



Saturday, January 28, 2012

VICTORIA AZARENKA CAPTURES WTA WORLD NO.1 RANKING

22-year-old becomes first Belarusian to hold top singles ranking

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA – Following her maiden Grand Slam victory in today's Australian Open singles final, Victoria Azarenka will become the WTA World No.1 when the new rankings are released on Monday, January 30, 2012.

WTA's World No.1 ranking was contested by six different players at the start of the Australian Open, including Azarenka and her singles final opponent, Russia's Maria Sharapova. By defeating Sharapova, Azarenka won her first Grand Slam title while clinching the top ranking for the first time in her career. Azarenka is just the third player to make the No.1 debut directly off the back of her first Grand Slam singles title, after Martina Navratilova at Wimbledon in 1978 and Ana Ivanovic at Roland Garros in 2008.

The 22-year-old is the 21st woman to hold the No.1 singles ranking and the first Belarusian to do so. Countrywoman Natasha Zvereva held the No.1 doubles ranking for 124 weeks between 1991 and 1999, and rose as high as No.5 in singles. Azarenka surpasses current No.1 Caroline Wozniacki, who has held the top ranking for 67 of the last 68 weeks since first capturing it on October 11, 2010.

"I couldn't be happier. I've been loving coming to Australia since I was a junior and I've had an amazing month and this is a dream come true," said Azarenka.

"Congratulations to Victoria on reaching the pinnacle of her career and becoming WTA's newest World No.1. It has been great to watch Vika grow as a player over the last few years and I am thrilled that she has achieved this milestone at such a young age," said Stacey Allaster, Chairman and CEO of the WTA.

Azarenka enjoyed a breakthrough year in 2011, compiling a 55-17 win-loss record. She won titles at the Sony Ericsson Open (Miami), Andalucia Tennis Experience (Marbella) and BGL BNP Paribas Luxembourg Open, and finished runner-up at the TEB BNP Paribas WTA Championships (Istanbul) and Mutua Madrid Open (Madrid) when she lost both finals to Petra Kvitova. She also achieved her career-first Grand Slam semifinal appearance at Wimbledon and won two doubles titles. Her ranking improved from No.10 at the start of the year, to No.3 by the season's end, which at the time was the highest ranking achieved by a Belarusian.

Azarenka began 2012 in fine form, defeating three Top 10 players in succession en route to her 9th career singles title at the Apia International Sydney. She remains undefeated so far this year with a 12-0 record and her Australian Open victory today makes her the 41st player in the Open Era to win a Grand Slam singles title.

WEEKS AT WORLD NO.1

PLAYER	WEEKS AT No.1	DATE REACHED No.1
Steffi Graf (GER)	377	August 17, 1987
Martina Navratilova (USA)	332	July 10, 1978
Chris Evert (USA)	260	November 3, 1975
Martina Hingis (SUI)	209	March 31, 1997
Monica Seles (USA)	178	March 11, 1991
Serena Williams (USA)	123	July 8, 2002
Justine Henin (BEL)	117	October 20, 2003

The WTA is the global leader in women's professional sport with more than 2,500 players representing 92 nations competing for a record \$96 million in prize money at the WTA's 53 events and four Grand Slams in 32 countries. More than 5.2 million people attended women's tennis events in 2011 with millions more watching on television and digital channels around the world. The 2012 WTA competitive season concludes with the TEB BNP Paribas WTA Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, October 23-28, and the Tournament of Champions in Sofia, Bulgaria, October 30-November 3. Further information on the WTA can be found on www.wtatennis.com.

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Lindsay Davenport (USA)	98	October 12, 1998
Caroline Wozniacki (DEN)	67	October 11, 2010
Amélie Mauresmo (FRA)	39	September 13, 2004
Dinara Safina (RUS)	26	April 20, 2009
Tracy Austin (USA)	21	April 7, 1980
Kim Clijsters (BEL)	20	August 11, 2003
Jelena Jankovic (SRB)	18	August 11, 2008
Jennifer Capriati (USA)	17	October 15, 2001
Maria Sharapova (RUS)	17	August 22, 2005
Ana Ivanovic (SRB)	12	June 9, 2008
Arantxa Sánchez-Vicario (ESP)	12	February 6, 1995
Venus Williams (USA)	11	February 25, 2002
Evonne Goolagong Cawley(AUS)	2	April 26, 1976
Victoria Azarenka (BLR)	1*	January 30, 2012

**including week of January 30, 2012*

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