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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEYLAH ANNIE FERNANDEZ, FÉLIX AUGER-ALIASSIME NAMED WINNERS OF 2023 PLAYERS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Fourth-straight year that Fernandez has won the Tennis Canada award, third-straight year for Auger-Aliassime

[TORONTO, ON] December 19, 2023 – On Tuesday, Tennis Canada announced that Leylah Annie Fernandez (Laval, QC) and Félix Auger-Aliassime (Montreal, QC) are the recipients of the 2023 Tennis Canada Excellence Awards for *Player of the Year* and *Singles Player of the Year* in the women's and men's categories, respectively.

The other Excellence Awards went to Gabriela Dabrowski (Ottawa, ON) and Vasek Pospisil (Vernon, BC) for *Doubles Player of the Year*, to Marina Stakusic (Toronto, ON) and Gabriel Diallo (Montreal, QC) for *Most Improved Player of the Year*, and to Nadia Lagaev (Vaughan, ON) and Keegan Rice (Regina, SK) for *Junior Players of the Year*. In wheelchair tennis, Rob Shaw (North Bay, ON) earned the *Wheelchair Tennis Player of the Year* award, while Natalia Lanucha (Pincourt, QC) claimed the *Most Improved Player of the Year* award.

"We would like to congratulate all of this year's recipients of the Tennis Canada Excellence Awards," said Gavin Ziv, CEO of Tennis Canada. "It was another incredible year for Canadian tennis, with historic milestones achieved across the board. Canada's first-ever Billie Jean King Cup victory and first women's Grand Slam doubles title were the main highlights, but that doesn't take away from everyone else's fantastic achievements on and off the court. From Rob winning a silver medal at the Parapan Am Games while serving as a flag bearer for Canada to Félix being recognized with the Arthur Ashe Humanitarian Award for his charitable efforts, it's been an absolute pleasure to watch our country continue to make great strides in 2023."

SINGLES PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

On the women's side, Laval's Fernandez took home her fourth straight *Women's Player of the Year* and *Women's Singles Player of the Year* awards. The 21-year-old had a stellar season, making it to the finals of the French Open in doubles, winning the Hong Kong Open in China for her third-career WTA title, and putting on a dazzling display on the international stage at the Billie Jean King Cup en route to Canada's first title at the tournament. In Seville, Fernandez won all four of her singles matches, including a crucial win over Czechia's No. 7 ranked Marketa Vondrousova in the semi-finals, and her one appearance in doubles.

For the third straight year, Montreal's Auger-Aliassime won the *Men's Player of the Year* and *Men's Singles Player of the Year* awards. The 23-year-old came back from a difficult start to the year to end his season with some very promising play. He successfully defended his title at the 2023 Swiss Indoors, defeating Holger Rune in straight sets in the semi-final for his first top-10 win of the season before beating Hubert Hurkacz in the final. Auger-Aliassime also participated in this year's Laver Cup, helping Team World defeat Team Europe.



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DOUBLES, JUNIORS AND MOST IMPROVED PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

Ottawa's Dabrowski had a year to remember, winning the *Doubles Player of the Year* award for the 11th time in her career. In September, the 31-year-old won the US Open doubles title with her new partner Erin Routliffe, clinching Canada's first Grand Slam women's doubles title. The duo then immediately made a run to the Guadalajara Open finals, and then followed that up by winning a WTA 500 title at the Zhengzhou Open. This late run helped Dabrowski and Routliffe qualify for the WTA Finals, where they made it to the semi-final. Dabrowski then ended the year at the Billie Jean King Cup, where she won all three of her doubles matches, playing an integral role in Team Canada's triumph.

Pospisil earned the men's *Doubles Player of the Year* award after his clutch play at the Davis Cup helped Canada qualify for the quarter final. In the group stage in Bologna in September, Pospisil won all three of his doubles matches playing alongside Alexis Galarneau. The wins helped Canada secure its spot in the Davis Cup Final 8 in Malaga, Spain.

Toronto's Stakusic had a breathtaking surge late in the year, winning three ITF tournaments in September and October, including a dazzling win in front of a home crowd in Toronto at the Tevlin Challenger W60 event. Following her end of season dominance, Stakusic then broke out on the international stage at the Billie Jean King Cup. The 19-year-old didn't squander the opportunity when she was called upon to play, winning three of her four singles matches, all against top-60 opponents. Meanwhile, Montreal's Diallo continues to climb the world rankings, achieving a career-high ranking of No. 130 in 2023, up from 227 in 2022, while earning three wins over top-25 opponents and winning three titles (two singles, one doubles). Diallo also played a pivotal role at the Davis Cup for Team Canada, highlighted by a stunning upset over Italy's world No. 18 Lorenzo Musetti.

In juniors, Lagaev, 15, and Rice, 17, had impressive years. Lagaev won two J100 titles in Quebec City and Latvia and participated at the Junior Billie Jean King Cup for Team Canada. She also won the singles title at U18 Fischer Indoor Junior Nationals in Toronto in April. Meanwhile Rice won one J200 title in Austria, achieving a career-high juniors ranking of 32 during the year.

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS AWARDS

Shaw received the *Wheelchair Tennis Player of the Year* award after concluding another incredible season on the wheelchair tennis circuit, achieving a career-high ITF quad singles ranking of No. 6 and doubles ranking of No. 3. Shaw competed in all four Grand Slam events, earned a silver medal at the Parapan Am Games while also serving as a flag bearer for Canada, and reached the finals in two ITF1 events. Lanucha received the *Wheelchair Tennis Most Improved Player of the Year* award as she achieved a career-high ITF women's singles ranking of No. 47 while winning the ITF Futures Fredericton women's singles title as well as the singles and doubles title at the Birmingham Nationals.

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



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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 X.

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