

Friday, September 22, 2006

ZHENG JIE & YAN ZI QUALIFY FOR SONY ERICSSON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Australian Open & Wimbledon doubles champions create history by becoming the first Chinese players to qualify for the Tour's crown-jewel season-ending, \$3-million event

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, USA – Zheng Jie and Yan Zi are the second team to qualify for the doubles event at the season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships, set to take place at Madrid Arena in the Spanish capital, November 7-12. In doing so, they are the first Chinese players in history to qualify for the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour's year-end championships.

The duo, two-time Grand Slam champions and winners of four other doubles titles this year, are currently in second place in the Race to the Sony Ericsson Championships with 2946 points. Having first played together as a team in 2000, Yan and Zheng picked up numerous titles on the ITF Women's Circuit, winning their first Sony Ericsson WTA Tour doubles titles last year. This year, they have a 46-11 match record and are currently ranked Nos.3 (Zheng) and 4 (Yan) on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Doubles Rankings.

"We are really excited to qualify for our first Sony Ericsson Championships," said Zheng. "This has been a special year for us as a team and we are looking forward to competing against the very best women's doubles teams in Madrid for the Championships title and the year-end No.1 doubles ranking."

"Being in Madrid will be a great moment for Chinese tennis and for us as a team," added Yan. "Playing in the Championships is a real honor for players and we hope to make the best of the opportunity."

"Zheng and Yan have had a truly impressive season. Winning the 2006 Australian and Wimbledon doubles titles has simply underlined their ability and rightly makes them one of the favourites to raise the Sony Ericsson Championships crown in November," said Larry Scott, CEO of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. "Already the doubles and singles line ups for the Sony Ericsson Championships are looking exceptionally strong; it is going to be a fantastic, world class week of tennis."

"The 2006 Sony Ericsson Championships is set for a week of exceptional tennis. As well as a world class singles line up, this year's Championships will feature the world's premier doubles teams from around the world," said Dee Dutta, CVP and Head of Marketing at Sony Ericsson. "Sony Ericsson is delighted to be sponsoring the premier event of women's tennis and intend to help make it a memorable November in Madrid with a host of innovations, parties and events as well as the very best in international tennis."

The Sony Ericsson Championships will gather the Top 8 singles players and Top 4 doubles teams from the regular 2006 Sony Ericsson WTA Tour season as they battle it out for the season-ending titles and a share of the \$3-million prize purse. The defending champions are Amélie Mauresmo (singles) and Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur (doubles).

Roland Garros champions Raymond and Stosur – who were announced as the first doubles qualifiers last week – currently lead the Doubles Race with 3448 points, with Australian Open and Wimbledon champions Yan Zi and Zheng Jie currently in second place (2946). The current third- and fourth-placed teams are Cara Black and Rennae Stubbs with 2004 points and Daniela Hantuchova and Ai Sugiyama (1746).

###

MEDIA CONTACT: Andrew Walker, Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, +1.727.871.5666, awalker@wtatour.com

The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is the world's largest premier professional sport for women with more than 1,300 players representing 75 nations competing for \$60 million in prize money at the Tour's 62 events in 35 countries. More than 4.5 million people attended women's tennis events in 2005 with millions more watching events on television networks around the world. The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour season concludes with the Sony Ericsson Championships at Madrid Arena in Madrid, Spain, November 7-12, 2006. Further information on the Tour can be found on the Internet at www.sonyericssonwtatour.com.