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News Release

February 23, 1993 For more info, contact Joe Cherner, 212 912-0960

NO LOVE LOST ON THE TENNIS COURTS PHILIP MORRIS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS BREAK-UP

The long marriage between women's tennis and Virginia Slims cigarettes is coming to an end. When the current sponsorship agreement between Philip Morris and women's tennis expires at the end of 1994, there will be no more Virginia Slims Championships, no more Virginia Slims Rankings, and no more Virginia Slims Bonus Pool.

"Women's tennis will seek alternative sponsorship," said Anne P. Worcester, Managing Director of the Women's Tennis Council. "The women's professional tennis tour is stronger than ever and offers corporate sponsors a uniquely attractive global opportunity."

The break-up of women's tennis and Virginia Slims has been attributed by health groups to public opposition of tobacco sponsorship. "Lung cancer surpassed breast cancer in 1986 as the #1 cancer-killer of women," says Leonore McKean, Vice-President of SmokeFree Educational Services. "It doesn't make sense for a healthy sport like women's tennis to help Philip Morris kill more women."

Only six tournaments on the entire women's tennis tour still allow Virginia Slims sponsorship. "Health groups have staged demonstrations at each Virginia Slims event and will continue to do so until Philip Morris' contract expires in 1994," says Ilana Perlow, organizer of New York City's demonstration. The next Virginia Slims tournament takes place on March 7 in Delray Beach, Florida and will be picketed by the National Organization of Women. "Imagine that," says Perlow, "a women's sporting event being picketed by the National Organization of Women. We really have come a long way, baby!"