



Media Release

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SERENA WILLIAMS SET TO HEADLINE THE BIGGEST EVER ASB CLASSIC IN 2017

ASB Classic is excited to announce that Serena Williams will headline the January showpiece.

Williams has captured 71 WTA (Women's Tennis Association) titles and has dominated Grand Slams for the past two decades winning 22 Grand Slam singles titles – an all-time record she shares with Steffi Graf. Along with her singles successes, the American has also won 14 doubles and two mixed doubles titles for a total of 38 Grand Slam successes – the most of any active player male or female.

The younger of the Williams sisters has also claimed four Olympic Gold Medals, five Season Ending Championship trophies and had team success winning Fed Cup for America.

Williams has been named Sports Illustrated 'Sportsperson of the Year' in 2015, Glamour Magazine Woman of the Year (2009), and included in Time '100 Most Influential People', Forbes '100 Most Powerful Women' and for 15 straight years Forbes '100 Biggest Celebrities'. She has also been awarded 'Sports Woman of the Year' three times at the Laureus Sports Awards (02, 10 & 16), and Associated Press's 'Athlete of the Year' on four occasions (02, 09, 13 & 15).

Organisers of the ASB Classic believe Serena's participation will make this the biggest event in the tournament's history. "We are obviously over the moon with this news. Serena is one of the biggest sporting stars on the planet. She has had the most Grand Slam victories, most consecutive weeks at Number One and has twice held all four Grand Slam trophies at once. I think she is the greatest player, man or woman, to play the game," said Tournament Director Karl Budge.

"To have an athlete of Serena's calibre come to Auckland is going to be huge for New Zealand and really cements the ASB Classic as our biggest annual sporting event," Budge continued.

Serena herself is excited to be making her Auckland debut. "I am really excited to be coming to Auckland for the first time. I have heard so many great things about the city and the tournament itself and I have always wanted to play there," said Williams.

The latest in a number of big name signings in recent years is a sign of how the ASB Classic is viewed on Tour. "We have really grown in recent years to be regarded as probably the strongest International Tier event on the WTA. Excitingly, we know there is still more to come in the way of top players who will be on show at the ASB Tennis Arena in January," said Budge.

Williams will be looking to start the year strongly. "The ASB Classic is the first event of the year. It can really set you up for a great run in Melbourne and I will be looking to start my year strongly in Auckland," said Williams.



With over 64,000 people attending the ASB Classic earlier this year, the highest in the events history, the tournament continues to grow.

ASB Chief Executive Barbara Chapman says ASB couldn't be happier to be welcoming Serena Williams to Auckland for this summer's ASB Classic.

"We know tennis fans will be as delighted as we are to host this exceptional sportswoman here on our court for the uniquely fun and intimate environment the ASB Classic provides. The ASB Classic continues to grow, attracting some of the world's best players with exciting competition and electrifying atmosphere and ASB is very proud to support these two weeks of outstanding tennis. There's no doubt we're in for another stellar tournament in January with one of the sport's greatest stars Serena Williams on the court."

More player signings will be announced in the coming months with the full men's and women's line-up to be announced late November.

The ASB Classic will span two weeks; the women's tournament commencing on January 2nd to 7th followed by the men's tournament from January 9th to 14th. Tickets are available for purchase through Ticketek. You can purchase tickets either online, over the phone on (0800 842 538) or in person at one of the agencies listed on the event website.

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