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News Release

For Immediate Release

Lasers add two new players in WTT Roster Draft

The Mylan World TeamTennis (WTT) Pro League completed its 39th Season Roster Draft today in Indian Wells, Calif.

The Springfield Lasers protected 2013 players Alisa Kleybanova and Jean-Julien Rojer in the draft, and added Anna-Lena Groenefeld and Michael Russell to the team. The Lasers Marquee player, American tennis star James Blake, was drafted in February. Coach John-Laffnie (JL) de Jager returns for his eighth season with the Lasers.

Springfield Lasers owner representative Bob Belote, Coach JL de Jager and Paul Nahon, Springfield Lasers Director of Sales, made up the Lasers draft delegation.

"The Lasers are extremely pleased with this year's draft results," said Belote. "Given the quality of the teams playing World TeamTennis this year, we felt we need to make a few moves to remain competitive at that high of a level. It was nice to start the draft knowing we had Alisa Kleybanova and Jean-Julien Rojer as protected players. Combined with our marquee player, James Blake, we have a very dynamic Lasers team heading into the 2014 season. I want to thank (Lasers owner) John Cooper for his ongoing support of the team."

Drafted to the team today:

1st Round Pick (Roster Draft- protected): Alisa Kleybanova – Returning for a second season in Springfield after leading the Lasers to the 2013 Western Conference Championship. Kleybanova, 24, from Moscow, Russia, also was named 2013 WTT Female Rookie of the Year. Her Mylan WTT debut with the Lasers came just months after returning to pro tennis after a two-year battle with Hodgkin's lymphoma. In the last 12 months, Kleybanova has climbed from No. 549 to No. 142, and she is well on her way to reclaiming her career-high No. 10 singles and No. 20 doubles rankings, both set in February 2011. Kleybanova has two singles and five doubles titles. She plays Sloane Stevens tonight in the 4th Round of the BNP Paribas Open, at Indian Wells.

1st Round Pick (Roster Draft): Anna-Lena Groenefeld – Now playing her fourth season of Mylan WTT, most recently with the New York Sportimes. Groenefeld, 28, from Nordhorn, Germany, won mixed doubles at Wimbledon in 2009. She has a 14 doubles titles and a singles title, with a career high ranking of No. 14 in singles and No. 7 in doubles, both in 2006. She has played doubles exclusively since 2012 and is currently ranked No. 14. She has been a member of the German Fed Cup team since 2004. "Anna-Lena is known for a big, hard-hitting game," said Belote. "She and Alisa together will be an imposing doubles team." Interestingly, Groenefeld beat Jean-Julien Rojer in mixed doubles earlier this year at the Australian Open.

2nd Round Pick (Roster Draft- protected): Jean-Julien Rojer – Returning for a second season in Springfield after leading the Lasers to the 2013 Western Conference Championship. Rojer, 32, from Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, earned the WTT Male MVP in 2013 and was also 2011 Male Rookie of the Year, after playing his first WTT with the St. Louis Aces. Rojer reached his career-high doubles ranking of No. 6 in May 2013, just before making it to the mixed doubles semifinals at Wimbledon. He holds 10 doubles titles and is currently ranked No. 18.

3rd Round Pick (Roster Draft): Michael Russell – Returning to WTT for the first time since 2009, when he was named WTT Male Rookie of the Year while playing with former Lasers rivals, the Kansas City Explorers. Russell, 35, from Detroit, Mi., was the oldest American to finish 2013 in the ATP Top 100 for the fifth year in a row. He is currently ranked No. 107 in singles, following a career high No. 60 in 2007. "He is known for being an incredible fighter on court and a nice guy off court," said Belote. "We've admired him from afar and it's exciting to know he's playing for the Lasers this year."

The 2014 WTT season runs for three weeks in July, with the Springfield Lasers playing home matches at Mediacom Tennis Stadium at Cooper Tennis Complex, 2331 E. Pythian, Springfield. A full schedule will be available in a few weeks, including two home matches with James Blake and one home match with former Laser Andy Roddick, who now plays for the Austin Aces. Season tickets for the Springfield Lasers are available now at 417-837-5800, with individual tickets available in May.

For more information about the Springfield Lasers, visit springfieldlasers.com, or look for Springfield Lasers on Facebook or @SpringLasers on Twitter. For media inquiries, call Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Public Information Administrator for the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, at 417-874-2176 or 417-224-5510.

For more information on Mylan WTT, visit wtt.com.