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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **TEAM CANADA ADVANCE TO BILLIE JEAN KING CUP FINALS WITH 3-2 WIN OVER BELGIUM**

***Dabrowski and Fernandez team up to win deciding doubles match 6-1, 6-2 over Minnen and Flipkens***

**Vancouver, BC, April 15, 2023** — The Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge Qualifiers concluded on Saturday as Team Canada presented by Sobeys defeated Belgium 3-2 at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver, British Columbia. As a result, the Canadian team has earned a spot in the Billie Jean King Cup Finals set to take place in November.

To kick off the final day of action, both teams' top players – Leylah Annie Fernandez and Ysaline Bonaventure – faced off against each other in the third match of the tie. Heading into the contest, Canada and Belgium were even at one win apiece after exchanging victories on Friday. In the opening set, Fernandez faced an early 4-0 deficit which proved insurmountable, despite the pressure she applied, as Bonaventure won the set 6-4. The Canadian quickly bounced back in the second set, taking it by a score of 7-5, and rode that wave of momentum up until the end of the match to secure the 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 win.

“In the first set, I got 3-0 and I think I finally settled down in the game,” said Fernandez in her post-match press conference. “Even though the score wasn’t going my way I felt like things were turning around. Second set, same thing. I was just trying to enjoy myself. So, I told myself ‘just smile’ and I started smiling a couple of times and it helped me. It also helped that I have a great support team on the bench that was lifting me up in tough moments and the crowd definitely helped.”

Ahead of the second match, Heidi El Tabakh and Wim Fissette – Team Captains of their respective country – announced a change in their lineups for the fourth and final singles match of the event. For Canada, Katherine Sebov replaced Rebecca Marino, while Fissette nominated Greet Minnen to play in place of Yanina Wickmayer.

In the opening set, the Canadian team got off to another slow start, as Sebov was broken in her first three service games. In the second set, after fending away three break points in the fifth game, Sebov flipped the switch and broke Minnen, eventually sending the match to a third set. However, it wouldn’t be enough for the Canadian, as she dropped the decider 6-3. Sebov finished the match with 22 winners and 60 unforced errors, compared to her opponent’s 20 winners and 40 unforced errors.

“I was a little bit overwhelmed with the atmosphere going in,” said Sebov. “That still hits me, but I’m glad I was able to pull it together in the second [set] and try to get some more balls in, play better and put up a fight to Greet [Minnen]. She was obviously playing really well from the start and I had to take it from her. She played really well, and I wasn’t quite there today in my opinion.”

With Minnen’s win in singles, it meant that the tie would come down to the doubles match between Canada’s Gabriela Dabrowski and Fernandez, and Belgium’s Minnen and Kirsten Flipkens. Right from the get-go, the Canadian duo looked in exceptional form, cruising to a 6-1 lead to take the first set.



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Dabrowski and Fernandez kept their foot on the gas in the second, breaking the Belgians twice to secure the victory for Canada by a score of 6-1, 6-2.

“It’s never easy when you’re playing for your country, but I think that [the team] did an incredible job – it was all them today,” said El Tabakh after the team’s on-court celebration. “It’s an honour to be going to the Finals and I think that these girls have what it takes. We can’t wait. We’re super excited.”

The win over Belgium means that Canada will compete in the Billie Jean King Cup Finals, at a to-be-determined location, in November.

### **About Tennis Canada**

Founded in 1890, Tennis Canada is a non-profit, national sport association with a mission to lead the growth, development and promotion of tennis in Canada and a vision to be 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 and Vancouver. 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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