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An interview with:

**MARDY FISH
ANDY RODDICK
J. WAYNE RICHMOND
EDDIE GONZALEZ**

BRENDAN MCINTYRE: Good morning, everyone. This is Brendan McIntyre, the director of corporate communications for the USTA. I'd like to welcome everyone to the first conference call of the 2015 Emirates Airline US Open Series. Today's call is on behalf of the BB&T Atlanta Open.

Joining us today are Andy Roddick and Mardy Fish, to talk about their summer plans. J. Wayne Richmond, the general manager of the Emirates Airline US Open Series, and Eddie Gonzalez, the tournament director and chief development officer for the BB&T Atlanta Open.

At this time I'd like to allow Eddie to give a few brief remarks and open up the call.

EDDIE GONZALEZ: Thank you.

Today is a big day for us because it's our Media Day. We're extremely excited and honored to kick off the Emirates Airline US Open Series with the summer hard courts leading up to eventually the US Open.

Today we announce our player field. Being the first tournament back in the United States, we really wanted to kind of kick off our opening ceremony and session with a celebration of American tennis. That's going to feature a singles exhibition with Andy Roddick as a great former American champion against Frances Tiafoe, a future American champion. We're also very excited to Mardy has agreed to come play singles.

Atlanta has a lot of nice history to both players because Mardy has won our tournament

twice, Andy won twice, his first ATP Tour event and his last event.

Once we knew we had Andy coming for a single's exhibition and Mardy's commitment to play in our main draw singles, I was thinking to myself, Gosh, wouldn't it be great if those guys would agree to stay and play main draw doubles together. It probably wasn't, because less than 24 hours later Andy and Mardy's team reached out to me and said, What do you think about Andy and Mardy playing doubles together?

So we are very excited to announce publicly for the first time here that Andy is actually coming out of retirement to play main draw doubles here in Atlanta with his good friend Mardy. We'll talk about that today, as well as what the rest of their summer plans are.

Before we get to that, J. Wayne is our general manager and wants to say a few words.

J. WAYNE RICHMOND: Thanks, Eddie. First, thanks to the press and media to be with us this morning.

Andy and Mardy have always been two of my favorites, I know fan favorites across the U.S., and I think they own the Atlanta event between the two of them.

These two guys have been supporters of the Series since day one. Andy has been the Series champion twice, in '05 and '06. The only other player to do that has been Nadal. Mardy did the same in 2011.

We're just excited to have you two guys back. We have a great summer ahead. I look forward to seeing everybody on the road, particularly in Atlanta in a few weeks.

Welcome back, Andy and Mardy.

BRENDAN MCINTYRE: At this time we're ready to open up the line for Q&A.

Q. Andy and Mardy, could you talk about why you wanted to do this. I remember last year you had talked about hoping to try to do this sort of thing maybe at the US Open. I'm

wondering whether that's in the plans for later this summer.

ANDY RODDICK: Yeah, we did want to play the Open last year, but it was my fault. I didn't know the rules. I'm getting back into the drug testing pool. So I kind of got Mardy all excited about it and couldn't actually do it.

I think this is something we wanted to do. Obviously with Mardy's comeback, it's been a pretty amazing story. The fact that he's going to pursue that even more this summer is really exciting.

We've been friends for a long time. We kind of just wanted to play together one last time. I wanted to play with my friend and kind of share in his comeback a little bit.

I don't think we're going to play in the US Open. I have some personal stuff coming up later this year that I won't be able to play.

Once we knew that, Atlanta seemed like the obvious choice. We both had success there. We both love that tournament. I'm just jumped. I hope I don't embarrass myself out there. I'm real excited.

I wasn't a very good doubles player when I was actually good at tennis. Mardy is going to have to do the heavy lifting.

Q. You two have had a relationship in the juniors. You played one another 13 times in the pro ranks. How exciting is this to be doing this US Open Series together? Andy, could you share your favorite story about Mardy. Mardy, if you could share your favorite story about Andy, that would be great.

ANDY RODDICK: Oh, God. I'll let you lead, Mardy, so I know what to respond with.

MARDY FISH: I could go a lot of different ways with that one (laughter).

First of all, yeah, I echo Andy's sentiment. We're really excited to play. Like he said, we've been friends forever, since we were 12, playing each other. Where was that, Altamonte Springs, Sanlando Park, was maybe the first time we played when we were 11 or 12. Your dad thought I was cheating you.

ANDY RODDICK: You probably were (laughter).

MARDY FISH: I wasn't. Your dad yelled at me because he thought I was cheating, but I wasn't. You ended up beating me 7-6, 7-6. First time we ever played in a real match.

No, we've got a long history. We're excited to do it there again in Atlanta.

I'm training probably harder than Andy is now because of the singles stuff. But I'm on him to hopefully get back and at least start practicing a little bit more.

But we're super excited.

ANDY RODDICK: Yeah, that's one of my favorite stories, too. I remember it differently because I do know that Mardy was definitely cheating. The yelling by my father was warranted (laughter).

But, yeah, we're just excited. I think the priority is on Mardy playing singles. We're going to have some fun with the doubles. For a moment in time there, three or four years ago, Mardy could win on tour with anybody in doubles. He's one of the best doubles players I've ever seen.

I'm looking forward to it. I plan on losing five pounds by the Atlanta tournament, then gaining 10 pounds back right away.

Q. Andy, I assume that part of the personal reasons towards the end of the year is impending fatherhood. Am I right there?

ANDY RODDICK: Yeah. A lot of naps. I'm planning on taking a lot of naps this fall.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about kind of your expectations, your apprehensions, and whichever sex this child is, would you like them to be playing professional tennis?

ANDY RODDICK: I don't know. The question might be about 20 years premature.

You ask around, and everyone has some advice. Mardy is a new father. His son Beckett is just the best. Thank goodness he looks like his mother.

You can have expectations, but I'm not going to know what it's all going to be like until the baby's actually here.

We're just really excited. We feel very lucky.

Q. Mardy, can you chime in on that a little bit, too, as to athletics in your kid's future.

MARDY FISH: He's going to be an athlete. He's going to be either a golfer or baseball player. He's going to be lefty. He has no choice.

Q. He has no choice?

MARDY FISH: No (laughter).

Q. You're seeing signs already of

athletic ability, I assume?

MARDY FISH: When he picks up his plastic golf club, he picks it up lefty. I get so excited. But then he grabs it with his right hand and he whacks it with his right hand and I get bummed.

So we'll see.

Q. Mardy, with the singles comeback, how far down the road are you looking? How much do you think you'd like to do, or you're not really thinking about that just yet?

MARDY FISH: Unfortunately I can only look to Atlanta, just with how things have gone in the past few years, how things went in Indian Wells. I wanted to play Miami. Still sort of fighting the battle of the anxiety disorder, trying to get a firm grip on how I feel after matches. The part that helps me is all the different reps and things like that that you get.

I used to struggle with sleep. Once you go to sleep at night so many times, you get better and better at it, you get more confident with it. It's hard for me to do the matches because there's not very many, and there's only so many situations I can kind of put myself in.

Indian Wells, in the first place, was a great place for me to start because it's just a drive away. My whole family could be there.

Atlanta is probably second easiest to that, considering how sort of comfortable the tournament is. Conditions-wise it will be a challenge as far as the weather and things. But that's stuff I grew up in and used to thrive in conditions like that on the court.

So just the comfort of knowing how Atlanta is, knowing that we've had success there, getting to play doubles with Andy, sort of having friends and family around, it's a perfect start there.

Then obviously it's no secret, I'd love to go back to the US Open where sort of it all came crashing down for me in 2012, sort of conquer that place. By 'conquer' I mean just get back out on the court there. I have a lot of demons from that place.

But there's obviously other events, Washington, Cincinnati, that I really love playing as well, that I hope to try to play.

But it all starts in Atlanta for me.

Q. This is a question you guys are probably tired of answering. Curious to hear both your thoughts on the future of men's tennis in America.

ANDY RODDICK: I've actually never heard that question before (laughter).

MARDY FISH: I can start a little bit because I'm out at Carson at our West Coast base for the USTA. I'm out here quite a bit. I've hit a lot with a lot of those guys.

We got a lot of young players coming up. By 'young' I mean obviously Jack Sock, who is 22 years old, but some of these guys are 17. No. 1 junior in the world right now, Taylor Fritz, has a big future. There's quite a lot of young guys that really can play.

I think age-wise underneath those young Aussies that are coming up in Kyrgios, some of those kids, Tomic, who are 22 and 21 years old, 20, we have some 16, 17, 18-year-olds who can play, apart from Jack.

These guys, what you don't understand, too, Donald Young, Sam Querrey to a certain extent, Sam is only 27 years old. It sounds old, and he's been out here for a long time, but it's still really young. He's got a lot of time if he can figure out and rekindle a lot of the stuff that he did early in his career.

There's a lot of guys age-wise just underneath those Aussies that everyone is talking about that are really good players that you'll hear a lot from in the next couple years.

ANDY RODDICK: I think probably for the first time in a while, we can say we're cumulatively as a tennis community in the States, there seems to be some really legitimate, authentic excitement. Not just around one or two guys, but around a handful, five or six. That's the recipe.

When Mardy and I were coming up, we trained with six or seven guys. Normally two come out of that and are top-10 players. That's what you need.

I love the way that Jack has taken ownership over his ability. It seems like there's a sense of belief. Getting that first-round draw at the French Open against Grigor Dimitrov, going out and beating him in straight sets I thought was a huge mental step that now should pay itself forward. Now it's just a matter of playing like he did at Roland Garros and doing that every week. That's how you become one of the best players in the world. He certainly has the tools.

I just learned at the beginning of this phone call the Monday night exhibition I'm playing against Frances Tiafoe, which literally scares the s*** out of me. Trust me, I went worse than, Oh,

God!

I'm excited to see it. The easiest way to kind of know what you're dealing with is to see it firsthand. I'm excited about it.

These guys are good. I'm pumped about it. I think there is some sense of optimism. Let's not compare them to the long shadow of American tennis; let's let them make their own way.

Q. We're right in the swing of the grass season. What do you think of the extra week that they've put now between the French Open and Wimbledon, whether you think that's something that would have benefited you in your playing days, and how it will change the results we'll see at Wimbledon down the road.

ANDY RODDICK: It's absolutely something that needed to happen. Let me start this opinion with the fact that I'm extremely biased because grass was probably my favorite surface.

But you see guys that can make a living playing three tournaments a year away from the clay courts. They can literally schedule February through September on clay, give or take a couple mandatory events. Then to have one or two events in the lead-up to the biggest tournament on earth as far as tradition I thought was a little ridiculous.

It put a lot of pressure on guys that were trying to play well on grass because you knew you had one warmup event. If that didn't go well, you're kind of searching for it in the middle of a Grand Slam.

I think this change was a long time coming. I was one of the guys throwing a fit about it when I was playing. I think it's a no-brainer, but I'm really glad that it's there and it's the way it should be.

Frankly, everybody is celebrating getting two or three weeks before Wimbledon. There's two or three months of clay court stuff before the French Open, so I still think there's some work to be done.

Q. My question is about coaching. I know your brother coaches. Do you have any interest in coaching college tennis in the near future or working with some of the young Americans like Taylor Fritz and others?

MARDY FISH: Andy.

ANDY RODDICK: (Indiscernible.)

MARDY FISH: For free, too.

ANDY RODDICK: Yeah, for free.

You know what, I don't know if I'd be interested in college tennis. My brother has done

...when all is said, we're done.®

such a good job, but it's such a foreign place for me. I never played college tennis. I don't know that I can relate to it.

I know where he goes, the parts of the world he goes to to recruit. It's a hustle. Frankly, it's more of a commitment than I'm willing to put forward maybe ever again.

I have worked with some of the young USTA guys. They've sent guys in for three or four days. I've always been available for those guys. I'm just glad that I'm getting taken up on it.

I think you don't go through a career in U.S. tennis and not want to pay it forward and see the success of the next generation. I'm happy to be involved in that in some way if I can going forward.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, it's funny, I owe a lot to the USTA sort of for my second career, if you will, after 2009. They allowed sort of an old, broken-down player that wasn't working as hard as maybe he could have, didn't reach the potential maybe he could have, and they still let me take a coach with me in David Nainkin and share him with Sam Querrey. I always remember that. Obviously it paid off for me and hopefully for them. But I always feel indebted to them because of that.

I always enjoy helping, asking questions about how guys are doing when I'm on the court practicing with them. It's a lot of fun to sort of give some of the knowledge that you've learned over the years.

Q. I'm in Germany, in Halle. Tommy Haas is making yet another comeback here at age 37. I'm wondering what you make of that? Andy, you announced your retirement on your 30th birthday. What do you think of somebody playing that deep into their life, fairly unchartered waters?

ANDY RODDICK: I know Mardy has practiced with Tommy a lot pretty much always. Since they both live in L.A., they've seen a lot of each other on the tennis court.

Tommy Haas knows how to play tennis. He has such a high tennis IQ. He's been No. 2 in the world, and he still kind of wants to get out there and do it again.

It's not the choice that I made. I'm very comfortable with my choice. But I have a lot of admiration for guys like Tommy, guys like Hewitt that are still out there, Mardy wanting to get back into the mix. I certainly couldn't respect it more.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, I mean, I've seen Tommy obviously up close, like Andy said. I practice with him quite a lot. He's had a lot of troubles with his injuries, his body and stuff.

But he's really sort of shown a whole 'nother step in the process of still wanting to play professional tennis, in this specific instance where he had a pretty bad shoulder injury for it's now been quite a while. Obviously he had surgery on it. The rehab process has been so long.

There's not many guys at all that would put in the time and the work that he does at his age, especially with the career he's had, what he's accomplished already.

Obviously he loves the game more than most. He loves the work and the travel and all that stuff. You have to just to continue to do what he does.

You know, I'm sure there's some milestones that he'd love to get to, some goals he wants to get to. There's not very many guys that have won 600 matches. Obviously, Andy knows how hard that is.

I think he's made 35 or 25 or whatever, has 500 or so match wins. That's an incredible career there. Once he gets to 600, which he certainly can over maybe the next year or so, it will be interesting to watch that. He's an awesome guy.

Q. What was the most important lesson you learned in learning how to play on grass?

ANDY RODDICK: Basically the way grass court tennis gets covered is a little bit of a misnomer. I think they think people who serve big are automatically going to do well. I don't think that's necessarily the case. We hear a lot about movement on clay, a lot about movement on hard courts. That rhetoric goes away once the grass court season comes.

I think it's a huge talent to be able to move the right way on grass. You see guys slipping and falling; they look uncomfortable. I think that's one part of it that gets completely undersold.

Also the quick twitch movement the guys that are slow and methodical don't traditionally do well on grass, the points are quicker, quicker reactions. I think that's another thing that gets a little bit undersold.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, I'd also say over the course of Andy and I's careers, we came out in 2000, 2001 kind of era. I think the courts have changed sort of the way you play grass court

tennis once, twice, maybe three times over the course of the last 15, 16 years.

The courts have gotten better, slower. The grass has gotten better. The balls have gotten heavier and slower. It brings a ton of different ways that you can play on grass. That's changed quite a bit.

I remember in 2003 to maybe 2006 or '7 I used to serve and volley on every first serve. Lately, last time I went, 2011 might have been the last time I went, I hardly ever served and volleyed because you couldn't because it was too slow. Guys are too quick on returning and stuff like that. It's changed quite a bit.

BRENDAN MCINTYRE: Thank you, everybody, for getting on today's call. A special thanks to Andy and Mardy for the early wakeup call. We're all looking forward to the start of the 2015 Emirates Airline US Open Series, and the BB&T Atlanta Open to kick it off. This year we'll be able to see the Emirates Airline US Open Series on ESPN and ESPN2 with more than 70 hours of live national coverage, and ESPN3 which will feature nearly 500 hours of weekday coverage. Thank you for taking the call.

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