

# BOARDROOM

## US Open Unveils Months-Long Campaign to Celebrate Equal Pay



*Billie Jean King at the 2022 US Open (Elsa/Getty Images)*

The campaign celebrating 50 years of equal pay for both men's and women's tennis players will begin on Tuesday and last nine months leading up to the US Open.

This year's [US Open](#) will be extra meaningful. The [tennis](#) competition will celebrate 50 years of equal prize money for both men's and women's

competitors, with the nine-month campaign beginning Tuesday. Because it is a central theme at this year's tournament — scheduled to begin Aug. 28 — expect significant activations and digital and social media campaigns in the run-up to the final Grand Slam of the year.

One campaign consists of an intricate history of equal prize money, and the impact that it has had on sports. The online series will include stories written by acclaimed journalists in the tennis space and complemented with historic video footage which will roll out over the five months leading to this summer's contest. Finally, a "What Equality Means to Me" series of essays penned by notable women from all disciplines of life, will begin to roll out in April. The first of these essays will be authored by living icon, champion of equal pay, and four-time US Open champion, [Billie Jean King](#).

"The USTA is incredibly proud to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of awarding equal prize money at this year's US Open, and to honor Billie Jean King's efforts to make this a reality," Brian Hainline, USTA Chairman of the Board and President said in a statement. "No individual has done more to secure equality for female athletes than Billie Jean King. Her impact goes far beyond the tennis court, and there is no better time to celebrate her legacy than on the anniversary of this historic milestone."

"It's not just about the money, it's about the message," King added. "Every generation does have to fight for equality and freedom."

When the [US Open](#) broke barriers by offering equal winnings, the total purses were \$100,000 and it included a \$25,000 payout to both the men's and women's singles champions. For King, who won the women's singles title at the 1972 US Open, she emphatically requested that the 1973 US Open pay men's and women's athletes equally.

King's persuasiveness set the tone for a momentous season ahead, beginning with the formation of the Women's Tennis Association ([WTA](#)). After the 1973 US Open milestone of equal pay, King then took down Bobby Riggs in the "Battle of the Sexes" at the Astrodome in Houston, a match that helped to propel the women's movement in both sports and in society, and still remains the most-watched tennis match ever.

For her relentless activism in the equal pay space and across sports, the USTA also is actively supporting the effort to have King's many accolades formally recognized with a Congressional Gold Medal. Though 11 individual athletes have received the prestigious honor, none of those recipients has been a woman athlete.

Equal prize money will be the focus of the US Open's ongoing "Be Open" campaign. Now in its fourth year, the initiative emphasizes the sport's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and respect, and encourages all tennis fans to embrace similar principles.