



THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS



# BILLIE JEAN KING *Cup*

BY > GAINBRIDGE



## AUS | BRA | POR

14-16 NOVEMBER 2025  
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**BJK Cup** BY GAINBRIDGE  
THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS

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Tennis Australia acknowledges the Muwinina people as the Traditional Custodians of Nipaluna (Hobart), the lands on which we work, rest and play on. We pay our respects to Muwininal Elders past, present and emerging.





# INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

► It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge Play-offs Group E in Hobart. We are looking forward to three days of great tennis here, with Australia, Brazil and Portugal all competing for a place in the 2026 Qualifiers.

The 2025 Play-offs are being played as seven groups of three nations on a round-robin basis as the last part of the transition from the previous format to the current format. This year's Finals, which were played in Shenzhen in September, were the first to be played as an eight-team event, mirroring the existing Davis Cup Final 8 format. Each Play-offs event is being held in one location over three days, with the host nation having choice of venue and surface.

The Billie Jean King Cup is the women's world cup of tennis. Founded in 1963, it has grown to become the largest international team competition in women's sport, with 138 nations competing this year.

Formerly known as the Fed Cup, this historic competition was renamed in honour of Billie Jean King in 2020 – a fitting tribute to an individual who, in addition to

being one of the game's all-time greats, has been a champion for equality and fought discrimination in all its forms throughout her life. It is the first time a major global team competition has been named after a woman, representing a landmark moment for sport.

This weekend, the teams competing in the Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs are bidding to reach the 2026 Qualifiers. The nation finishing in first place in each Play-off group will advance to the 2026 Qualifiers, where they will compete for a place at the 2026 Finals and a chance to battle for the famous trophy. The nations finishing in 2nd and 3rd place in each group will compete in one of the three regional Group 1 events (Americas, Asia/Oceania or Europe/Africa) next season. Traditional home-or-away ties will return in both the Qualifiers and Play-offs from 2026 onwards.

However, Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge goes well beyond the elite level of the competition. It is also the story of the 138 nations who took part across six continents in this global tournament that spans three regional levels beyond the Finals, Qualifiers and Play-offs. In

every match, players take pride in playing for something bigger than themselves, representing their country with the dream of their nation progressing from regional level all the way to Finals. Billie Jean King Cup is a vital tool for developing our sport in all these countries and delivering tennis for future generations.

I would like to pay tribute to all Billie Jean King Cup sponsors and partners, including title sponsor Gainbridge, with whom we began a six-year partnership in 2022. Through the partnership, women and men were paid equivalent prize money for competing at the Billie Jean King Cup and Davis Cup Finals in 2022, 2023, 2024 and this year. This was an important step towards achieving our ambition of closing the gender pay gap at all levels of the competition and part of the ITF's Advantage All strategy which supports gender equality throughout the sport.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Tennis Australia for their collaboration, and to acknowledge the work of everyone involved in organising this group event. Thank you also



to the players and captains who give so much to making the Billie Jean King Cup such a special competition throughout the year.

Enjoy the tennis!

**David Haggerty**  
President, ITF



# TENNIS AUSTRALIA

► Welcome to the Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs, where Australia hosts Brazil and Portugal in a bid to secure a place in the 2026 Qualifiers.

The world's largest annual international team competition in women's sport returns to Tasmania for the first time since 2014.

Hobart's picturesque Domain Tennis Centre is a familiar venue for many members of the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team – including our No.1 woman, Maya Joint, who launched her brilliant 2025 rise with a maiden WTA semifinal appearance at the Hobart International in January.

Our top women's players relish the chance to compete before home crowds, especially as the 2026 summer tennis events approach. They're supported this week by Nicole Pratt, who steps into the captain's role while Sam Stosur continues her maternity leave.

Tennis Australia remains dedicated to creating leadership opportunities for women and girls, both on and off the court, and events like this are a vital part of that commitment. None of it would be possible without the outstanding team behind the scenes – from Event Operations to our ballkids, volunteers and officials – and we thank each of

them for their dedication and hard work. We wish all teams the very best of luck in this tie and thank our passionate fans for their ongoing support.

**Jayne Hrdlicka**  
Chair, Tennis Australia



# PREMIER OF TASMANIA

► Welcome to our beautiful island state of Tasmania and to the Billie Jean King Cup.

It is with great pride that we host this prestigious international women's tennis event – a celebration of elite sport, national pride, and the power of women in sport. This year's competition brings together international teams from Brazil and Portugal, who will face off against our own Australian team right here in the heart of Hobart at the Domain Tennis Centre.

This marks the return of the Billie Jean King Cup to Hobart for the first time since 2014, when Australia triumphed over Russia in a memorable 4–0 victory in what was then known as the Fed Cup. That event was a

resounding success both on and off the court, with strong crowds and an electric atmosphere – and we look forward to recreating that excitement once again.

Over three thrilling days, we will witness world-class tennis as top athletes represent their nations. Australia has a proud history in this competition, having lifted the trophy seven times, and we'll be cheering on our team as they strive to secure a place in the 2026 Qualifiers.

Australia has a proud history in this competition, having lifted the trophy seven times, and we'll be cheering on our team as they strive to secure a place in the 2026 Qualifiers.

We warmly welcome the visiting teams and their supporters to Tasmania. Our

newly upgraded tennis facilities and passionate local crowd will ensure a memorable experience for players and fans alike.

While you're here, I encourage you to explore all that Tasmania has to offer – whether you're exploring our lively capital, indulging in award-winning food and wine, or discovering the stunning landscapes and cultural treasures across the island, Tasmania has something for everyone.

Enjoy your time in Tasmania, and best of luck to all teams!

**Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP**  
Premier of Tasmania





Alex de Minaur and  
Ajla Tomljanovic  
Tennis Superstars



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TEAM AUSTRALIA



# Maya MAKES HER MOVE

New Aussie No.1 Maya Joint will be the highest-ranked player at the Billie Jean King Cup Play-off ties in Hobart, a position she has grown used to in 2025. By JACKSON MANSELL



It will be a different story for Maya Joint when she arrives in Hobart for the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team's Play-offs against Brazil and Portugal on 14-16 November.

Joint was considered the hunter in her last visit to the Tasmanian capital. Ranked world No.118 in January when she received a wildcard into the Hobart International, the 19-year-old was the surprise packet of the field, advancing to the semifinals.

She picked up victories against Olga Danilovic, No.4 seed Magda Linette, and Sofia Kenin - all ranked in the top 100 at the time - to achieve her best result to date at a WTA event.

Ten months later, Joint will be the hunted at the Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs. In her second appearance for Australia, she enters as the highest-ranked player from all three countries

after making her top-40 debut in July.

"It's an honour to be selected again. I'm really excited to be able to play. It's in Hobart this time, which is really special," said Joint, who will be joined in the green-and-gold squad by Kimberly Birrell, Talia Gibson, Storm Hunter and Ellen Perez. "It was always a dream of mine to play for Australia."

"It was a big goal of mine to be selected again for the tie coming up in November, so I was working really hard all year to try and be selected again. I'm glad it paid off."

By peaking at world No.32 in late October, Joint continues her mammoth rise over the past 18 months. She commenced the 2024 season ranked 684th yet quickly emerged as one of the game's rising stars, and is now in a position to be seeded at Grand Slam events.

'IT WAS A UNANIMOUS DECISION [TO SELECT MAYA]. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO DEBATE THAT FOR VERY LONG.'

NICOLE PRATT

The teenager is beginning to adjust to her newfound position in the game, and bigger profile.

"It's definitely a lot different. I always like being the underdog and not having too much pressure, just being able to go out and have a free swing. That's definitely changed a lot over the last couple of months," Joint reflected.

"I think now in more matches, I'm the higher-ranked player or on paper I'm supposed to win, but I've been doing a lot of mental work on not thinking about that too much and just playing tennis, playing my game, having fun."

Joint has also turned heads by

upsetting three top-20 opponents in 2025. The first came against Donna Vekic at a WTA 500 tournament in Merida, Mexico, in February, before she overwhelmed Clara Tauson in the Seoul 500 quarterfinals and Diana Shnaider at the Beijing 1000 event.

Two WTA singles titles this year have provided added confidence. Joint's first crown in Rabat in May helped instil belief in the teenager, who used that Moroccan triumph as inspiration in claiming the Eastbourne International in June.

After beating Grand Slam finalists Ons Jabeur, Emma Raducanu and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova en

route to the final, Joint saved four championship points to defeat Alexandra Eala 6-4 1-6 7-6(10) and claim her second singles trophy.

"The tiebreak was insane," said Joint, who became the first Australian to win the Eastbourne International women's singles title. "For the tiebreaks that I've played after that match, I just try and think back to that final because I came back when I was down and saved quite a few match points, and some of those points were ridiculous."

"I was pretty nervous going out onto the court, but I had played a final earlier that year, so I think I was a bit more relaxed [this time around], just trying to take some experience knowing that I've been in that situation before."

Joint's successes in 2025 made her Billie Jean King Cup team selection an easy decision ahead of the Play-offs. Interim Australian captain Nicole Pratt hopes the

Australian No.1 can tap into the feelings she enjoyed when she last competed at the Domain Tennis Centre in January.

"It was a unanimous decision [to select Maya]. We didn't have to debate that for very long," Pratt said. "Maya's had an amazing year."

"We always talk about players and where they've performed well before. It's a place they want to go back to because they know that they've performed well, so Maya should have great memories from a breakout week [in Hobart] and the experience that she got."

Joint looks forward to once again having Pratt in her corner.

"She's been at quite a few of the same tournaments that I've been to, and we're on court together quite a bit," Joint said.

"She's definitely given me tips, and we keep in contact quite a bit, so I'm really excited to be able to have her on the bench next to me."

CAREER MILESTONE: Maya Joint made her singles debut for Australia in Brisbane, losing to Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan before notching her first win for the green-and-gold against Colombia's Yuliana Monroy.



SIDELINE SUPPORT: Australian captain Sam Stosur (L) with Maya Joint.



SECOND WIN: Joint captures her second career title at Eastbourne 2025.

AUSTRALIAN TEAM



MAYA JOINT

SINGLES RANK 32  
DOUBLES RANK 54  
W-L RECORD 1-1

After a loss to experienced Kazakhstani Yulia Putintseva on debut in April, Joint returned to Pat Rafter Arena two days later and trounced Colombia's Yuliana Monroy for her first BJK Cup win.



KIMBERLY BIRRELL

SINGLES RANK 94  
DOUBLES RANK 150  
W-L RECORD 2-5

Birrell, who peaked at world No.60 in May 2025, led Australia to a 2-0 victory over Colombia in her last Billie Jean King Cup outing in Brisbane, and has appeared in seven previous ties.



TALIA GIBSON

SINGLES RANK 137  
DOUBLES RANK 329  
W-L RECORD 0-0

Australian youngster comes into the team to replace the injured Priscilla Hon, selected after winning two ITF singles titles in 2025 and peaking at world No.105 in August.



STORM HUNTER

SINGLES RANK 505  
DOUBLES RANK 33  
W-L RECORD 12-4

A star Australian performer on a five-rubber win streak in BJK Cup, Hunter is reclaiming form after an injury-blighted 18 months, recently winning the WTA 1000 doubles title in Wuhan.



ELLEN PEREZ

SINGLES RANK N/A  
DOUBLES RANK 23  
W-L RECORD 4-3

Perez has won her past four doubles rubbers for Australia in Billie Jean King Cup and is Australia's highest-ranked doubles player, on the cusp of the world's top 20.

Rankings as of 3 November 2025



# Taking the REINS

Nicole Pratt, who for 10 years has served as Australia's Billie Jean King Cup team coach, steps into the role of captain for November's ties in Hobart while Sam Stosur is on maternity leave.



**BILLIE JEAN KING CUP OFFICIAL PROGRAMME:** As interim captain for this tie, you named Maya Joint in the team fairly early. How did you come to that decision?

**NICOLE PRATT:** "It was a unanimous decision. We didn't have to debate that for very long. Maya's had an amazing year. I mean, if you think about in January or the end of last year, she was ranked 114 in the world and hit a career high of 37 or 38 [Editor's note: Joint has since peaked at world No. 32]. And fortunately she said yes to come in November and she's got that in a schedule at the moment. That's wonderful."

"She's also had such success, on the court throughout this whole year, but particularly in Hobart at the start of the year in January. I think it bodes well; we always talk about players where they've performed well before and it's a place they wanna go back to because they know that they've performed well. And so Maya should have great memories from sort of a breakout week there [at the Hobart International] and the experience that she got. But really, I think it's about the accumulation of experiences for Maya this year and also last year. And it's exciting that she's just continuing to perform so well and kind of surprise a lot of people to be honest. It's a very nice surprise for Australian tennis."

**What's the primary motivation for the team when they compete in Hobart?**

"We need to get through and certainly don't want to be back in the qualifying competition. If we win through this one, we get a chance to compete for the trophy

in 2026. I think the Tasmanian community really get behind their tennis. They come out and watch the Hobart International, so this is another opportunity for three days of high-level, high-class tennis and it'll certainly be fabulous to get as many people out there on the Friday and Sunday when we play."

**What confronts Australia when they get there?**

"I think Brazil will be the team to beat there. They've got Laura Pigossi who has been someone that's been ranked consistently around 100-150. And then they've got Luisa Stefani, who is an accomplished doubles player. She's actually won double titles with our own Storm Hunter. So a lot of experience. So that they would be the team to beat, to make sure that we get through and qualify."

**And tell us what we can expect from Portugal?**

"Clearly they're a competitive team because they've qualified to play in the Play-offs for a chance

to play through to the world group finals next year. So they've got two sisters there, the Jorge sisters. They've been playing sort of week in, week out, more on the ITF tour, the Challenger tour. So we don't know too much about them, but we'll certainly do our homework before we get there in November."

**How do you envisage the new experience of being Australian captain?**

"I guess I'm looking forward to sitting on the bench. To be honest, as a player doing it for 10 years and having the captain next to me, and then being the coach for the last 10 years and sitting on the sidelines, it's gonna be really sweet to be able to sit on the bench with the players and hopefully get them across the line with the much-needed result."

**How does your mindset change in this role for Hobart?**

"I think it's a little bit different in the sense that at the end of the day, I believe the captain makes

ultimately the final decision. And so I've just tried, in my role as coach, to support the captain as I best I could. But ultimately all the decisions - who you decide to play, and how we structure our days - is ultimately determined by the captain. So I guess it's a little bit different for me that that responsibility will be on my shoulders."

"Even though she's not present as the captain, she's very much involved with the decision making. We've been in constant contact, even though she's been on leave, talking to her throughout the summer in Europe and then at the US Open. And Sam will be a part of the selection committee that actually decides the team. So she's very much a part of it. It's an absolute privilege to be able to just step in there, take over just for the one tie, and then she'll be back next year."

**You've got a long association with tennis in Hobart. Tell us about that.**

"Yeah, for me a lot of memories in Tasmania in general. I played my first 14-and-under nationals, that was in Burnie. And then as a player I've played the Hobart International a few times, and going back there as a coach also. So a lot of memories. It's such a stunning place where we play at the Domain Tennis Centre which overlooks the River Derwent and the city. And that view never gets old. And it's something I certainly look forward to each and every time I get there."

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Nicole Pratt (L) and Sam Stosur work together as Australian coach and captain; Kim Birrell has produced a career-best season in 2025; Pratt (L) with rising Australian star Maya Joint.





# 2026 FORMAT

## APRIL QUALIFIERS

W/C 6 APRIL

### 7 HOME-AND-AWAY TIES (14 NATIONS)

- 7 2025 FINALS NATIONS (EXC. HOSTS CHINA)
- 7 2025 PLAY-OFF WINNERS
- WINNERS OF EACH TIE QUALIFY FOR 2026 FINALS

TIE #1



TIE #2



TIE #3



TIE #4



TIE #5



TIE #6



TIE #7



## REGIONAL GROUP I

W/C 6 APRIL

### AMERICAS I, ASIA/OCEANIA I, EUROPE/AFRICA I

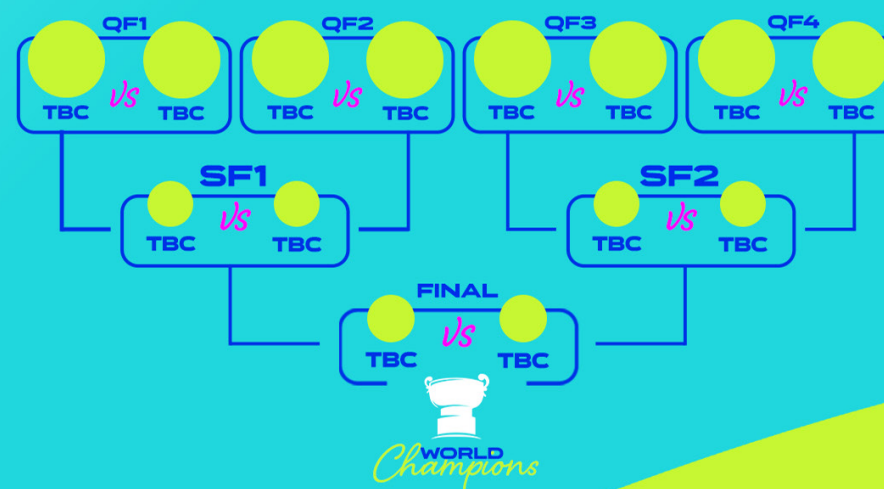
- ROUND ROBIN EVENTS, SINGLE VENUE
- 7 NATIONS ADVANCE TO 2026 PLAY-OFFS

## SEPTEMBER FINALS

W/C 21 SEPTEMBER

### 1 KNOCK-OUT EVENT (8 NATIONS)

- 1 HOST NATION (CHINA)
- 7 2026 QUALIFIERS TIE WINNERS
- 7 NATIONS (EXC. CHINA) COMPETE IN 2027 QUALIFIERS



## NOVEMBER PLAY-OFFS

W/C 16 NOVEMBER

### 7 HOME-AND-AWAY TIES (14 NATIONS)

- 7 LOSING NATIONS FROM 2026 QUALIFIERS
- 7 WINNING NATIONS FROM REGIONAL GROUP I
- WINNERS OF EACH TIE ADVANCE TO 2027 QUALIFIERS

TIE #1



TIE #2



TIE #3



TIE #4



TIE #5



TIE #6



TIE #7





# Brazil: NATION ON THE RISE

With the emergence of a new generation of players reigniting fan interest as well as investment in tennis back home, Team Brazil heads to Hobart with the wind in its sails. By BEDE BRISCOMB

**T**here's almost nothing as infectious as the passion of Brazilian sports fans. Whether it's a packed football stadium, a roaring volleyball arena, or the

long lines overflowing from João Fonseca's opening matches at the Australian Open, Brazilians have a way of turning promise into spectacle.

It's been more than two decades since Gustavo Kuerten

painted Roland Garros blue, green and yellow with the last of his three singles majors in 2001. For many years after, Brazilian tennis experienced a leaner period. But now, a new generation - led by Beatriz

Haddad Maia, Laura Pigossi, Luisa Stefani and teenage phenom Fonseca - is rekindling that fervent national spark.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics women's doubles event was the moment the tide began to turn.

Pigossi and Stefani, two players set to steer Team Brazil's Billie Jean King Cup 2026 Campaign in Hobart, saved four match points against the Russian Olympic Committee in the bronze medal play-off to claim the nation's first-ever Olympic tennis medal.

"Words can't express what this medal means," said Pigossi, who was not only making her Olympic debut but also ranked outside the top 200 in both singles and doubles. "I'm over the moon and speechless. Everything I've done, everything I've given up to get here, I always thought it was worth it, but now I have a medal to prove it. And we know that everyone in Brazil was behind us."

That historic triumph proved the catalyst for breeding newfound belief among Brazilian players.

In 2022, Beatriz Haddad Maia soared toward the top of the women's game, ending that season ranked No.15. It was the first of three consecutive year-end top-20 finishes and was a period also highlighted by her stirring semifinal run at Roland Garros in 2023.

It's perhaps no coincidence that the WTA's investment in Brazil has returned, with São Paulo hosting a new tournament in 2025 - 25 years after the city last staged the Brasil Open, and proof that belief can turn into something tangible.

That same belief now carries through 42-year-old coach Luiz Peniza, an architect of Brazilian player development, as he leads a spirited team to Tasmania to face Australia and Portugal.

Battling for airtime among soccer, basketball and motor sports, Brazil's leading tennis players have nonetheless been proud regulars at the Billie Jean King Cup - formerly Fed Cup - since their debut in 1965. Their standout result came with a quarterfinal run in 1982, ended by the United States.

The Brazilian team bound for Hobart in 2025 has been dealt a blow with the absence of Haddad Maia, who opted to end her season early to prioritise physical and mental recovery. And so the task of leading Brazil in singles

will likely fall to Pigossi, whose best win in 2025 came against Germany's then-world No.88 Laura Siegemund at a WTA 250 event in Colombia.

It's in doubles where the team's true firepower lies. Pigossi, Stefani and Ingrid Martins form one of the more cohesive and battle-tested units in the competition. All three sit inside the world's top 100 in doubles, with Stefani leading the way at No.16, thanks to three WTA titles and two Grand Slam quarterfinal runs in 2025.

Stefani in particular has been a cornerstone of Brazil's Billie Jean King Cup campaigns. A two-time Olympian, Australian Open mixed doubles champion and 13-time WTA title winner, she's delivered consistently for her country, compiling one of the strongest records in the team's history.

This season, the 28-year-old added another milestone by qualifying for the prestigious WTA Finals in Riyadh alongside Hungarian doubles stalwart Tímea Babos. It marks her debut appearance at the year-end championships.

Few players embody national pride quite like Stefani, who seems to rise to another level whenever she's wearing Brazil's colours.

"There is nothing more important than representing Brazil," she said after Olympic glory in Tokyo. "And this is important for tennis in Brazil - it's a brilliant achievement. Maybe this will bring us more players in Brazil and motivate more girls to play tennis. This is what is wonderful in sport - I want to see Brazilian sport grow, for us to become more important in the sports world, especially for girls."

Ana Candiottto, 21, and 15-year-old Nauhany Vitoria Leme Da Silva round out the team line-up, a pair of young talents already showing that inspiration is taking shape. In September, Da Silva created history as the first player born in 2010 to win a main-draw match at a WTA event, defeating compatriot Carolina Alves in three sets at the São Paulo Open.

With belief spreading through its ranks, Brazil arrives in Hobart with momentum, pride and a sense they're on the cusp of something special.

**LEFT:** Brazilian leading light Luisa Stefani is a Grand Slam mixed doubles champion, Olympic bronze medallist and former top-10 doubles player.

## BRAZIL TEAM



### LAURA PIGOSSI

**SINGLES RANK** No.193  
**DOUBLES RANK** No.83  
**W-L RECORD** 9-14

An Olympic doubles bronze medallist with a career-high singles ranking of 100, the 31-year-old has represented Brazil 18 times since 2013.



### ANA CANDIOTTO

**Singles rank** No.457  
**Doubles rank** No.228  
**W-L record** 0-0

The 21-year-old will make her BJK Cup debut in Tasmania. In 2025 she has reached two ITF singles semifinals and improved her ranking more than 100 places.



### NAUHANY VITORIA LEME DA SILVA

**SINGLES RANK** No.669  
**DOUBLES RANK** No.749  
**W-L RECORD** 0-0

The 15-year-old, who made history as the first player born in 2010 to win a main-draw match at a WTA event in São Paulo, is currently a top-50 junior in the ITF rankings.



### LUISA STEFANI

**SINGLES RANK** N/A  
**DOUBLES RANK** No.16  
**W-L RECORD** 11-3

A lethal doubles specialist, Stefani has scored 10 BJK Cup doubles wins for Brazil with four different partners since her competition debut in 2017.



### INGRID MARTINS

**SINGLES RANK** N/A  
**DOUBLES RANK** No.77  
**W-L RECORD** 1-0

The 29-year-old's one BJK Cup appearance so far was a dominant 6-1 6-2 doubles victory against Team Korea in 2023, alongside Stefani.

*Rankings as of 3 November 2025*





Competing in the lowest rung of the competition in 2022, Team Portugal has won 14 of its past 18 Billie Jean King Cup ties to reach far loftier heights in 2025.  
By MATT TROLLOPE

**A**nchored by talented sisters Francisca and Matilde Jorge, Team Portugal is trending up in the Billie Jean King Cup.

The Iberian nation has enjoyed a resurgence in the competition, with a team featuring the Jorge sisters, plus Angelina Voloshchuk and Ines Murta, advancing to November's Play-offs where they will meet teams from Australia and Brazil in Hobart.

Since the competition was renamed Billie Jean King Cup (previously Fed Cup) at the start of the decade, this is the highest tier at which the Portuguese team is competing. More success in Hobart would propel them into the 2026 Qualifiers, where an elite group of 14 nations will battle for seven places at the 2026 Finals, aiming to join hosts China in the eight-nation field.

Such a scenario was perhaps unthinkable for Team Portugal three years ago. In July 2022 they travelled to the North Macedonian capital of Skopje to compete in Group III - then the lowest rung of the competition - of the Europe/Africa Zone. Having suffered three consecutive losses in February 2020, during Group II ties in the same zone, Portugal was relegated to Group III after a 2-0 defeat to Israel.

And so began the process of rebuilding. It began in Skopje with wins over Burundi and Malta before a semifinal victory over Ireland, followed by a 2-1 promotional play-off win over the hosts North Macedonia. That play-off victory sent Portugal back into Group II for 2023 - and on their path to higher heights.

Yet this time, the team was on more familiar ground, with Portugal hosting the nations competing at this stage of the

competition on red clay at Jamor Sports Complex in Oeiras.

Team Portugal was unstoppable, winning all four matches in its pool - and avenging the defeat it suffered to Israel which sent them to Group III - before defeating Georgia 2-0 in a play-off tie, thus earning promotion to Group I in 2024.



**SIZZLING START:** Since debuting for Portugal in 2021, Matilde Jorge has won 18 of 24 Billie Jean King Cup rubbers across both singles and doubles.

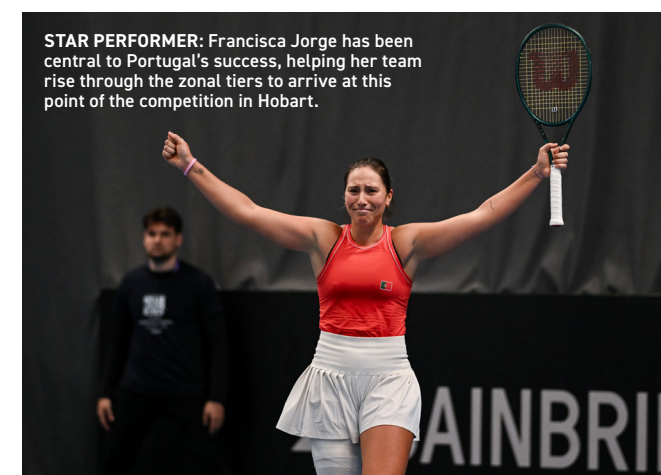
It was Portugal's first appearance in Group I of the competition since 2018, and was made possible by nine consecutive Billie Jean King Cup tie victories.

Francisca and Matilde Jorge contributed to all of those victories, with Francisca, in particular, firing when her team needed her most.

The 25-year-old went 7-2 in singles, and 13-2 overall, to help lead her country back into the higher tier of the competition. She and Matilde formed an unbeatable doubles combination, going 6-0 across those nine ties - five of those coming in deciding rubbers when scores were locked at 1-1.

Those doubles victories foreshadowed the level the sisters could attain; in 2024 and 2025 they won back-to-back doubles titles at the Oeiras WTA 125 event - to date the biggest trophies of their careers. Both have been ranked inside the doubles top 100 in 2025.

Matilde went 10-2 across the same two-year period of Billie Jean King Cup, helping establish Portugal as a presence among Group I nations including Netherlands, Austria, Serbia and Latvia - all of whom headed to



**STAR PERFORMER:** Francisca Jorge has been central to Portugal's success, helping her team rise through the zonal tiers to arrive at this point of the competition in Hobart.

Portugal where Oeiras' Jamor Sports Complex again hosted the action.

This time around, in April 2024, Portugal lost all three of its round-robin matches to finish at the bottom of Pool B, but avoided relegation to Group II by beating Bulgaria and Norway. Francisca Jorge was again the star at this stage, going 4-0 in those two wins - 2-0 in singles, and 2-0 in doubles with Matilde - to ensure Portugal remained in Group I for 2025.

In April 2025, the team - the same quartet that will represent Portugal in Hobart - travelled to

the Lithuanian capital Vilnius for another shot at Group I glory.

Their campaign opened with a redemptive win over Latvia, who'd beaten them comfortably in the same stage of the 2024 competition. And they shrugged off a 3-0 loss to Croatia, rebounding to beat Austria 2-1 and finishing second overall in their group.

The result earned Portugal a shot at Slovenia in a promotional play-off tie, which the Portuguese team won 2-0 to cement its place in the 2025 Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs, and ensure a trip to Hobart in November.

The Jorge sisters were again the catalyst for the result, with Francisca and Matilde both recovering from a set down to beat their Slovenian opponents in singles. Voloshchuk and Murta also played their valuable part, combining to win the doubles rubber to complete a 3-0 rout of Latvia, and Voloshchuk also pairing with Matilda Jorge to secure a 2-1 win over Austria.

Those 2025 wins were Voloshchuk's first Billie Jean King Cup victories, boosting her confidence as she prepares to head to Australia. And there's been a resurgence for Murta, Portugal's longest serving team-member who debuted in 2014 and has won four of her past six BJK Cup outings dating back to 2023.

Francisca Jorge is another team stalwart, with 25 wins giving her the second-most of any Portuguese woman in the history of the Billie Jean King Cup. She's 19-6 across singles and doubles since her country began its renaissance in 2022.

Coupled with Matilde Jorge's career record of 18-6, the sisters - and Team Portugal as a whole - will no doubt prove a formidable unit as they look to continue their upward trajectory in Hobart.

## PORTUGAL TEAM.



### FRANCISCA JORGE

**SINGLES RANK** 209  
**DOUBLES RANK** 102  
**W-L RECORD** 25-20

Her nation's top-ranked singles player, Jorge owns 25 career wins in Billie Jean King Cup play - the second highest tally in Portuguese history. She peaked at world No.176 in singles last year.



### MATILDE JORGE

**SINGLES RANK** 255  
**DOUBLES RANK** 101  
**W-L RECORD** 18-6

(12-2 in doubles)  
The 21-year-old made her BJK Cup debut in 2021, has built an impressive record when representing Portugal, and has also improved her WTA singles ranking more than 50 places after reaching three ITF singles finals in 2025.



### ANGELINA VOLOSHCHUK

**SINGLES RANK** 507  
**DOUBLES RANK** 644  
**W-L RECORD** 2-6

Dipping as low as world No.928 in singles in June, the 18-year-old cracked the top 500 within four months due to strong results, including a quarterfinal finish at the Porto WTA 125 event.



### INES MURTA

**SINGLES RANK** 822  
**DOUBLES RANK** 831  
**W-L RECORD** 7-12

The longest-serving member of the Portuguese team, the 28-year-old has notched five ITF singles quarterfinals this year and rebounded to world No.822 after missing all of 2024.

*Rankings as of 3 November 2025*



# The road SO FAR

Australia hosted Kazakhstan and Colombia in Brisbane for April's Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers, where Kazakhstan won through to September's Finals in Shenzhen, while second-placed Australia will now contest November's Play-offs in Hobart.

BELOW: Team Australia debutant Maya Joint (centre) is flanked by (L-R) Storm Hunter, Ajla Tomljanovic, Kimberly Birrell and captain Sam Stosur prior to Australia's tie against Kazakhstan.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Team Kazakhstan celebrate qualifying for September's Billie Jean King Cup Finals; Colombia's Valentina Mediorreal Arias (L) and Paulina Perez in doubles action; Kimberly Birrell competed as the Australian team's top-ranked player for the first time; Pat Rafter Arena was the stage for the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers; 10th-ranked Elena Rybakina did not drop a set in singles as she clinched victories for Kazakhstan over Australia and Colombia.





# HISTORY OF THE Orange Girl

In April, rising star Emerson Jones became the latest in a long tradition of Orange Girls learning from, and connecting with, established members of the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team. By MATT TROLLOPE

**E**merson Jones revealed she was slightly nervous and wasn't sure what to expect when selected as the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team's Orange Girl for April's Qualifiers event in Brisbane.

Yet Jones, then 16, thoroughly soaked in the experience as the Aussie team built towards competing at Pat Rafter Arena.

"Getting to hit with these top women has been really great for me," she said. "I think we're going

to an escape room tonight, so we're all pretty excited about that. Getting to go out to dinner with them, staying with them, hitting, having lunch with them, it's all been really great for me to hang out with these types of girls.

"Watching Maya [Joint] and Kim [Birrell] compete in singles], they tried their hardest and you could really see that, so I think it was really inspirational for me to watch."

Jones, once a world No.1 junior who has since cracked the WTA top 200, enjoyed

hearing her teammates' stories of their memories as Orange Girl. "Someone mentioned that Kim was watching four hours of their practice when she was Orange Girl and nearly fell asleep," Jones laughed.

Birrell confirmed this was true. "There was only one court, so I didn't get to hit that much that week, and with jet-lag on the first couple of days, I was sitting on the court watching I think my fourth practice back-to-back, which I was absolutely loving, but there was a moment where I started to

get a little bit tired, and someone got a video of me like nodding a little bit to sleep, and then jerking myself awake," Birrell laughed, before adding: "Mol [Alicia Molik] loves to bring that up whenever she can."

## A REFLECTIVE HEADSPACE

Birrell was the Orange Girl for Australia's 2015 tie in 's-Hertogenbosch against Netherlands, a green-and-gold team captained by Molik and featuring Sam Stosur, Casey

Dellacqua, Jarmila Wolfe and Olivia Rogowska. Within a year, she was a fully-fledged member of the team, debuting against Slovakia in Bratislava.

It was a week that had a significant impact on Birrell, and a decade later she enjoyed the opportunity to welcome Jones into the fold in a similar way.

"I just remember how warmly they embraced me [in 2015] and I absolutely loved every second. They made me feel like I was really part of the team," Birrell said. "Then I actually got to be a part of the team the following year, so I definitely felt so much more comfortable, having had those experiences.

"It is really cool to reflect on how I felt at that time of my life and hope that I can be somewhat of a positive influence on [Emerson] and her career. It's been really fun having her around - lots of fresh, young energy."

Storm Hunter also enjoyed the chance to reflect, thanks to Jones' presence.

"My Orange Girl experience was in 2013 when we played Switzerland," said Hunter, who fondly remembers staying on Lake Como, a stone's throw across the Italian border from the tie in Chiasso.

"Playing and training amongst my idols that I grew up watching on TV, to be surrounded by them in the training environment and not necessarily just on court, but having the off-court conversations and connecting, was such an amazing experience.

"That's when Ash Barty made her debut as well, and she ended up sealing the tie for us, which was really cool to be a part of that moment."

Hunter, now 31, said that following her stint as Orange Girl, it became a significant goal to earn her number and become part of the Australian team. And that's exactly what happened - she was selected as part of the

four-player Aussie squad which travelled to Hobart to take on Russia in February 2014.

## ORANGE GIRL EXPLAINED

Just to clarify, the Australian team Orange Girl is not a young player who dresses in head-to-toe orange, squeezes orange juice for the team or hails from Orange, NSW. As Billie Jean King Cup team stalwart Nicole Pratt explains, it's a role designed to immerse the youngster in the team and its culture, helping them experience everything playing members do.

"At different times, we need them to get out and practise. We need them to put in the hours," Pratt said. "So they pretty much have to do whatever's required. Hey, can you get out there and serve a little more to that player? Can you hit some returns?"

"I know when I was playing, we'd give them little tasks that were somewhat annoying - you'd be like, 'hey, can you go pick up our racquets? Can you go get us lunch? Can you go buy us a coffee?' But I think over the years we've sort of moved away from that, just because we have more staff.

"We get to also see the professionalism of where they're

at, as well, and where we can offer some advice, either to them throughout the week or to their coaching teams afterwards.

"I think that really assists in a player's development."

Joint is a prime example of how valuable this experience is to that development. Just five months before debuting in the Australian team for April's Qualifiers in Brisbane, she was the team's Orange Girl at the 2024 Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Malaga, Spain.

"It was a massive goal of mine, when I was the Orange Girl, to make the team. But I think it was really good experience for me to be able to be with the team, but not have the pressure of performing," she laughed.

"So I just got to see how everything worked and how the training worked, and just be surrounded by such great players. And with Sam and Pratty, all the support staff, and everyone, it was just so nice to meet them.

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

After being selected to play singles in Brisbane, Joint was officially presented with her Australian team jacket by tennis legend Lesley Bowrey.

Bowrey was an original

member of the Aussie Billie Jean King Cup team which competed at London's Queen's Club in the competition's inaugural year in 1963, when it was called Fed Cup. She played in multiple Cup-winning Australian teams during the 1960s.

Bowrey went on to captain the side from 1994 to 2001 and it is believed the Orange Girl concept was introduced during this period.

"We didn't always have an Orange Girl," she recalled. "It's certainly something that I'd probably learned from seeing the Davis Cup - they always had the young player in there to learn a lot. It was a real experience for them.

"It's a real treat for somebody to be selected to be an Orange Girl, to really learn the ropes about what goes on, and team spirit."

In a full-circle moment, it was now-captain Stosur who introduced Bowrey to the Australian team in Brisbane. Stosur had been selected as Orange Girl at age 16 when Australia played Switzerland at Royal Sydney Golf Course in 2001, with Bowrey as captain.

"It was great for her to be around the girls who had been there and done that, to see how professional they were," Bowrey recalled.

"Obviously at that age you learn a lot. We tried to teach her what she needed to do. Pretty tough deal; she had to do everything that I asked her to do, and I wasn't always easy, probably (smiling). I think it was a real discipline week for her.

"It obviously stood her in good stead - she did well, she won a Grand Slam at the US Open, beating Serena Williams, and so she came on."

Stosur has clear recollections of that week at Royal Sydney under Bowrey, right down to the hotel in which the team stayed in Coogee and the cafe they visited each morning by the beach.

The team comprised Pratt, Molik, Evie Dominikovic and Rachel McQuillan. "I've still got a poster of all of them, signing it," Stosur revealed. "Pratty actually left quite a long message on there, saying 'Dear fellow Queenslander' and 'practice hard and good things will happen'. And my Dad quoted that to me numerous times over my career.

"It was absolutely incredible to be the Orange Girl and see how it all operated and have that experience.

"Now [the cafe] is called Barzura ... many years later I ended up living in Coogee so I could reminisce all the time."





