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**MARINO, STAKUSIC, BRANSTINE AND CROSS AWARDED WILD CARDS, JOIN FERNANDEZ, MBOKO, ANDREESCU AND BOUCHARD IN THE MAIN DRAW OF THE NATIONAL BANK OPEN IN MONTRÉAL**

*The qualifying wild cards go to Canadians Carol Zhao, Cadence Brace and Katherine Sebov.*

**[MONTRÉAL, QC] July 19, 2025** – Today, Tennis Canada announced that Rebecca Marino (Vancouver, BC), Marina Stakusic (Mississauga, ON), Carson Branstine (Montréal, QC) and Kayla Cross (London, ON) were granted main draw wild cards for the National Bank Open presented by Rogers (NBO) in Montréal, which runs from July 26 to August 7 at IGA Stadium. They join fellow Canadians Leylah Annie Fernandez (No.35), who qualified by virtue of her ranking, as well as Bianca Andreescu (No.185), Victoria Mboko (No.86) and Genie Bouchard, who were awarded the first main draw wild cards.

Marino, No.117, will be making her sixth appearance in the main draw of the NBO. In 2021, the former No.38 got as far as the round of 16, posting wins over Madison Keys of the US and Paula Badosa of Spain before falling to Aryna Sabalenka. Last month, Rebecca competed in the final of the Ilkley Open in Great Britain and will be looking to build on that momentum in front of the crowds in Montréal.

Stakusic, No.142, will be returning to competition following a few weeks off to recover from an injury sustained after Roland-Garros. She will be making her second appearance in the main draw of the NBO. In 2024, Marina earned a wild card and won her opening match against Erika Andreeva. In 2025, she got as far as the quarterfinals of two WTA 125 events and represented Canada at the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers in Japan, where she won her singles match against Team Romania.

Branstine, No.178, will be making her main draw debut at the NBO. The rising star is currently enjoying an outstanding season during which she qualified for the main draw of a Grand Slam for the very first time in her career at Wimbledon. In the qualifying rounds, she toppled top seed and recent Roland-Garros semifinalist Loïs Boisson and her compatriot Bianca Andreescu before running into World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka in the first round of the main draw. Weeks earlier, Carson defeated No.17 Liudmila Samsonova and competed in the final of a WTA 125 event in Mexico. She has tried to qualify for the NBO four times but has yet to win a match.

Cross, No.230, will also be making her first appearance in the main draw of the NBO. She played in the qualifying tournaments in 2021 and 2022 but lost in the opening round both times. She received a wild card as the winner of the [Road to the NBO](#) competition, having earned the most points at the national events leading up to Canada's premier international tennis tournament. So far this season, she has won an ITF W35 title in the US and reached the quarterfinals of two W75 tournaments and the semifinal of a W50 event. A member of the Louisiana State University's women's tennis team, she is ranked no.53 in the NCAA Division I singles and no.6 in doubles with her partner Cadence Brace.

"We are thrilled to announce that a record number of eight Canadian women will take part in this year's main draw," said Valérie Tétreault, Tournament Director of the National Bank Open in Montréal. "Tennis fans won't soon forget this historic edition, where the experience of players like Eugenie Bouchard and Rebecca Marino will blend with the energy of our rising stars like Victoria [Mboko], Marina [Stakusic],



Carson [Branstine] and Kayla [Cross]. Our tournament has often been the stage where our Canadian players have delivered some of the best performances of their careers, carried by the energy and passion of a crowd that rallies behind them every single match. It promises to be a memorable week.”

The final wild card was awarded to Elizabeth Mandlik (No. 204) by the USTA under an agreement that allowed Bianca Andreescu to enter the US Open draw last summer.

#### **Four Canadian women to compete in the qualifying tournament on Saturday, July 26 during IGA Family Weekend**

Fans will have the opportunity to see even more Canadian talent in action on Saturday, July 26, during the IGA Family Weekend in partnership with LEGO. Carol Zhao (Richmond Hill, ON), Cadence Brace (Toronto, ON) and Katherine Sebov (Toronto, ON) have all received wild cards for the qualifying event. The final qualifying wild card will go to the winner of the pre-qualification tournament that gets underway on July 21 at IGA Stadium.

- Zhao (No.232), 30, leads the Canadian contingent in qualifying. Just two weeks ago, she reached the semifinals at the Hall of Fame Open (WTA 125) in the US. Her 2025 season also includes a semifinal at a W50 ITF event in the US and a quarterfinal showing at a W75 in China. She will be competing in the NBO for the 14th time and looking to better her five main draw appearances.
- Brace, 20, is currently ranked a career-high No.259. She recently followed up an appearance in the final of a W75 event with a semifinal berth at a W100 ITF tournament in the US. Since January, she has been the no.1 singles player for the LSU women’s tennis team (ranked no.8 in the NCAA) and forms the top-ranked doubles pair with Kayla Cross (ranked no.6 in the NCAA). Cadence will be making her NBO debut.
- Sebov (No.301), 26, will be competing in the NBO for the eighth time (the seventh time as a qualifier) and looking to claim her first win. In June, she played in the semifinals of a W75 ITF event in the US after a semifinal appearance at a W50 in Florida. Earlier this year, Katherine won her fifth career ITF title (W35).

#### **About the National Bank Open presented by Rogers**

The National Bank Open presented by Rogers is a world-class tournament owned and operated by Tennis Canada. The women’s event, which celebrates its 131st anniversary, will take place at IGA Stadium in Montréal from July 27 to August 7. The men’s event, celebrating 143 years of tradition, will be held at Sobeys Stadium on the same dates. The National Bank Open presented by Rogers is the third-oldest title in tennis, behind only Wimbledon and the US Open. For more information and tickets, visit [www.nationalbankopen.com](http://www.nationalbankopen.com).

#### **Information**

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