

Leander Paes, Vania King Capture World TeamTennis MVP Honors

Russell and Dekmeijere Named Top Rookies and de Jager is Coach of the Year

NEW YORK, N.Y. (July 24, 2009) – Leander Paes of the Washington Kastles, and the Springfield Lasers' Vania King were named the 2009 Male and Female MVPs of the Advanta World TeamTennis Pro League, officials announced today.

WTT also announced that Mike Russell of the Kansas City Explorers, and Liga Dekmeijere of the St. Louis Aces picked up the WTT Rookie of the Year honors and Springfield Lasers coach John-Laffnie de Jager was named the 2009 WTT Coach of the Year.

Paes finished atop the mixed doubles standings, winning 56 mixed doubles games and posting a 66.7% winning percentage in his mixed doubles matches. Paes helped propel his Washington Kastles over the Boston Lobsters to clinch a spot in the Advanta WTT Eastern Conference Championship on July 24 against the New York Sportimes.

"I am honored to have been named the World TeamTennis Male MVP for 2009," said Paes. "I want to thank our team's owner, Mark Ein, for all of his support. I want to thank our head coach, Murphy Jensen, for his counsel and the way he's brought our team together. Most of all, I want to thank my teammates, without whom I could not have earned this great honor. I also want to thank Billie Jean King. It's been a great season playing in front of our fans in Washington, and I couldn't have asked for a better first experience playing World TeamTennis."

King was the League's best overall singles player in 2009, capturing 61 women's singles games and 40 women's doubles games, for a total 65% winning percentage of her matches this season. This is the first WTT MVP award for both Paes and King.

"I'm really excited and honored to win the league's Female MVP Award," said King. "Coming into the season, I didn't really know what to expect with this being my first year in World TeamTennis. However, it's been really exciting getting to compete with current and former Top 10 women's players and I've loved the team aspect of it. All in all, WTT has been a great experience and is something that I hope to continue playing in the future as well."

In her first year with the St. Louis Aces, Dekmeijere finished the regular season with a strong performance, winning 52 games in women's doubles, which lead the Aces' to the fourth best record in women's doubles.

"I was very excited to play WTT in the first place, so to win Rookie of the Year really means a lot to me," said Dekmeijere. "I wasn't expecting this, it's a very nice surprise."

Big thanks to everybody involved with the St. Louis Aces, especially Dan Apted, Dani Apted-Schlottman and our fantastic squad. Special thanks to Tripp Phillips, because without Tripp on the team I would not get this award. I had a blast playing for the Aces and I hope to be back there next year."

Playing his first season with the Kansas City Explorers, Russell finished second in men's singles winning 36 games and delivering a 61% winning percentage. He coupled this with a strong men's doubles performance leading the Explorers to a second place finish with a record of 60-50 with doubles partner Dusan Vemic and the help of Bob and Mike Bryan.

"World TeamTennis is one of the most fun, satisfying tennis experiences I have ever had," said Russell. "The boisterous fans, rocking music, on-court coaching, pressure packed situations, and team camaraderie all contributed to an enjoyable season. I can't wait to play next year!!" In his third season at the helm of the Springfield Lasers, de Jager led the team to the top seed in the Advanta WTT Western Conference Championship and a WTT-best 12-2 regular season record. This is the second time de Jager has earned Coach of the Year honors as he earned the award in 2007, his first season as coach of the Lasers.

"It's a great honor but it can't happen if we don't have a great team and this Lasers group has been unbelievable," said de Jager. "World TeamTennis has one of the best formats in all of tennis. The game will take a step up and we will have even more participation and crowd support as WTT's format is further implemented on both the ATP and WTA Tours."

The 2009 Advanta WTT Pro League season concludes this weekend with the Advanta WTT Finals on July 26 in Washington, D.C. The finals will feature the winners of the Advanta WTT Conference Championship matches set for Thursday, July 24. The Springfield Lasers and the Newport Beach Breakers are battling for the Western Conference title in Springfield, Mo., while the Washington Kastles and the New York Sportimes are facing off in the nation's capital for the Eastern Conference crown.

For more information, visit WTT.com.

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