

SPORTS

Mercedes-Benz swings for COVID relief in U.S. Open sponsorship

August 28, 2020



Sloane Stephens is partnering with Mercedes-Benz on a charitable project. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is taking a philanthropic approach to this year's activation at the U.S. Open.

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Mercedes-Benz USA and its ambassador, tennis pro Sloane Stephens, are partnering on an "Ace the U.S. Open" program to support community tennis organizations amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The tennis tournament has been a major event for luxury brands looking to engage with an affluent audience, with charitable contributions taking on greater importance this year.

Ace the Open

Through the new program, Mercedes-Benz USA will make a \$50 donation to USTA Foundation's "Rally to Rebuild" initiative for each ace served during the U.S. Open. During the 2019 tournament, more than 3,000 aces legal serves which are not touched by the receiver were recorded.

USTA Foundation's "Rally to Rebuild" is working to help 160,000 underserved youth in 250 communities navigate the pandemic. Typically, the National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) chapters provide on-court and educational programming to support young players.

Mercedes' final contribution will be equally split between three NJTL chapters: the Sloane Stephens Foundation chapter; a northeast chapter and an Atlanta, Ga. chapter, close to the home of MBUSA's headquarters.

For added engagement, the automaker is also launching an "Ace tracker" on MBUSA's social media channels, allowing fans to track the number of aces and donations throughout the U.S. Open.

"Due to the current health crisis, it is more important than ever for Mercedes-Benz to give back to our community. As a continued sponsor of the US Open, we wanted to create an opportunity to support the youth that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic," said Monique Harrison, head of brand experience marketing at Mercedes-Benz USA, in a statement. "Our goal is to give back to these organizations so that both education and tennis programming can continue and thrive."

Mercedes has sponsored the event since 2010. Ace the U.S. Open is also a continuation of the relationship between

Mercedes-Benz and Ms. Stephens.

Last year, the automaker worked with the 2017 U.S. Open champion to create a fan experience centered around MBUX, the Mercedes' virtual assistant.

Mercedes' augmented reality experience guided guests through a virtual tennis lesson with Ms. Stephens. While standing near a tennis net and facing a large screen, attendees can initiate the experience by saying, "Hey Mercedes, teach me to serve like Sloane" ([see story](#)).

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