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## US Open Confirms Wildcard Pairings for Revamped Mixed Doubles Format

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The US Open has officially announced 14 teams for its redesigned mixed doubles tournament, with two wildcard entries still to be determined. Among the confirmed names are singles stars Emma Raducanu and Carlos Alcaraz, both granted wildcard entries as the event shifts to a faster-paced format designed to raise the competition's profile.

In a major structural shift revealed earlier this year, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) confirmed that the mixed doubles event would now take place over two days during the tournament's qualifying week. Matches will follow a condensed format: sets played to four games with a tiebreak at 4-4, no-ad scoring, and a 10-point tiebreak replacing the third set. The prize pool has been increased to \$1 million, up by \$800,000 from 2024, in a bid to attract more high-profile singles players.

So far, only one of the 14 confirmed duos is an established mixed doubles team: last year's champions Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori. The other pairings include numerous top-tier singles athletes, reflecting a move away from traditional doubles specialists. This shift has been met with pushback from the doubles community. Czech player Katerina Siniakova, who won the Wimbledon 2025 mixed doubles title with Sam Verbeek, criticized the format, telling BBC Sport it was "a marketing step" that reduces opportunities for professional doubles players. Verbeek echoed the sentiment, noting that while the format could help attract viewers, it undermines the core doubles field, stating, "My heart is bleeding."

Despite such objections, the revamped format has drawn major names. Among the confirmed participants are nine Grand Slam singles champions, including reigning Wimbledon winners Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek. Sinner will pair with American Emma Navarro, while Swiatek will play alongside Norwegian standout Casper Ruud. Other notable wildcard recipients include Americans Madison Keys and Frances Tiafoe, as well as top-ranked women's doubles player Taylor Townsend paired with Ben Shelton. Venus Williams, returning from injury, will partner with Reilly Opelka, while Novak Djokovic will play with fellow Serbian Olga Danilovic.

The qualification process included eight teams granted direct entry based on their combined singles rankings, with six others selected via wildcard. Two more wildcard pairings are expected to be named before the event.

An adjustment in the roster saw British No. 1 Jack Draper, originally entered with China's Zheng Qinwen, now paired with Spain's Paula Badosa after Zheng withdrew following elbow surgery. The revamped event has generated strong interest, prompting other players to request entry. Australian player Alex de Minaur publicly requested a spot alongside his fiancée, Katie Boulter, via social media.

As the USTA prepares for the tournament's launch, the shift toward singles-driven promotion and condensed match formats signals a significant change in the US Open's

approach to mixed doubles, one that emphasizes star power and marketability, while drawing concern from the doubles community about the event's evolving identity.