



ABILENE

*Convention and Visitors Bureau
Sports Alliance*

1101 North 1st ■ Abilene, Texas 79601
325-676-2556 ■ 800-727-7704 ■ Fax: 325-676-1630
www.abilenevisitors.com

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kelly Thompson, Communications Director

325-676-2556, kelly@abilenevisitors.com

Taylor Jones, U.S. Tennis Association-Texas, Director of Marketing & Communication
or (512) 443-1334 X 219 tjones@texas.usta.com

Best junior tennis players to slam Abilene this June

ABILENE, Texas – Abilene will swing with the state’s best youth tennis players June 9-17 when the Abilene Tennis Association partners with USTA- Texas to host the newly christened Texas Slam Tennis Championship, a tournament where the state’s top junior players will vvy for bragging rights to Texas’s top tennis titles.

The ACVB estimates 2700 people will visit Abilene during the nine-day event, including 1200 players, fans, families, coaches and officials. Matches will take place at 100 tennis courts throughout the city, including middle and high schools, city parks and university courts. Championship Finals will take place June 16-17 at Abilene Christian University and Rose Park. The public is invited to watch these future college and professional players at courts throughout the city at no charge.

Abilene faced off with other Texas communities to win the right to host the tournament, the nation’s largest, through 2019. The city first hosted the group last summer.

”This is one of Abilene’s largest events in terms of economic impact” said Debi Schultz, ACVB Sales Director. ”Those nine days will bring \$1.8 million into our city -- \$5.5 million over the three- year contract.”

Throughout the tournament’s more than 60-year history, the series of matches was dubbed the ”Grand Slam Championship.” That has changed. This year, the Abilene Tennis Association and USTA-Texas are proud to roll out a new logo and a title fitting for our state: The Texas Slam.

What’s more, the ATA has demonstrated a tournament first: They’ve signed up to be the event’s title sponsor.

”We wanted to underscore our strong support for hosting the Texas Slam in Abilene,” said ATA President Kevin Crousen. ”Other cities are lining up to snatch this tournament when our contract is up, but we want to enjoy the home court advantage. We value the economic impact, but hosting this tournament gives our local up-and-coming players a chance to watch competitive tennis in top form. It gets everyone excited about tennis. That’s a win-win.”

Nearly \$40,000 already has been raised from individuals and businesses to underwrite the tournament.

The ATA is signing up volunteers, event sponsors and businesses who want to cater to the teeming throngs when they hit town.

Volunteers will be needed to help with registration and fan gear vendor booths, as well as serving as go-fers running supplies from campus to campus. Folks who sign up for a shift, a full day or the entire event will get a keepsake Texas Slam T-shirt, as well as the chance to watch some great games.

The ACVB is hoping Abilene will serve with love that week – showing West Texas hospitality to the group.

”We’ll be distributing welcome buttons for frontline personnel to wear at key venues throughout town, putting up welcome signs, you name it,” Schultz said. ”We hope hotels and other businesses will join the effort. If you have a sign in front of your facility post ’Abilene loves Tennis’ or ’Welcome Texas Slam Players.’ It makes an impression.”

In coming weeks, the ATA will publish the tournament roster and schedule and share information about local players competing in the championships. Everyone can access how players advance in real time at www.ata-texas.com.

”Sweep off your front porch, put out the welcome mat, and get ready for a citywide party with the nation’s best youth tennis players,” Schultz said. ”When you’re a champion in Texas, you’re probably just the best -- period.”

To volunteer, contact Volunteer Committee Chair Susan Clark at skcintx@hotmail.com or 325-513-7233.

Sponsors can contact Bourdon Wooten at bwooten123@msn.com.

Restaurants that want to sponsor or offer a discount to players can contact Beverly Guthrie at bguthrie349@outlook.com or 325-668-9247.

ATA will host a player party at Rose Park the evening of Sunday, June 10, when USTA-Texas Executive Director Van Barry will present outstanding player and sportsmanship awards. That party is closed to the public but media is invited.

Located in the T & P Depot landmark downtown, the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau leverages local hotel tax into economic development. The ACVB’s tourism professionals harness the latest travel trends, research and strategies to bring group and leisure visitors to Abilene. Travelers to the Abilene MSA produced more than \$12.9 million in local receipts in 2017 bringing happy people to stay in local hotels, shop, dine, and enjoy sports, arts and attractions. Established as an affiliate of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce in 1970, the bureau has improved the quality of life and enhanced the Abilene visitor experience for nearly 50 years.