

Morariu Fed Cup candidate

By Charles Bricker
Staff Writer

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No one will be astonished when U.S. Fed Cup captain Zina Garrison names Lindsay Davenport and Serena Williams as her singles players for the first-round tie against Belgium, April 23-24, at the Delray Beach Tennis Center.

But there could be a major surprise on her doubles team. One of the players under consideration is Corina Morariu, who grew up in Boca Raton and who beat a life-threatening form of leukemia almost three years ago.

Morariu, who now lives in Newport Beach, Calif., and who is a former No. 1 in the WTA doubles rankings, has never played Fed Cup. But, after her comeback was stalled by shoulder surgery in 2004, she's back on tour, and she and Davenport, who are longtime partners, were doubles runners-up at both the Australian Open and at Tokyo this season.

Morariu is one of a number of alternatives Garrison is considering. Her doubles team could be Martina Navratilova and Lisa Raymond, though they are no longer playing together after winning only one title in 2004. It could be Navratilova and Venus Williams or Navratilova/Morariu or Venus Williams/Morariu.

Either the Williams sisters or Davenport/Morariu would be the United States' strongest doubles team. But because the doubles point is the fifth and final rubber in the two-day event, it would mean either taking Davenport or Serena out of the singles or asking one of them to play two matches in the same day if the two countries split the four singles.

Former No. 1 players Justine Henin-Hardenne and Kim Clijsters are expected to play singles for Belgium.

Davenport is 28-2 in Fed Cup play and has won 21 consecutive matches, singles and doubles included, dating to 1994. Serena is 6-0 in Fed Cup, last playing in a 5-0 win over the Czech Republic in 2003.

Tickets for the event go on sale by telephone on Monday.

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