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## **CANADA WINS BILLIE JEAN KING CUP FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY** ***Team Canada defeats Italy 2-0 to win maiden title at women's World Cup of Tennis***

**[SEVILLE, SPAIN] November 12, 2023** – On Sunday, Team Canada presented by Sobeys made history by defeating Italy 2-0 to win the country's first Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge title.

The Canadian team that helped achieve this historic feat at the renowned international event is made up of Leylah Annie Fernandez, Gabriela Dabrowski, Rebecca Marino, Marina Stakusic, Eugenie Bouchard, and team captain Heidi El Tabakh.

Playing out of Estadio de la Cartuja in Sevilla, Spain, the Canadian team had a dominant week en route to the title. In the round-robin stage, they swept Poland and host nation Spain without dropping a single set, and then managed to upset the powerful Czechia team in the semi-final.

“Our Canadian team has just concluded a brilliant world championship run that is truly one for the ages. A nation can only win the gruelling Billie Jean King Cup competition if it has the best team, and that was our nation this past week,” said Michael Downey, CEO of Tennis Canada. “Canada had the best team on-court, the best support team off-court and the best team of diehard fans, many of whom travelled farther than most of the 12 competing nations to cheer their team to victory. Congratulations to all our Canadian teams, but especially the one comprised of Leylah Annie, Gabriela, Marina, Eugenie, Rebecca and captain Heidi, now holding the title of BJKC world champions!”

Stakusic (No. 258) introduced herself to the world of tennis in her Billie Jean King Cup debut this week, earning the first two wins of her career against top-75 opponents during the round-robin ties. After losing to Barbora Krejckova (No. 10) in her semi-final matchup, she rebounded in a huge way against Martina Trevisan (No. 43), defeating her 7-5, 6-3 and putting Canada in prime position to win it all. Stakusic ended her week with a 3-1 record, setting new highs by defeating the highest-ranked opponents of her career.

Fernandez (No. 35) let it be known that she remains a force to be reckoned with in the tennis world, dominating every match she appeared in and winning all five of them; four times in singles and once in doubles. The Billie Jean King Cup appears to bring out the best in the 21-year-old, as she's now won 16 of her last 17 matches at the tournament.

“We worked really hard the past years, and, you know, I think every year, as I said before, we just keep improving,” said Fernandez post-match. “It's showing on the tennis court. It's showing in competition, individual competitions. Now it has shown in the biggest stage in the world.”

With the chance to clinch the title on the line, Fernandez took on Jasmine Paolini (No. 30) in the second match of the tie. Fernandez dominated the match, winning 6-2, 6-3 and coming up clutch once again for Team Canada and securing the country's maiden victory.



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As a result, Dabrowski and Fernandez didn't need to take the court for a decisive doubles match. Dabrowski ended the tournament with a perfect 3-0 record, recording two wins alongside Bouchard and one with Fernandez against Czechia to clinch the team's spot in the final.

"I'm also incredibly proud of every single girl that's sitting here," said El Tabakh post-match, who became the first female captain to win the tournament since 2017. "It's been a pleasure sharing the court with them all week, and everyone who is here currently has been a huge asset to the Canadian team throughout the years. We wouldn't be here without every single one of them right now."

Canada now becomes the 13<sup>th</sup> country to ever win the Billie Jean King Cup, which began in 1963. They followed in the footsteps of the men's team, who won Canada's inaugural Davis Cup last year in 2022.

This year's Billie Jean King Cup Finals had a record prize purse of \$9.6 million, with \$2.4 million awarded to Team Canada as World Champions. This prize money is equivalent to the levels awarded at the 2023 Davis Cup Finals.

### **About the Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge**

The Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge is the women's World Cup of Tennis. Previously known as the Fed Cup, it is the largest annual international team competition in women's sport, with 134 nations having entered in 2023. The competition was founded in 1963 and is in its 60<sup>th</sup> year. Since its 2020 re-brand, the competition has continued to develop as a bold, powerful platform for the growth of women's tennis across the world. It was broadcast in an unprecedented 196 territories in 2022, and a record 134 nations have entered this year. The ITF also welcomed new title sponsor Gainbridge in 2022, joining Microsoft and Magellan as the global sponsors of the event. Tory Burch also became apparel partner in 2022, while Iberdrola and Franklin Templeton became official partners in 2023.

### **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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