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## D.C. Is Home To New Franchise

Kastles Begin WTT Play in July

By Liz Clarke  
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Washington will get an addition to its summertime sports landscape with the arrival of a World TeamTennis franchise, to be known as the Washington Kastles.

The Kastles, whose entry to the league will be made official today, will debut this season, which runs July 3-23. The team will be owned by a local group led by venture capitalist Mark Ein, 43. Though a site for home matches hasn't been selected, Ein said in an interview that he's eyeing a location in the District and feels he's close to an agreement.

Ein is the majority owner and managing member of Kastle Systems, which provides building and office security systems and is the team's namesake.

World TeamTennis is a coed professional league that was co-founded by Billie Jean King in 1974. With Washington's addition, the league will consist of 11 teams of four players each -- two men and two women -- and a coach.

Though Washington's roster hasn't been set, each World TeamTennis squad typically includes at least one marquee player who is assigned by the league. The 2008 marquee players will be named later this month. The rest of the Kastles' roster will be rounded out through a draft on April 1, in which Washington will pick sixth. Among the top players who have competed in recent years are [Venus Williams](#) and [Lindsay Davenport](#).

Ilana Kloss, the league's commissioner and chief executive, said in a telephone interview that she had long considered Washington as ideal for a team, given the city's strong tradition of supporting tennis.

"We love the international appeal of Washington," Kloss said. "World TeamTennis presents an incredible array of international players. Tennis has always been a global sport, but it used to be the United States, [Australia](#), [Great Britain](#) and a few others. And now we have players from all over the world, like [India](#) and [South Africa](#)."

For Ein, an avid tennis player and former captain of his high school team at [Bethesda](#)-Chevy Chase in the 1980s, the Kastles represent his first foray into professional sports and one that's close to his heart.

"I'm just a general tennis enthusiast," said Ein, who has served on the board of the Tennis Patrons Foundation, the Tennis Center at College Park and the Mid-Atlantic Tennis and Education Foundation. "I actually remember World TeamTennis from when I was a kid, and I have a number of friends who have played on the tour and played in the league, and they've told me how much fun the players have and how much the fans love it."

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After meeting with King, Ein was sold on the idea of bringing a franchise to Washington. The team's schedule will wind down just as the city's men's tournament, the [Legg Mason Tennis Classic](#), gets underway Aug. 9.

The format for World TeamTennis is different from tournament tennis. Each match consists of five sets: men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles. Every game counts toward the overall score. Games feature no-ad scoring, and the "lets" are in play. And fans are encouraged to cheer for the home team as they would at a basketball or baseball game.

"Billie Jean's life legacy has been about equality," Kloss said. "We've always believed that having men and women play together makes a much better product."

The Kastles will play in the Eastern Conference with the Boston Lobsters, New York Buzz ([Schenectady](#), N.Y.), New York Sportimes (Mamaroneck, N.Y.), [Philadelphia](#) Freedoms and Delaware Smash ([Wilmington](#), Del.). They'll play seven home matches and seven away during the month-long season. Each team's marquee player doesn't play all matches but competes in one or two of the home events.

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