



Central Coast Tennis Classic
Templeton Tennis Ranch
345 Championship Lane, Templeton CA 93465
(805) 434-9605
www.centralcoasttennisclassic.com



Top-Seeded American Taylor Townsend Defeats No. 8 Renata Zarazua From Mexico To Win Central Coast Tennis Classic In Templeton

TEMPLETON, Calif. – Oct. 1, 2023 – With a singles-minded focus all week, top-seeded 27-year-old Taylor Townsend captured the **EPIC Central Coast Tennis Classic** on Sunday at the Templeton Tennis Ranch downing Mexico's No. 8 seed Renata Zarazua, 6-3, 6-1.

Townsend began the tournament with a No. 101 WTA ranking next to her name on the draw, and with the convincing win earned 80 WTA points to put her at No. 77 once the rankings are released on Monday.

Townsend adds her name to the list of past singles champions that includes Sachia Vickery (2017), Asia Muhammad (2018), Shelby Rogers (2019) and Madison Brengle (2022) since the tournament's inception in 2017.

Townsend called the EPIC Central Coast Tennis Classic the strongest \$60,000 level tournament she's ever played and said that is a testament to the tournament staff and the way the event is run.

A world top-8 player in doubles, Townsend told the enthusiastic Central Coast crowd after the match that she decided to forgo playing doubles on the more lucrative WTA Asian tour swing instead to set her sights on reaching the top 50 in singles by the end of the year.

She went on to tell Tournament Chairman and Templeton Tennis Ranch owner Ralph Goehring that her 2-year-old son Adyn is her motivating factor.

"My son is a motivator for me and I just want to be sure that every time I leave him and I'm gone from home that it's worth it. I have this bracelet that has a little smiley face, and he has one also. So, when I'm feeling a little bit crappy on court, I just look at it and try and push myself."

Townsend has been back on the tour for 18 months following maternity leave, but said she has her up and down weeks. "Last week was really tough for me," Townsend said. "I came here from Guadalajara (WTA 1000) and had a great week there and it was really hard for me being at home. Just the emotional toll it takes week after week of having to come home for three days and having to leave my son again. I went to practice the last day and I was just balling crying and saying, 'This is so hard.' But I had a great practice and I was thinking these are the moments that make me really grateful for the sport because it's gives you purpose."

Both players thanked the ball runners, which is typical at this level of event, with the always positive Zarazua going so far as to say, "Thank you for all the hard work out there. It's not an easy job, especially when we get mad at you. Please don't take it personally."

As if to make amends, Zarazua actually hopped onto a side court and hit with seven or eight ball kids who took turns retuning her shots after the match.

The all-American doubles final was contested by four former college players as the University of Florida's McCartney Kessler and North Carolina's Alana Smith took out former North Carolina Tar Heel Jessie Aney and Smith's former North Carolina State teammate Jaeda Daniel, 7-5, 6-4, in an entertaining match that started the day off.

Kessler, 24, and Smith, 23, were given a USTA wild card into the event and played for the first time last week losing in the opening round at Berkeley in what Smith called a "warm-up match" for this week's title run.

Smith said she tried not to think too much about playing a close friend and teammate in Daniel. "I felt like I kind of knew what her strengths were because we've been practicing for the past three years together," said Smith, who won her fifth ITF doubles title and just a few weeks ago won her first \$60K title in Canada.

Kessler was also granted a USTA wild card in singles and advanced to the singles semifinals where she fell to Townsend on Saturday in straight sets. "It was a really competitive match and I wouldn't say I was surprised by getting that far because I've been playing pretty good tennis," Kessler said. "I haven't played against that level very often so it was good to see how my game stacked up against Taylor's."

Visit the tournament's website www.centralcoasttennisclassic.com to purchase tickets, see scheduling details and live scoring and video streaming. Follow Facebook page www.facebook.com/ttrprotennis for player announcements and the latest tournament news. Once again the year's RadioTennis.com will be on hand with Ken Thomas providing his analysis and commentary on the matches. Be sure to check it out www.RadioTennis.com.

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