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CANADA SHOCKS CZECHIA, MAKES HISTORY BY REACHING BILLIE JEAN KING CUP FINAL FOR FIRST TIME

Canada to play Italy for the title on Sunday

[SEVILLE, SPAIN] November 11, 2023 – On Saturday, Team Canada presented by Sobeys made history by defeating Czechia to reach the Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge final for the first time. The Canadian squad made up of Leylah Annie Fernandez, Gabriela Dabrowski, Rebecca Marino, Marina Stakusic, Eugenie Bouchard, and team captain Heidi El Tabakh will now take on Italy on Sunday for the title.

"I'm so proud of my girls. Really, really proud," said El Tabakh postmatch. "But we're not done, we got to come out here tomorrow and do it all over again. So, the focus now is obviously on recovery and getting the girls ready for tomorrow, but I am so proud of them."

Stakusic (No. 258) opened the tie against Barbora Krejckikova (No. 10) after winning her previous two matches in the round-robin. The 18-year-old was defeated 6-2, 6-1, going up against the highest-ranked opponent of her career. Despite the loss, Stakusic still managed to hold her own against a previous Grand Slam champion, fighting for tough points and putting together solid rallies all match long.

Fernandez (No. 35) took on Marketa Vondrousova (No. 7) in the second match of the tie, needing a win to give Team Canada a chance to book its spot in the finals. Fernandez rose to the occasion, winning 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 to force a decisive third doubles match. Fernandez's fearless efforts helped her defeat the 2023 Wimbledon champion, saving nine of 13 break points and hitting 26 winners. The win notched her first victory against a Top 10 opponent since the 2021 US Open.

"It's an amazing thing for Canadian tennis. I think for us as a country we've always been kind of put aside as a hockey nation - which is true - but we are also a tennis nation," said Fernandez postmatch. "There are a lot of tennis girls and boys that are playing, that are picking up the racquet, and that are competing, and I do know that they have big dreams like all of us and I think for us to be doing this and to be able to showcase that Canada is also among the best countries in the world it's an honour, it's a privilege, and hopefully young girls and boys from Canada can continue in their dreams."

Dabrowski (No. 8) and Fernandez (No. 20) then teamed up for the first time at the tournament to take on Katerina Siniakova (No. 10) and Krejckikova (No. 13) in the deciding doubles match. After Bouchard subbed in for Fernandez in doubles in the first two ties of the tournament, the duo showed no signs of rust, taking down Siniakova and Krejckikova in straight sets 7-5, 7-6. Dabrowski and Fernandez were up to the task in the match, making just 18 unforced errors compared to Czechia's 31 and putting their opponents on the edge all match long. With the win, Fernandez has now won 15 of her last 16 matches at the Billie Jean King Cup, and her and Dabrowski have yet to drop a set in the four matches they've played together in Billie Jean King Cup play.

Team Canada will face Italy for the title on Sunday, November 12 (9:00 a.m. ET) and will be broadcast live in Canada on Sportsnet One and TVA Sports.



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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 60th 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 and follow us on Facebook and Twitter

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