

OCTOBER 9, 2009

VENUS WILLIAMS AND VICTORIA AZARENKA QUALIFY FOR SONY ERICSSON CHAMPIONSHIPS – DOHA 2009

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, USA – American Venus Williams and Belarus' Victoria Azarenka are the sixth and seventh players to secure their ticket to Doha for the season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships, set to take place for the second year in a row at the Khalifa International Tennis Complex in Doha, Qatar, from October 27-November 1, 2009. Defending champion Williams, qualifying for the ninth time in her career, and first time qualifier Azarenka, will join Dinara Safina, Serena Williams, Elena Dementieva, Caroline Wozniacki, Svetlana Kuznetsova and the doubles teams of Cara Black/Liezel Huber, Venus Williams/Serena Williams and Nuria Llagostera Vives/Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez, all of whom have previously qualified and are headed to Doha. The world's top eight singles players and top four doubles teams from the 2009 Sony Ericsson WTA Tour season will compete for the coveted Sony Ericsson Championships title and a share of the record Championships prize money of \$4.55 million.

Venus Williams' qualification for the prestigious year-end Championships comes on the heels of a successful season, highlighted by winning her 40th and 41st Sony Ericsson WTA Tour titles - Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships (Dubai) and Abierto Mexicano TELCEL presentado por HSBC (Acapulco), reaching the final at Wimbledon (losing to sister Serena) and the final at the Bank of the West Classic (Stanford), losing to Marion Bartoli. Venus also captured four doubles titles this season, lifting the trophy at the Australian Open, Wimbledon, US Open and Stanford, all with Serena.

"I am pleased to have qualified for the Sony Ericsson Championships and I look forward to defending my title," said Venus Williams. "Qualifying for the year-end tournament is always a goal I set for myself at the beginning of the season and I am excited to have an opportunity yet again to compete with the best players in the world."

Azarenka has enjoyed a stellar season on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour in 2009, highlighted by winning her first Premier title – the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami, defeating then World No.1 Serena Williams in the final. She raced to a fast start by winning 24 of her first 26 matches en route to capturing her inaugural tournament – the Brisbane International (Brisbane) – followed by the Regions Morgan Keegan Championships & the Cellular South Cup (Memphis). After reaching the semifinals at the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Azarenka made her Top 10 debut on March 23, 2009 and reached a career-best World No.8 after winning the Sony Ericsson Open. She also reached the quarterfinals at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, her best Grand Slams showings so far, as well as the semifinals of the Internazionali BNL d'Italia (Rome). Azarenka's season was also highlighted by winning two doubles titles – in Memphis (with Wozniacki) and Indian Wells (with Vera Zvonareva).

"I am thrilled to have an opportunity to go to Doha for the Sony Ericsson Championships," said Azarenka. "Winning my first Tour title and reaching the Top 10 for the first time in my career has really made my year and I couldn't think of a better place to finish it than in Doha. Having an opportunity to travel to the year-end Championships is an accomplishment I am very proud of."

"Venus and Victoria have had great 2009 seasons and earned places among the elite group of players competing at the Sony Ericsson Championships. Venus is a true fan favorite around the world and it will be exciting to watch her defend her Championships title in Doha, and Victoria has had a breakthrough season and solidified her place as a formidable star on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour," said Stacey Allaster, Chairman and CEO of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. "I wish Venus and Victoria luck in Doha and look forward to a great Championships and an exciting finale to the 2009 season."

"We congratulate Venus and Victoria on having great 2009 seasons," said Aldo Liguori, Corporate Vice President and Head of Global Communications & PR for Sony Ericsson. "Each year the excitement of the Sony Ericsson Championships eclipses the

The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is the world's leading professional sport for women with more than 2,200 players representing 96 nations competing for more than \$86 million in prize money at the Tour's 51 events and four Grand Slams in 31 countries. More than 4.8 million people attended women's tennis events in 2008 with millions more watching events on television networks around the world. The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour season concludes with the Sony Ericsson Championships – Doha 2009 in Doha, Qatar, from October 27-November 1, and the inaugural Commonwealth Bank Tournament of Champions in Bali, Indonesia from November 4-8. Further information on the Tour can be found on the Internet at www.sonyericssonwtatour.com

previous year and with Venus and Victoria heading to Doha, I am sure this trend will continue. We look forward to these stars joining the previously qualified players and wish them luck at what will be an exciting year-end Championships."

Always at the forefront of innovation and style, Sony Ericsson, a global leader in communications entertainment and the title sponsor of the Tour, continues to awe tennis fans with its innovative marketing and trend-setting style, elevating the sport to unprecedented new heights. Sony Ericsson offers tennis fans around the world one-of-a-kind access to their favorite stars through innovative products that inspire fans to seek new experiences, enjoy immediate connection to their favorite players through social media networks, and make them believe that anything is possible. With the help of Sony Ericsson, this year's Sony Ericsson Championships promise to further the sport to the next level and broaden the visibility and prestige of the event worldwide.

The Championships were first played in 1972 and since then the event has been held in such notable venues as Madison Square Garden, New York City; the Olympiahalle in Munich; Staples Center in Los Angeles; and the Recinto Ferial Casa de Campo in Madrid. Former singles champions include Tracy Austin, Kim Clijsters, Chris Evert, Evonne Goolagong, Steffi Graf, Martina Hingis, Martina Navratilova, Gabriela Sabatini, Serena Williams, Justine Henin and Venus Williams.

For high resolution image of Venus Williams, please click:

<https://rcpt.yousendit.com/747271939/f140442cdd82ce3285ae8741f5e7a0a8>

For high resolution image of Victoria Azarenka, please click:

<https://rcpt.yousendit.com/747272291/fa5713b5d220a5a86d76892fb197d387>

RACE TO THE SONY ERICSSON CHAMPIONSHIPS - DOHA 2009

(as of the week of October 5, 2009)

SINGLES			DOUBLES		
PLAYER	POINTS	RACE STANDING (as of October 5, 2009)	TEAM	POINTS	RACE STANDING (as of October 5, 2009)
Dinara Safina	7652	1**	Cara Black & Liezel Huber	8850	1**
Serena Williams	7437	2**	Venus Williams & Serena Williams	6750	2**
Caroline Wozniacki	5570	3**	Nuria Llagostera Vives & Maria José Martínez Sánchez	6146	3**
Elena Dementieva	5365	4**	Rennae Stubbs & Samantha Stosur	5043	4**
Svetlana Kuznetsova	4773	5**	Daniela Hantuchova & Ai Sugiyama	4192	5
Victoria Azarenka	4371	6**	Anabel Medina Garrigues & Virginia Ruano Pascual	4123	6
Venus Williams	4317	7**	Shuai Peng & Su-wei Hsieh	3286	7
Jelena Jankovic	3660	8	Kveta Peschke & Lisa Raymond	3206	8
Vera Zvonareva	3301	9			
Flavia Pennetta	3060	10			
Marion Bartoli	2715	11			
Samantha Stosur	2691	12			
Agnieszka Radwanska	2690	13			
Maria Sharapova	2680	14			
Na Li	2402	15			

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PRESS RELEASE

** Denotes player/team has already qualified

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