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News Release

For Immediate Release

Springfield Lasers draft James Blake as marquee player

The Springfield Lasers have drafted American tennis star James Blake in today's Mylan World TeamTennis 2014 Marquee Player Draft.

Blake, 34, reached a career-high ATP ranking of No. 4 in 2006, placing him just behind Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Nikolay Davydenko. He has earned 10 singles titles and seven doubles titles. Blake returns to the court after less than six months of retirement, announced last August after the US Open. Now returning for his eighth season of WTT, Blake was acquired by the Lasers in a pre-draft trade with the Boston Lobsters. Blake will play in two Springfield Lasers home matches. Dates for the July 6-27 Mylan WTT season will be announced in March.

Blake replaces former Lasers marquee player Andy Roddick, who left the Lasers in November to join the new Austin Aces WTT franchise in his hometown of Austin, Tx. As part of today's marquee draft, Roddick plans a return trip to Springfield with his new team during the upcoming season.

"It's exciting to have two American tennis legends coming to Springfield for this year's Lasers season," said John Cooper, Springfield Lasers founder. "We welcome James Blake as the newest member to our Springfield Lasers team. And bringing Andy Roddick back to town will be a real treat for our fans!"

Blake is known for his powerful forehand, his speed on the court and his incredible comeback after breaking his neck in May 2004, when he tripped and fell headfirst into a metal net post. During the next two years, his ranking plummeted from No. 39 to No. 210, then rebounded to No. 4. His career includes wins against Andre Agassi (ATP Tour, 2003), Rafael Nadal (US Open, 2005), Roger Federer (US Open, 2006) and Andy Roddick (RCA Championships, Stella Artois Championships and International Series, 2006).

Blake's and Roddick's careers have been intertwined since the early 2000's. They were the top two American tennis players for most of the decade. Both were members of the Davis Cup USA team, including 2007, USA's most recent Davis Cup championship, when Blake, Roddick and Bob and Mike Bryan beat Russia in the World Group finals. Blake and Roddick partnered in doubles for several tournaments on the ATP tour. They remain friends and golfing buddies, playing together at AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am just this previous weekend.

Blake was described in 2005 by the New York Times magazine as having an "í unusual combination of H's ô Harvard, Harlem (...), handsome and humble." He is co-author of "Breaking Back: How I Lost Everything and Won Back My Life," which reached No. 15 on New York Times Best Seller list. He is the founder of the James Blake Foundation, which has raised



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h since 2008. He was also named People magazine's
d among the magazine's Single & Sexy Men of 2008.

The 2014 season three brings new franchises to the eight-team Mylan WTT league: the Austin Aces, formerly the Orange County Breakers; the San Diego Aviators, formerly New York Sportimes; and the Las Vegas Neon, formerly the Sacramento Capitals. The multiple relocations mean that for the first time, the Springfield Lasers will appear in the league's Eastern Conference.

The Lasers were the 2013 WTT Western Conference Champions. The Lasers will draft their remaining players during the March 11 WTT roster draft.

Season tickets for the Springfield Lasers go on sale in March, 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. Today's Mylan WTT news release is at: www.wtt.com/page.aspx?article_id=4295