

NEW HAVEN OPEN at Yale



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NEW HAVEN OPEN AT YALE ADDS US OPEN NATIONAL PLAYOFFS CHAMPIONSHIPS

***Men's, Women's Singles Champion Earn Wild Card into US Open Qualifying Tournament;
Mixed Doubles Winners Earn Wild Card into the US Open Mixed Doubles Championship***

NEW HAVEN, Conn., January 26, 2011 – New Haven Open at Yale, a WTA event that is part of the Olympus US Open Series, has added the US Open National Playoffs Championships, the culmination of 16 sectional qualifying tournaments that provide the opportunity for all players 14 years of age and older to earn a berth into the US Open, it was announced today by Anne Worcester, tournament director. The tournament will be expanded by one day to accommodate this addition and run from August 18-27, 2011 at the Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale.

The US Open National Playoffs, which was created last year by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) to connect more people to the US Open and expand the event's reach to communities throughout the United States, will again feature 16 sectional qualifying events, including the New England section tournament which will be held May 18-22 at the Yale University Tennis Center. The 16 men's singles, women's singles, and (new this year!) mixed doubles champions from each sectional qualifying tournament will advance to the US Open National Playoffs Championships at the New Haven Open at Yale. The US Open National Playoffs Men's Singles and Women's Singles Championship will be held August 18-21 and the US Open National Playoffs Mixed Doubles Championship will be held August 24-27. The men's and women's singles champions will receive a wild card into the qualifying draw of the US Open, while the mixed doubles champions will receive a wild card into the main draw of the US Open.

"We again expect the top junior players, collegians, teaching professionals, 'weekend warriors' and other recreational players to come out in large numbers to compete this year in singles and now mixed doubles," said Jim Curley, Chief Professional Tournaments Officer & US Open Tournament Director. "The New Haven Open at Yale will be a great host for the championships and the winners will be close to New York for the US Open."

"Adding the US Open National Playoffs Championships to the New Haven Open at Yale means more quality matches for our fans, keeping men's tennis on the schedule, and the addition of mixed doubles, which doesn't happen at any other professional tournament in the United States outside of the US Open," said Worcester. "New Haven is the final stop before the US Open, and has always been a place where rising stars are born, so adding this Playoff Championships is a natural fit for us. Further, we continue to be focused on delivering maximum entertainment value both on and off the court, and this is just one of several new and exciting enhancements for 2011."

"The New Haven Open at Yale has been widely recognized as a leader among Olympus US Open Series events in providing grassroots tennis opportunities," said Jeff Waters, USTA New England Executive Director. "The addition of the US Open National Playoffs Championship is a great fit with all of the outreach activities supported by the New Haven Open at Yale throughout the year."

Registration for each of the 16 sectional qualifying tournaments begins on March 15 at www.usta.com/tennislink. The entry fee for each of the sectional qualifying tournaments is \$125 for singles and \$150 for each mixed doubles team (\$75 per player). All players competing must have a current USTA membership valid through August 29, 2011.

In all, 1,232 players (859 men, 373 women) competed in the inaugural edition of the 2010 US Open National Playoffs, ranging from experienced professionals (including two-time ATP singles champion Jeff Tarango and Russian Alina Jidkova, who reached a career-high No. 51 in 2005) to recreational players of all talents and walks of life (including Olympic skier Bode Miller, former Major League Baseball player Todd Walker and Rabbi Gregg Ackerman of Long Island, N.Y.).

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In the end, Blake Strode, a former top-ranked collegian from the University of Arkansas who learned the game at an NJTL chapter in his hometown of St. Louis, Mo., and Alexandra Mueller, a 22-year-old from Abington, Pa., who competes regularly on the USTA Pro Circuit, emerged as the US Open National Playoffs champions and earned wild cards into the 2010 US Open Qualifying Tournament.

For more information about the US Open National Playoffs visit www.usopen.org . For more information about the New Haven Open at Yale, visit www.newhavenopen.com.

About New Haven Open at Yale

New Haven Open at Yale marks the beginning of a new era in the New England professional sports world, thanks in large part to Cornerstone Sponsors Aetna, American Express, Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale University. The event has always been much more than a tennis tournament; it is a leading example of leveraging a large-scale international sporting event to generate \$26 million in regional economic impact and building community pride, spirit and engagement, especially among youth. The 2011 tournament is a women's-only Olympus US Open Series tournament on the WTA Tour and will be held August 19-27 at the Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale.

About the Olympus US Open Series

The Olympus US Open Series has established itself as a true regular season of hard court tennis, linking 10 summer tournaments to the US Open. Fans follow the action throughout the summer through national television coverage, culminating each week with back-to-back men's and women's finals every Sunday afternoon. Players battle for \$40 million, including a chance for bonus prize money at the US Open. In 2008, Olympus became the first title sponsor of the Series. The Olympus US Open Series is also supported by sponsors American Express and Evian.

Andy Murray won the 2010 Olympus US Open Series men's title and Caroline Wozniacki won the women's title. In 2007, Roger Federer collected the biggest paycheck in tennis history -- \$2.4 million -- for winning US Open and the Olympus US Open Series. In 2005, Kim Clijsters also captured both the US Open and the Olympus US Open Series, winning \$2.2 million -- the largest purse in women's sports history -- and again equaled that amount in 2010, winning the US Open and finishing the Olympus US Open Series in second place.

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