

Hundreds Play in Premier ITF Event in Mexico

By Patricio Quijano

San Luis Potosí is 6,000 feet above sea level in the center of Mexico, and it was the site of the 30th ITF Seniors World Individual Championships April 4 to 11, the first time the event was held in Mexico. The city, which is a dazzling display of color, is praised for its excellent infrastructure, cultural tradition, history and enchanting colonial facades, and it is closely associated with the major figures of the ancient Huachichil culture.

Play for the hundreds of participants took place at three sports centers in the city: the Club Deportivo Potosino, which had previously hosted international tennis events; the Lomas Racquet Club, which had hosted the ITF junior championships in previous years; and La Loma Centro Deportivo, an important sports academy in Latin America that has seen a significant number of worldwide sports events. La Loma Centro Deportivo also has figured in the training of many world-class athletes, such as swimmers Michael Phelps and Lázló Cshe, taekwondo expert María Espinoza, track and field star Ana Gabriela Guevara, and tennis players Jelena Jankovic and Daniela Hantuchova, among others.

Hundreds of players from more than 39 countries took part in the weeklong event in San Luis Potosi. The city and the sports facilities have played host to major ITF events before, hosting the ITF Junior Cham-



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ors of the Mexican flag. After the presentation of the delegations from each country, various tournament, state and ITF officials welcomed the international players. Afterward, players and guests socialized at a local restaurant and enjoyed a Mexican dance show.

In between the hard-fought matches, there were plenty of opportunities to socialize and enjoy, including a mid-week banquet at La Loma Centro Deportivo, one of the most elegant events in the history of the Senior Championships. As the more than 500 guests enjoyed drink, food and music, there was yet another unprecedented scene. South Africans Lynn Sonderup and Ronnie Van't Hof chose San Luis Potosi—and the tournament—as their place to get married, before Mexican registrar Blanca Luz Guzmán Sánchez. All the guests celebrated and danced until early morning.

Toward the end of the week, winners were crowned in each division, and ceremonies took place in each of the sports clubs. Winners were awarded a traditional Mexican sombrero, a medal and flowers.

For a week in April, San Luis Potosi proved to be a perfect home for hundreds of international guests, who left with lasting memories. ☺

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ionships for the last three years. Championships were named in Men's Singles and Doubles, and Women's Singles and Doubles, each in five age divisions (35s, 40s, 45s, 50s, and 55s). There also were consolation tournaments.

The Senior World Individual Championships opened on center court of the Club Deportivo Potosino, festooned with balloons in the col-



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Key Results from the Seniors World Individual Championships

In Men's 40s play, Mario Tabares of the U.S. beat Germany's Christopher Bloemeke in a thrilling three-setter, 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (8). Meanwhile, his younger brother Alexander Tabares-Perez, playing for Spain, had an equally thrilling final in the Men's 35s, but came up short to Thassilo Haun of Germany, 5-7, 7-6 (5), 6-4. The Tabares brothers then teamed to win the Men's 35s doubles title in straight sets.

The Men's 50s doubles was an all-American affair with Dan Waldman and Egan Adams defending their title, defeating Ross Persons

and Mike Tammen, 6-3, 6-4. Andrew Rae and Gary Thoroughgood (AUS) claimed the Men's 55s doubles, defeating Fred Robinson and Tom Smith (USA), 6-0, 7-6.

One of the biggest upsets of the tournament took place in the Women's 50s singles final, when Diane Fishburne of the U.S. beat top seed Patricia Summers Medrado of Brazil, a four-time world champ who lost only one match in the last four years on the ITF Seniors Circuit. The Women's 55s final was a more straightforward affair as top seed Tina Karwasky (USA) defeated Great

Britain's Frances Candy in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, to win her first world singles title after several doubles wins.

In women's doubles, Wanda Clothier and Leanne Swaysland (AUS) fought back from a set down to claim their first doubles title in the Women's 50s, beating Christine French and Anne Clarke (GBR), 4-6, 7-6, 6-2. Lynn Mortimer (AUS) and Carolyn Nichols (USA) claimed the Women's 55s doubles title, defeating Mary Ginnard and Tina Karwasky (USA), 6-4, 1-6, 6-2.