



News Release

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WTA'S SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY QUADRUPLES NUMBER OF FANS IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS

- 23 Million fans for the WTA and its players on social media
- Maria Sharapova most popular on Facebook with more than 5.3 million fans
- Serena Williams leads Twitter following with 2.1 million fans

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM – The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) announced today that the social media community of the WTA and its players has surpassed 23 million fans, more than quadrupling in size over the past 18 months. The growth in social media fans of the sport has been highlighted by strong growth in the WTA's Facebook page; significant increases in the social media fan bases of WTA players; and enormous gains across social media channels in China.

"Fans love social media and they really connect with women's tennis through it. We like it because it establishes a deeper engagement with our fans. It also drives the growth of our player, tournament and sponsor businesses, and is a strategic priority for the WTA. This digital engagement will continue to become more and more important as we seek to grow our sport's popularity," said Stacey Allaster, Chairman and CEO of the WTA.

The increased popularity of the WTA and its stars in the social media space is in part a by-product of women's tennis being one of the most global sports in the world. Earlier this year, the ten players in the World Top 10 Rankings hailed from ten different nations.

The WTA's remarkable fan growth has been achieved by the sport working closely with the players, sponsors and tournaments on creating an entire ecosystem of new destinations for tennis fans in social media. In addition to news, updates, photos, and videos, the WTA uses social media for geo-targeted messages and unique content, promoting ticket sales and alerting fans whenever their favorite player's match is on TV.

Additionally, the WTA's new global advertising campaign "Strong is Beautiful" has driven online interest in women's tennis, with the TV spots viewed on YouTube close to 1.8 million times. Earlier this year, the WTA partnered with its lead global sponsor Sony Ericsson for a tennis-themed online TV show series "Xperia Hot Shots" which has since grown close to 819,000 Facebook fans and achieved 3 million YouTube views in a matter of months.

Maria Sharapova, three-time Grand Slam Champion and listed by *Forbes* as the most marketable female athlete on the planet, leads the WTA player Facebook fan count with 5.3 million followers, boosting the number by 250,000 new fans every month. On Twitter Serena Williams is number one among WTA players, with a following of more than 2.1 million fans.

A trailblazer for women's tennis in China, French Open Champion Li Na, leads the WTA's Chinese social media fan base with 2.7 million fans on Sina Weibo. While women's tennis was rapidly growing in popularity in China even before Li Na became the first Chinese player in history to win a Grand Slam earlier this summer, the Chinese star has given the sport an extra push in penetrating the largest Internet market on the planet. Close to 420 million people in China already use the Internet, giving the WTA unprecedented potential to connect with current and future fans of the sport. In China, the WTA has partnered with such national social media companies as Sina Weibo, Renren, Baidu and QQ, the outcome of which has resulted in

The WTA is the global leader in women's professional sport with more than 2,400 players representing 99 nations competing for more than \$90 million in prize money at the WTA's 53 events and four Grand Slams in 33 countries. More than 5 million people attended women's tennis events in 2010 with tens of millions more watching on television and digital channels around the world. The WTA competitive season concludes with the WTA Championships in Istanbul, Turkey from October 25-30, and the Commonwealth Bank Tournament of Champions in Bali, Indonesia, from November 3-6. Further information on the WTA can be found on www.wtatennis.com

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a series of social media channels for local fans to connect with their favorite tennis players in Chinese. Now counting a combined 10 million social media fans in China, WTA and its players are in a prime position to promote women's tennis and attract new sponsors interested in reaching Chinese audiences.

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