



## PRESS RELEASE

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# HENIN-HARDENNE, MAURESMO QUALIFY FOR SONY ERICSSON CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Victors at year's first three Grand Slams are first to reach Tour's crown-jewel season ending \$3 million event as battle for Sony Ericsson WTA Tour World No.1 Heats Up**

**ST. PETERSBURG, Florida** – Justine Henin-Hardenne and Amélie Mauresmo, the two standout players of the 2006 season thus far, are the first women to qualify for the singles event at the season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships, set to take place at Madrid Arena in the Spanish capital, November 7-12.

The Belgian and Frenchwoman are currently in first and second place respectively in the Race to the Sony Ericsson Championships, having shared between them the first three Grand Slam events of 2006, won eight singles titles (four each) and amassed \$5 million in prize money. Henin-Hardenne has accrued 2786 Race points, while Mauresmo has earned 2372, more than 300 points clear of surging third-placed Maria Sharapova (2027), recent winner of the Acura Classic in San Diego.

“Making it to the Sony Ericsson Championships is the dream of every player,” said Henin-Hardenne. “I am so excited that our season-ending event is back in Europe and in such a great sporting city as Madrid. I can't think of a better place for the battle for the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour No. 1 ranking to be decided.”

“Winning the Sony Ericsson Championships in 2005 was really a turning point in my career,” said Mauresmo. “That moment was so special for me, so making it back again is really thrilling. I know the competition is going to be as tough as ever, and we are all looking forward to showing Spanish tennis fans the best of women's tennis.”

“It is fitting that the two players who have dominated 2006 are the first to qualify for the Sony Ericsson Championships,” said Larry Scott, CEO of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. “Justine and Amelie are great champions on and off the court. The 2006 Sony Ericsson Championships is shaping up to have a stellar field.”

“Sony Ericsson is committed to making the 2006 Sony Ericsson Championships the most fan interactive, innovative and entertaining season-ending event that women's tennis has ever witnessed,” said Dee Dutta, CVP and Head of Marketing at Sony Ericsson. “Sony Ericsson is proud to sponsor the event that brings the best of the best together, and to use the Sony Ericsson Championships as a platform for our technology and brand.”

“I am thrilled to know that both Amelie and Justine have already qualified for the Sony Ericsson Championships in Madrid,” said Spanish tennis legend and Sony Ericsson Championships tournament director Manolo Santana. “Amelie and Justine have had great seasons so far and they really deserve to be in Madrid. Having the best eight players of the year in Madrid is a great opportunity for tennis fans in Spain and in Europe. I am sure that the coming weeks will reveal some more stars of the Tour who will be joining these two players in Madrid.”

Henin-Hardenne is the first woman since Martina Hingis in 1997 to reach the finals of the Australian Open, Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same season. In June, the 24-year-old collected her third Roland Garros title, defeating Svetlana Kuznetsova in the final. She has also won titles at Sydney, Dubai and Eastbourne and finished runner-up at the Australian Open, Berlin and most recently at Wimbledon, putting together an impressive 44-6 record for the season. The former world No.1 carried a season-best 17-match win streak into the Wimbledon final.

World No.1 and reigning Sony Ericsson Championships titleholder Mauresmo, the woman who beat Henin-Hardenne in both the Australian Open and Wimbledon finals, had a tremendous start to 2006, winning three of her first four events, including her first major in Melbourne (also Paris [Indoors] and Antwerp, compiling a 16-match win streak). After a lean couple of months thereafter – 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](http://www.sonyericssonwtatour.com).



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reaching one final in her next six events – Mauresmo rebounded to become the first Frenchwoman in 81 years to win the Wimbledon ladies' singles title.

Three days after her 27th birthday, Mauresmo had even more cause for celebration, coming from behind to beat Henin-Hardenne in a three-set Wimbledon final to become the 16th different champion at the All-England Club in the Open Era. With a 37-8 record for 2006, Mauresmo's 82.2% win-loss rate is second only to Henin-Hardenne's 88%.

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 Mauresmo (singles) and Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur (doubles).

Roland Garros champions Raymond and Stosur currently lead the Doubles Race with 2997 points, with Australian Open and Wimbledon champions Yan Zi and Zheng Jie not far behind. The Chinese pair is more than 800 points clear of the third-placed team of Cara Black and Rennae Stubbs.

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