



SOBEYS STADIUM
1 Shoreham Dr, Suite 100
Toronto ON M3N 3A6
T. 416.665.9777

STADE IGA
285, rue Gary-Carter
Montréal QC H2R 2W1
T. 514.273.1234

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CANADA FALLS 2-1 TO JAPAN IN BILLIE JEAN KING CUP QUALIFIERS

Canada heads to the Playoffs in November for a chance to advance to the 2026 Qualifiers

[TOKYO, JPN] April 13, 2025 – Canada lost 2-1 to host nation Japan in a tightly contested tie that concluded the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers on Sunday. As a result, No. 2-ranked Canada will see its four-year streak of reaching the Finals end, and instead, the team will head to the Playoffs in November.

“Overall, I really do believe it was a great day. It was a very tough day, all matches were very close,” Canadian captain Heidi El Tabakh said. “I’m sure we’re all disappointed we lost, but I’m very, very proud of every single girl on the team and the effort they put in today. We fought till the end, and it just didn’t go our way.”

With both Canada and No. 14 Japan having defeated Romania in their opening ties, both nations entered the final day of competition looking to book a spot in the Finals. Canada’s 18-year-old Victoria Mboko began with a hard-fought, three-set victory over Japan’s Ena Shibahara (6-4, 6-7(8), 7-5). In a match that stretched to 2 hours and 45 minutes, the No. 159 Mboko got off to a quick start and won the first set, before her opponent evened the match in a close second set. Mboko showed her resolve in the third, however, overcoming an early 0-2 deficit to win the match and improve her 2025 record to a remarkable 30-2.

“I feel like we were both very nervous in the first set, it wasn’t as high quality as it got towards the end of the third set,” Mboko said. “I had so many opportunities in the second set, but Ena [Shibahara], she was just on every single one of my balls. She was playing super great, and I knew I had to take it up another level. I’m so happy to get this win today.”

In the second singles match, No. 128 Marina Stakusic battled Japan’s Moyuka Uchijima, who, at No. 51, was the tie’s top-ranked player, but was unable to break her experienced opponent, losing in straight sets (6-3, 6-3).

“[Uchijima] changed her rhythm a lot, which threw me off a lot,” Stakusic said. “She made me very uncomfortable on the court, so it was really difficult to find my rhythm and play well. But I think in general she just played a more solid match than I did.”

It came down to a winner-take-all doubles match. Canada’s duo of Rebecca Marino and Kayla Cross dropped the first set against Shibahara and Shuko Aoyama, but the Canadians showed their fight, leveling the match in the second set. But the Japanese duo jumped out to an early 3-0 lead in the deciding set and ultimately prevailed 6-3, 5-7, 6-2, sending the host nation to the Finals for only the second time.

“I’m very, very, very proud of Rebecca and Kayla for showing up and playing the way they did this evening, playing against a very experienced Japanese team, one of the best players in the world,” El Tabakh said.



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With the loss, Canada now heads to the 2025 Playoffs, set to take place during the week of November 10. Canada will await the draw to find out their opponents in what will be a three-day, round-robin format for the chance to return to the 2026 Qualifiers.

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 a record 146 nations entered in 2025. Champions Italy took home \$2.4m for their triumph at the 2024 Finals in Malaga. Global partners of the event include Gainbridge®, e.l.f. Beauty and Microsoft.

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 website at: www.tenniscanada.com and follow us on LinkedIn, X, Facebook and Instagram.

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Media Contact

Patrick Steski
Advisor, Communications
psteski@tenniscanada.com
+1 (613) 818-6237