



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **WTA TOUR ANNOUNCES PLAN TO RESHAPE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S TENNIS**

***“Roadmap 2010” to Include Shorter Season, Simplified Tier Structure and Rankings, New Premier Series Featuring Top Players, and Greater Collaboration with Other Governing Bodies as Top Priorities***

**FLUSHING MEADOWS, NY** – The WTA Tour announced today a multi-year, multi-pronged vision for a more well-defined tennis season that will build the popularity of the sport and make tennis even more exciting for fans to follow.

“Roadmap 2010” involves a series of changes beginning in 2005 that include shortening the season to 10 months, clarifying and differentiating the tournament tier structure, creating a new top series of marquee events featuring the top players, simplifying the ranking system, closer cooperation with other tennis governing bodies, enhanced professional development programs, and other initiatives designed to further promote and develop women’s professional tennis.

As a significant first step in evolving the overall circuit structure, the 2005 Tour calendar will feature a shorter playing season and increased simplicity by condensing tournament categories from five to four Tiers (I, II, III, IV), and creating greater distinction between the Tier levels.

“Since joining the Tour 16 months ago, my extensive discussions with players, tournaments, sponsors, media and other governing bodies have all revolved around a collective desire to develop the power, exposure and appeal of the sport,” WTA Tour CEO Larry Scott said. “Our ultimate goal is to increase the popularity of the sport by building exciting rivalries and better packaging the sport.”

To shorten the 2005 season, the Fed Cup final will be moved from November to September as part of a collaborative effort with the International Tennis Federation. Under the four-year extension of Tour and ITF agreement signed this week, the Fed Cup final will take place the week of September 12-18 following the US Open, two months earlier than its current date.

As a result, the prestigious WTA Tour Championships, which will remain at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles in 2005, becomes the definitive season-ending tennis event, followed by a seven-week off-season, two weeks longer than in 2004.

“This is a positive step for women’s tennis and extends a long-running and successful relationship between our two organizations,” ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti said. “Between us, the ITF and WTA Tour have achieved a shorter calendar that is a definite benefit for the players, and have also, among other important matters, secured a stronger date, for the players and the organizers, for the Fed Cup final within the calendar from 2005.”

The ITF extension is the latest example of collaboration between the Tour and the sport’s other governing bodies, which is at the center of the Tour’s long-range vision for an easier-to-understand, fan-friendly sport. The Tour also collaborated with the United States Tennis Association on the finalization of the US Open Series, and with the ATP on the “One Game” program of administrative and promotional synergies, and cooperative initiatives.

As part of "Roadmap 2010," collaboration between the Tour and other governing bodies will continue and expand in the area of Professional Development, following a recent and comprehensive review of the Tour's educational and developmental programs conducted by an independent panel of leading sports sciences and medicine experts. The governing bodies will work together to ensure that competitive tennis as a whole provides the necessary programs to create a healthy and supportive environment for players throughout all ages and stages of their careers.

"Through a shared vision and mutual cooperation among tournaments, players, sponsors, governing bodies and other key stakeholders, we will continue to work towards reshaping the future of women's tennis to broaden the attractiveness and marketability of the entire sport," Scott said. "We have many challenges ahead of us, but we are on an exciting path toward taking women's tennis to the next level in the global sports marketplace."

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*The WTA Tour is the world's premier professional sport for women with more than 1,100 players representing 76 nations competing for more than \$58 million in prize money at the Tour's 60 events in 30 countries, as well as the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. More than four million people attended women's tennis events in 2003 with millions more watching events on television networks around the world. The WTA Tour season concludes with the WTA Tour Championships presented by Porsche at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California, November 10-15, 2004. Further information on the Tour can be found on the Internet at [www.wtatour.com](http://www.wtatour.com).*

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# ROADMAP 2010 FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** Overview of long-range circuit structure plan for women's tennis.

**OBJECTIVE:** By 2010, significantly increase the global popularity of women's tennis through the development of a tennis season that is packaged in a way that is more appealing to fans, players, tournaments, sponsors and the media, and that will better highlight the game's most engaging rivalries.

## **KEY ELEMENTS:**

- Shorter Playing Season
- Series of easily-identified top events in the most ideal weeks of the season
- Mandatory tournament commitment system for players
- Easier-to-understand ranking system
- Packaged television rights and sponsorship deals
- Strategic coordination with other tennis governing bodies
- Enhanced Professional Development programs
- Enhanced WTA Tour Championships

## **SIGNIFICANT FIRST STEPS IN 2005:**

- Extended off-season, from 5 weeks to 7 weeks, through renewed ITF Agreement
- Condensed tier structure with 4 tiers vs. 5

**FOUNDATION:** New vision builds on recent Tour enhancements, which include:

- Increased sponsorship success – recent signing of regional sponsors Whirlpool Europe and Dubai Duty Free
- Growing attendance - overall Tour attendance up 9 percent over last year
- Greater marketing and promotion - successful “Get In Touch” brand campaign and popular All-Access Hour media availabilities
- Restructured and streamlined WTA Tour Board of Directors
- Formation of Global Advisory Council comprised of leading global CEOs