

Savannah Challenger returns to The Landings Club

From Staff Reports

Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Savannah Challenger professional tennis tournament will be returning for its 12th year from April 25 to May 1 after a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event is presented by St. Joseph's/Candler and hosted by The Landings Club at the Franklin Creek Tennis Center on Skidaway Island. The United States Tennis Association ATP tournament is part of the worldwide Challenger series, a pro circuit event which will bring some of the world's finest tennis players to Savannah.

The week-long tournament will host a full field of professional singles and doubles that are recognized globally with rankings ranging from 100-300. The Challenger series is a worldwide

See SPORTS, Page 5B



Hugo Dellien, the winner of the 2018 Savannah Challenger, at the Franklin Creek Tennis Center at The Landings Club. JACOB STUCKEY/PROVIDED

Sports

Continued from Page 1B

circuit of approximately 150 tournaments located in more than 40 countries. Up-and-coming players gain valuable experience while competing for prize money and world ranking.

"The Landings Club is overjoyed to be hosting this pro circuit event again, and we couldn't be more excited to witness the most talented tennis players compete for the Savannah Challenger title," Chris Kader, the Savannah Challenger tournament director, said in a press release. "It is an honor to host such a high-level event at The Landings Club."

Past competitors include Daniel Medvedev, Denis Shapavolov, Nick Kyrgios, Kei Nishikori, Jack Sock and Ryan Harrison. The Savannah Challenger player roster for the 12th season will be published the first week of April 2022.

All Challenger matches will be live streamed via the ATP Challenger website, www.atptour.com. The livestream coverage of all matches also can be viewed on the Savannah Challenger website: www.savannahchallenger.com.

"We are delighted for the return of the Savannah Challenger and look forward to welcoming a lineup of stellar players back to the Hostess City," Savannah Challenger tournament chair Rhegan White-Clemm said in the press release. "This tournament would not be possible without community support. We are so grateful to our sponsors and volunteers."

For the first time, the Savannah Challenger has partnered with the nonprofit organization, Savannah Area Tennis Association, to give back to local, underserved children who play tennis in Chatham County. Proceeds from the inaugural 2022 Challenger silent auction will benefit SATA's educational programs.

Tickets will be available for purchase on the Savannah Challenger website and through Eventbrite starting on Feb. 25. For tickets or more information about the Savannah Challenger Tournament, including schedule details, sponsorship prospects and volunteer opportunities, go to www.savannahchallenger.com or call 912-598-3501.

To learn more about SATA, go to www.savannahtennis.com.

Academic honors for SCAD men's and women's swim teams

The Savannah College of Art and Design men's and women's swimming teams have been selected by the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America as Scholar All-America teams.

The men and women posted grade-point averages of 3.45 and 3.72, respectively, to earn the honors. In total, 728 teams from 450 colleges and universities were selected Scholar All-America teams. Those with a GPA of 3.3 or higher will be eligible for the Intercollegiate Coach Association Coalition All-Sport Academic standings.

CSCAA Executive Director Greg Earhart highlighted the Bees' achievements, noting, "Coach (Bill) Pilczuk continues to build a team the university can be proud of. These 31 men and women are some of the best ambassadors that SCAD and the Bluegrass Mountain Conference could ask for."

SCAD's women (3.72 GPA) and Keiser's men (3.53) were tops among NAIA schools.

SSU women's basketball team ranked No. 24 in DII

The Savannah State women's bas-

ketball team fell from No. 22 to No. 24 in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association NCAA Division II poll released Tuesday.

The SSU women had lost at Benedict College 71-65 on Saturday in Columbia, S.C., ending the Tigers' 14-0 win streak for the best start to a season in the program's history. After voting in the poll closed, SSU followed with a 92-81 victory at Allen in Columbia to improve to 15-1.

The SSU women (8-1 SIAC) return to Tiger Arena at 1 p.m. Saturday to play Albany State, followed by the men's teams at 3 p.m.

The SSU men were 6-8, 4-4 in the SIAC going into Wednesday night's home game against Clark Atlanta. The SSU men won at Allen 78-66 on Monday.

Pooler Lions Club golf tournament on May 7

The Pooler Lions Club's seventh annual Chipping for Charity Golf Tournament is May 7 at Crosswinds Golf Club.

The sign-in is 8 a.m., followed by a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Registration is \$100 per golfer, \$400 per foursome, and includes range balls, golf cart, goody bag and buffet lunch. RSVP by April 8.

Sponsors are welcome. Awards given for the top three teams as well as winners of longest drive and closest to the pin. There is a possibility to win a \$1,000 hole-in-one prize as well as ice cream for a year with a hole-in-one.

All proceeds benefit community outreach initiatives of the Pooler Lions Club, whose main service is to the blind and visually impaired. Other core service areas include hunger, childhood cancer, diabetes and environmental projects.

To register, go to www.poolerlionsclub.org/golftournament. For information, email lionsclub2@gmail.com

Tormenta FC 2 soccer team signs goalie Eric Cotton

South Georgia Tormenta FC 2 has added goalkeeper Eric Cotton to its 2022 USL League Two roster, pending league and federation approval.

Cotton comes to the Statesboro-based club after an impressive season starting in net for the University of the Pacific.

Cotton has cemented himself as the starting goalkeeper for two seasons and is looking for an NCAA tournament run with the Pacific Tigers in 2022. Prior to Pacific, Cotton spent 2018-19 with Western Michigan University, where his team battled in back-to-back Mid-American Conference Championship finals.

In 2021, the goalkeeper appeared in all games for the Pacific Tigers and helped the team achieve a 9-5-2 record while earning a WCC Defensive Player of the Week title.

Cotton brings USL League Two experience in 2021 at Oakland County FC, where he played in seven games and registered 20 saves in 450 minutes. Starting in 2015, the keeper also competed in three seasons for the Portland Timbers' U.S. Soccer Development Academy team.

Cotton joins French forward Alexis Ledoux and midfielder Jalen James on the team's 2022 roster.

Tormenta FC 2 is the pre-professional soccer team of South Georgia Tormenta FC, a club based in Statesboro and founded in 2015. The team has established itself as one of the premier League Two clubs across the country and has helped nearly 50 players achieve their professional dreams.