

Kim Clijsters' To Make Comeback; First Stop is W&SFG Women's Open Former World No. 1 Accepts Wildcard into Cincinnati Premier Event

CINCINNATI – March 26, 2009 – Former world No. 1 Kim Clijsters has announced her return to the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour after a 28-month layoff, and her first appearance will be at this summer's Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open in Cincinnati.

Clijsters retired in 2007 after winning the 2005 US Open title and reaching four Grand Slam singles finals – two French Opens ('01 & '03), the US Open ('03) and the Australian Open ('04). She also won 34 singles titles (including five Tier I events, now known as the Premier level) and 11 doubles titles on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour.

Clijsters spent 19 weeks at No. 1 and won more than \$14 million in prize money. She was the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour's Newcomer of the Year in 1999, and its Player of the Year in 2005.

Clijsters will accept a wild card into the Cincinnati field which already includes eight of the top 10 players on the year-end world rankings and the reigning champs of all four Grand Slams. Among those expected to compete with Clijsters for the title include Venus & Serena Williams, Ana Ivanovic, Jelena Jankovic, Elena Dementieva and Dinara Safina to mention only a few.

"We're thrilled for the sport that Clijsters has decided to make a comeback, and we're thrilled for our fans that she'll return to the Tour in Cincinnati," said tournament director Bruce Flory. "Our women's field for this first year of our upgraded event just keeps getting better and better, and it's going to make for a very exciting summer of tennis in the Midwest."

The Cincinnati event was recently upgraded to the Premier level on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, which means Cincinnati will host the Tour's third-richest event in the United States, after Miami and Indian Wells. The men's event, the Western & Southern Financial Masters, is an ATP Masters 1000 event, which means all the top players, including Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray are automatically entered.

Total prize money will be \$5 million for the W&SFG Masters & Women's Open, which will be held August 8-23 at the Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason.

"The middle weekend, August 15-16, will be unlike anything tennis fans in the Midwest have ever seen," said Flory. "We'll have women's singles and doubles, men's main-draw doubles, and top players practicing all over the Lindner Family Tennis Center. It's going to be a blast."

Tickets are on sale now by calling 513-651-0303 or visiting www.cincytennis.com. Tickets also are available via TicketMaster at 800-745-3000 or www.ticketmaster.com.

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August 8-23, 2009

Played at the Lindner Family Tennis Center, Mason, Ohio. Contributes to Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the Barrett Cancer Center.

