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SONY ERICSSON WTA TOUR ANNOUNCES 2008 PLAYER AWARD WINNERS

- **Serena Williams and Black/Huber clinch Player of Year and Doubles Team of Year**
- **Safina, Wozniacki, Zheng Jie, Dementieva and Ivanovic also earn top honors**

MIAMI, Florida – The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour announced today the winners of the 2008 annual Player Awards during a special ceremony at the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami, Florida. Eight players were honored for their remarkable achievements both on and off the court for the 2008 Tour year.

Serena Williams was voted the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour's 2008 Player of the Year for the second time in her career, having first earned the accolade in 2002. In addition to winning the 2008 U.S. Open crown, the 26-year old American became the World No. 1 for the second time in her career on September 8, 2008 and capped an amazing season with an Olympic Gold medal in doubles with sister Venus at the Beijing Olympic Games. Serena also reached the finals at Wimbledon and captured three other singles titles: the Canara Bank Bangalore Open in India, the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami and the Family Circle Cup in Charleston. As a result of her fantastic 2008 results, Serena qualified and competed in the season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships in Doha.

In her fourteen-year career Serena Williams has won every major title in addition to ten Grand Slams, becoming only the fifth woman, other than Margaret Court, Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova, and Steffi Graf, to achieve such a feat. Of the current players, only Serena's older sister Venus Williams comes close to such an achievement, with seven Grand Slam singles titles to her name. Previous recipients of the Player of the Year award include eight-time winner Steffi Graf, seven-time winner Martina Navratilova and the 2007 winner Justine Henin.

"Winning the Player of the Year award for the second time in my career is a great personal achievement," Serena Williams said. "Last year was a very special year on the Tour for me, winning an Olympic Gold medal with Venus, the U.S. Open title and becoming the World No. 1 player again. I feel great about my game and hope to win many more Player of the Year titles in the years to come."

The World No.1 doubles team of Cara Black and Liezel Huber earned their second award for Doubles Team of the Year. While the competition in doubles was fierce on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour in 2008, the Black/Huber duo topped the world rankings and enjoyed another dream season, capturing ten titles, including the U.S. Open, year-end Sony Ericsson Championships in Doha, the Proximus Diamond Games in Antwerp, the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships in Dubai, the Qatar Telecom German Open in Berlin, the AEGON Classic in Birmingham, the AEGON International in Eastbourne, the Bank of the West Classic in Stanford, The Rogers Cup in Montreal and the Zurich Open in Zurich.

"Liezel and I are thrilled to be named the Doubles Team of the Year for the second year in a row," Black said. "We are really pleased and honored to be receiving this award."

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



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“Cara and I achieved incredible results during the 2008 season and while we are a very competitive team, playing tennis with each other is fun, so winning this award is the icing on the cake,” added Huber.

Russia’s Dinara Safina won the Most Improved Player award after a remarkable season that culminated in finishing the year at a career-high World No. 2, reaching her first Grand Slam final at Roland Garros and winning a Silver medal in singles at the Beijing Olympics. The 22-year-old Moscovite also won the coveted U.S. Open Series and qualified for her first year-end Sony Ericsson Championships in Doha.

Comeback Player of the Year honors went to China’s Zheng Jie who rebounded from an injury-marred 2007 for her best season to date, highlighted by a run to her first Grand Slam singles semifinal at Wimbledon, beating then World No. 1 Ana Ivanovic. Zheng Jie reached the semifinals two more times during 2008, at the Guangzhou International Women’s Open and the China Open in Beijing. Zheng finished the 2008 season as the World No. 25, the highest ranking to date for the Chinese player.

Denmark’s Caroline Wozniacki picked up the Tour’s Newcomer of the Year Award, having reached a career-high World No.12 ranking and winning her first, second and third Tour singles at the Pilot Pen in New Haven, the Nordic Light Open in Stockholm, and the Japan Open in Tokyo, respectively. Having never beaten a Top 20 player prior to the 2008 season, Wozniacki enjoyed ten wins over players ranked in the top 20, including four Top 10 wins, and became the first Danish woman ever to win a Tour singles title.

For off the court achievements, Ana Ivanovic was named Humanitarian of the Year for her work and contributions to UNICEF, including serving as a UNICEF ambassador in and promotion of a “Schools without Violence” program in Serbia. Elena Dementieva was honored with the Karen Krantzcke Sportsmanship Award, which recognizes a player’s conduct, attitude and sense of fair play.

“2008 marked the 35th anniversary of the Tour and was an historic year in women’s tennis,” said Larry Scott, Chairman and CEO of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. “During the season we witnessed amazing achievements and excellence on and off the court and this year’s winners stood out as the stars of the 2008 season. I congratulate these players for their efforts and contributions in making women’s tennis as exciting and popular as it’s ever been.”

“The stars of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour continue to shine both on and off the court, and the year 2008 proved again why women’s tennis has never been more popular,” said Aldo Liguori, CVP and Global Head of Communications & PR. “Sony Ericsson is proud to be associated with world-class athletes who represent the best of sport.”

The winners of the annual player awards for Player of the Year, Doubles Team of the Year, Most Improved Player of the Year and Comeback Player of the Year are determined by the global tennis media, with Sony Ericsson WTA Tour players themselves selecting Tournaments of the Year, Sportsmanship and Player Service award.

Additionally, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour players voted on their favorite tournaments and chose the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart as their favorite Premier event and The Commonwealth Bank Tournament in Bali as their favorite International event.

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2008 Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Player Awards:

- Player of the Year – Serena Williams
- Doubles Team of the Year – Cara Black and Liezel Huber
- Most Improved Player – Dinara Safina
- Comeback Player of the Year – Zheng Jie
- Newcomer of the Year – Caroline Wozniacki
- Humanitarian of the Year – Ana Ivanovic
- Karen Krantzcke Sportsmanship Award – Elena Dementieva
- Player Service Award – Liezel Huber
- Favorite Premier Tournament – Porsche Tennis Grand Prix (Stuttgart)
- Favorite International Tournament – The Commonwealth Tennis Tournament (Bali)

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