

WTA STORYLINES - ROLAND-GARROS

Setting The Scene

Tournament	Champion	Runner-Up
Credit One Charleston Open	Jessica Pegula (USA)	Yuliia Starodubtseva (UKR)
Copa Colsanitas Colsubsidio (Bogota)	Marie Bouzkova (CZE)	Panna Udvardy (HUN)
Upper Austria Ladies Linz	Mirra Andreeva	Anastasia Potapova (AUT)
Porsche Tennis Grand Prix (Stuttgart)	Elena Rybakina (KAZ)	Karolina Muchova (CZE)
Open Capfinances Rouen Metropole	Marta Kostyuk (UKR)	Veronika Podrez (UKR)
Mutua Madrid Open	Marta Kostyuk (UKR)	Mirra Andreeva
Internazionali BNL d'Italia (Rome)	Elina Svitolina (UKR)	Coco Gauff (USA)
Internationaux De Strasbourg presented by MAMMOTION	Emma Navarro (USA)	Victoria Mboko (CAN)
Grand Prix Son Altesse Royale La Princesse Lalla Meryem (Rabat)	Petra Marcinko (CRO)	Anhelina Kalinina (UKR)

Tribute to Howard Fendrich

- The WTA was deeply saddened by the sudden passing of [veteran tennis writer Howard Fendrich](#) (Associated Press) following a short health battle
- His classic opening before a question of "soooo, I'm curious..." always set a comfortable tone of kindness in interviews
- Jessica Pegula was one of many voices offering tributes, saying: "Howard was one of the most respected journalists in our sport and someone players trusted because he always approached his work with honesty, professionalism and fairness."

Off-Court Storylines

- To mark **Mother's Day** in France during Roland-Garros, 60+ WTA **Players and Legends** across generations have united behind a powerful public **open letter elevating maternal health as a global priority**, shaped by their own experiences as mothers, daughters, and elite competitors. The letter, backed by the [WTA Foundation's Global Women's Health Fund](#), affirms a shared belief that every mother deserves access to the **care and support** needed for a healthy pregnancy. In partnership with **UNICEF**, the WTA Foundation's Global Women's Health expands access to essential maternal health and nutrition resources for women and babies worldwide and has already helped support 1.5 million women globally. The full list of signatories will be debuted on **May 31st, Mother's Day in France**. For advance access to the letter, the full signatory list, and interviews during Roland-Garros, please contact Jessica Walton at jwalton@wtatennis.com
- **Billie Jean King**, the WTA's iconic founder, recently celebrated her **graduation** from California State University, Los Angeles with a **Bachelor of Arts in History degree**. King's journey to graduation started in 1961, when she first enrolled in Cal State, but after 1964 her blossoming tennis career pulled her away from her studies. More than **60 years later**, having completed the outstanding final year of work required to graduate, she **delivered the commencement** address for her fellow Class of 2026 students at the Shrine Auditorium. [Click here to watch](#)

- The WTA debuted its all-new content series this month called **Style Unpacked**, which pairs WTA players with a **local fashion insider** for key off-court moments and showcases how each athlete engages with fashion as an extension of her identity. This first edition, filmed during the Madrid Open, features **Camila Osorio** prepping for the 2026 Laureus Sports Awards alongside Madrid-based stylist Antonia Payeras. [Click here to watch Style Unpacked](#)
- Prior to the start of the grass court swing, the **LTA (UK)** has **voluntarily increased their prize money** purse for their events at [Queen’s and Eastbourne](#). There will be **\$1,915,000** in prize money at Queen’s – the second most for a WTA 500 event – and **\$499,000** on offer at Eastbourne, the **most out of all WTA 250 tournaments**. This is the latest step towards meeting the WTA's goal for equal prize money at comparative women's and men's events across the Tour by 2029
- **Serena** and **Venus Williams** along with **Naomi Osaka** dazzled at the 2026 **Met Gala** in May with their stunning outfits inspired by art and culture. [Click here](#) to read more
- A new **Netflix documentary, Chris & Martina: The Final Set**, will have its world premiere at New York’s Tribeca Festival on June 10. Featuring never before seen interviews and footage, the film brings tells the story of the **intense rivalry** which pushed both towards the ultimate goal of being the number one tennis player in the world

Partnerships / Commercial

- On May 7 **Accenture** was announced as the **Official Business and Technology Consulting Partner** of the WTA. The **multi-year partnership** will be focused on **enhancing the player experience** and fuse Accenture’s leadership in technology and AI enablement with the WTA’s commitment to excellence as a modern, athlete-first governing body

Cirstea Makes Top 20 Debut

- On May 18 **Sorana Cirstea**, 36, achieved a new milestone in her evergreen career by reaching the Top 20 for the first time, in doing so becoming the oldest player to make their **Top 20 debut** in WTA Rankings history
- The Romanian achieved the feat by reaching the **semifinals in Rome**, scoring her first ever victory over the **reigning WTA World No.1 player** by defeating Aryna Sabalenka in the third-round. [Click here](#) to read more about Cirstea’s rise

WTA Legends Milestones

- **10 years** since **Garbiñe Muguruza** won her first Grand Slam title at **2016 Roland Garros**
- **15 years** since **Li Na** won first her **FIRST** Grand Slam title at 2011 Roland Garros, becoming the first major singles champion **born in Asia**
- **25 years** since **Jennifer Capriati** won her second Grand Slam title at 2001 Roland Garros overcoming Kim Clijsters 12-10 in final set
- **40 years** since **Chris Evert** defeated Martina Navratilova to win her 18th and final Grand Slam title at 1986 Roland Garros (and also a record 7th title in Paris)
- **50 years** since **Sue Barker** won her sole Grand Slam title at 1976 Roland Garros
- Former Top 60 player and commentator, **Sophie Amiach**, will be on site in Paris signing copies of her innovative new instructional book, **Tennis Smart & Simple**. Intended both for teaching professionals and players who want to improve independently, the book integrates

QR codes, directing readers to 29 instructional videos. Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova have given the book their seal of approval

Race to the WTA Finals

- **Elina Svitolina** has been this clay swing's biggest riser on the PIF Race to the WTA Finals Leaderboard, and following her third Rome title sits at No.3. She has a **rich history** at the WTA Finals having been crowned champion in 2018 and also finished as runner-up in 2019
- Her **fairytale run** to the Rome title - an event she has now won three times - saw her defeat **three Top 5 players in the WTA Rankings in a row** and now only trails **Elena Rybakina** and **Aryna Sabalenka** on the Leaderboard in first and second place respectively
- In doubles, Rome semifinalists **Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend** have ascended to the **No.1 position** on the PIF Race to the WTA Finals Leaderboard for the first time this season. The Czech-USA duo have overtaken **Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic** at the summit by the tightest of margins, with **less than 100 points** separating the two teams

WTA 125 Snapshot

- Two former **Grand Slam champions** enjoyed strong performances on clay at two WTA 125 events recently. 2021 Roland-Garros and 2024 Wimbledon champion **Barbora Krejčíková** reached the final at the **Parma Ladies Open**, while 2025 Australian Open winner **Madison Keys** finished as runner-up at the **Trophée Clarins** in **Paris**