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## **\$100,000 Stockton Men's Challenger, An USTA Pro Circuit Tour Event**

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### **2016 FINALIST NOAH RUBIN AMONG SEVEN AMERICANS IN FIELD AT 2017 STOCKTON MEN'S CHALLENGER**

Stockton, Calif. - At least seven Americans will be among the field of 32 players vying for the singles championship of the second annual \$100,000 Stockton Men's Challenger tennis tournament, hosted by the United States Tennis Association (USTA), the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP Tour) and the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. The event will take place from September 30 to October 8 at the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center.

Noah Rubin, a 21-year-old from Long Island, N.Y., will return for the second year in a row to Stockton. Rubin had a remarkable run at the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center in 2016, advancing to the final, where he bowed to eventual champion Frances Tiafoe.

In 2017, Rubin qualified for the 2017 Australian Open and won his first-round match before losing to eventual champion Roger Federer, now ranked No. 2 in the world. Rubin also made the final of the \$50,000 USTA Pro Circuit Challenger in Cary, N.C., earlier this month. Currently, Rubin is 205th in the ATP Tour rankings.

Tiafoe, currently ranked 73rd in the world, will not return to defend his title. He played one of the most memorable matches at this year's U.S. Open, taking Federer to five sets before bowing out in the first round.

The top-ranked American in the field is No. 98 Tennys Sandgren of Gallatin, Tenn., who made his Grand Slam main-draw debut at this year's French Open, a result of winning the \$75,000 USTA Pro Circuit Challenger in Savannah, Ga. and making the final of the \$100,000 Challenger tournament in Sarasota, Fla.

The 26-year-old Sandgren, who is making a comeback from hip surgery in 2014 and was outside the top 300 on the ATP Tour, also appeared in the main draw at the 2017 U.S. Open.

Nineteen-year-old Michael Mmoh, who also appeared in the Stockton tournament last year, will be back in action. Mmoh was in the semifinals of last year's Stockton tournament. The 142nd-ranked American won his first ATP Challenger title in Lexington, Ky., a follow up to his first Challenger win at Knoxville, Tenn., in 2016.

Mackenzie MacDonald, a former three-time All-American at UCLA, is also returning to Stockton. MacDonald, who also made the 2016 Stockton semifinals, won his second USTA Pro Circuit event career singles title at the \$25,000 Futures in Los Angeles this year. MacKenzie, who is originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, is 201st in the world.

Tim Smyczek of Tampa, Fla., who has been ranked as high as 68th in the world, is another Stockton alumnus.



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Smyczek, currently 191st, qualified for five ATP main draw events, including the 2017 U.S. Open.

Other Americans in the field include Christian Harrison of Bradenton, Fla., who won two USTA Pro Circuit events in Tulsa, Okla., and Wichita, Kan., and Mitchell Krueger of Boca Raton, Fla., who has made the singles semifinals of the Tallahassee Challenger and an ITF event in Australia.

Ruben Bemelmans of Belgium is the highest ranked player in the Stockton field, at 92nd in the world. Bemelmans reached the third round of Wimbledon this year, and has made an appearance in each of the four Grand Slams (Wimbledon, U.S. Open, Australian Open and French Open) at least once in his career.

Other international players who could do well in Stockton include Feliz Auger-Aliassime of Canada (ranked 168th), who won his first ATP Challenger event in Seville, Spain, at the age of 16 years, 10 months, and had a career-high junior world ranking of No. 2 before turning pro; Darian King of Barbados (ranked No. 156), another Stockton returnee who was in the main draw of the 2017 U.S. Open; Ramakumar Ramanathan of India, ranked 156th, who defeated world No. 8 Dominic Thiem at the Antalya Open in Turkey and was in the main draw of the Cincinnati Masters; and Sweden's Elias Ymer (200th), who won an ATP Challenger event in Cordenons, Italy, and made the main draws of three ATP World Tour events in 2017.

This year's event will also include a "Kids Day" on Saturday, October 7, where children of all ages are invited to attend for free and take part in a free clinic hosted by University of the Pacific coaches and USTA professionals.

#### **About the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center**

The tennis center, which opened on March 24th, 2016, was made possible by a \$1.5 million gift from Eve Zimmerman, a University of the Pacific graduate and previously world-ranked professional player. The complex features 12 courts, covered player benches with a new electronic scoreboard and a 5,500-square-foot clubhouse, which was completed this fall. The Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center, which occupies a portion of the former Amos Alonzo Stagg Memorial Stadium, offers an impeccable setting to host the 2017 men's USTA Pro Circuit event.

The Stockton Men's Challenger is part of the USTA Pro Circuit and will feature 32 singles competitors along with 16 doubles teams. The Pro Circuit is the route to large scale events such as the US Open and tour-level competition for both up-and-coming players and established pros. Tournaments of this caliber often feature athletes ranked in the top 500 in the world and have assisted in kick starting the careers of Andy Murray, John Isner and Maria Sharapova. Both the University and the city of Stockton are proud to host this top tier event and are hoping their sophomore year is one to remember for the fans and the players.

Tickets are on sale at [EveZimmermanTennisCenter.com/STKChallenger](http://EveZimmermanTennisCenter.com/STKChallenger) and live streaming will be available on the event's official website. Fans and spectators can also "Like" the "Stockton Men's Challenger" on Facebook and follow all the action on Twitter and Instagram @STKChallenger. Those looking to volunteer at the event should visit the tournament website or email [info@stocktonchallenger.com](mailto:info@stocktonchallenger.com) for more information. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the event please contact Jeremy Neisser by emailing him at [jneisser@pacific.edu](mailto:jneisser@pacific.edu).

#### **About the USTA Pro Circuit**

The USTA Pro Circuit is world class tennis administered on the local level and played on local courts as part of the fabric of communities nationwide. The USTA launched its Pro Circuit in 1979 to provide players with the opportunity to gain professional ranking points and has since grown into the largest developmental circuits in the world. There are nearly 100 tournaments throughout the country and prize money ranging from \$10,000 to



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\$100,000. Maria Sharapova, Andy Roddick, James Blake and Andy Murray are among today's top players who began their professional careers on the USTA Pro Circuit.

### **About University of the Pacific**

University of the Pacific is a nationally ranked university with a long tradition of dedicated teaching, small class sizes, practical experience and a vibrant residential life. Founded in 1851, Pacific is the oldest University in California with its breathtaking Gothic main campus in Stockton. In addition to the dentistry school in San Francisco, Pacific also has the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento-one of California's largest law schools. Total University enrollment is nearly 7,000 students offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees. For more information about University of the Pacific, visit [www.pacific.edu](http://www.pacific.edu).

### **About Visit Stockton**

Visit Stockton (formerly the Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau) is charged with the promotion and marketing of the City of Stockton as a meetings, events, and travel destination. The bureau is a 501c6 non-profit organization funded by the collection of an assessment paid by guests to Stockton lodging establishments. Visit Stockton services include the development of an annual tourism marketing plan and its implementation through advertising, public relations, tour package development, online/electronic means, and attendance at consumer and trade shows.

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