

Aztec Tennis Reporter

FOR THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY

Vol 2, No 4, 2000

Here's the Score:

This is the 9th edition of *Aztec Tennis Reporter*, a newsletter for players, coaches, alumni, and friends of San Diego State tennis.

ATR's circulation continues to grow: Copies of this issue are being mailed to 782 readers in 37 states and 17 foreign countries.

To receive a copy, complain, contribute an article, comment, or seek a correction, write: John Martin, ATR, 1528 Corcoran St., NW, Washington, DC 20009

Players, Team Hit by Blues: It's the Money

The Aztec men's team finds itself in a \$7,500 budget hole just as tennis officials try to help three fifth-year players overcome financial difficulties caused by department cuts.

"Right now, I'm feeling maximum stress," said Coach John Nelson.

An expected \$15,000 donation did not appear, he said, leaving him \$7,500 underfunded for the coming season and \$7,500 in debt for last (Continued on Page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Aztecs in WTA's Future? 2
Dear ATR: I Was First 2
Where Are We Now? 3
O'Hara's Documentaries 3

NEXT ISSUE:

2001: A Season's Odyssey

Aztecs Invited to Top U.S. Event

San Diego State has accepted an invitation to create a single squad of men and women to compete in a National Collegiate Tennis Championship at Stanford University on October 6-8.

Sponsored by Wingspanbank.com and World Team Tennis, the three-day event features men's and women's singles and doubles and mixed doubles played in a

Men and Women Form Single Team for Palo Alto Play

WTT scoring format. Each match is one set, each game worth one point.

The competitors are San Diego State, Stanford, UCLA, USC, Illinois, Minnesota, Notre Dame, LSU, Clemson, Mississ-

ippi, Mississippi State, South Alabama, South Carolina, Texas A&M, Tulsa, and Virginia Commonwealth.

Coaches Peter Mattera and John Nelson plan to team Whitney Wells, Julie Chidley, and Katey Becker with Oliver Maiberger and Valentino Pest to represent the Aztecs.

Of the unusual scoring format, Mattera said: "The fans should love it."



Art Seitz

DYNAMIC DUO: Allison Bradshaw, left, and Valerie Ziegenfuss, atop Ashe Stadium at 2000 U.S. Open.

The Ziegenfuss Legacy

FLUSHING MEADOWS, NY - It was the best feel-good story of the U.S. Open's first week: Allison Bradshaw, a San Diego teenager, upset Sara Pitowsky of France and reached the third round, setting off memories of her mother's pioneering play 30 years ago.

Valerie Ziegenfuss was one of nine breakaway players who in 1970 rebelled against the USTA, and recalled Columnist Harvey Araton of The New York Times.

What Ziegenfuss did was help lead the charge for independence and better pay for women in pro tennis. Attending San Diego State in 1967-69, she took off each spring to compete with Billy Jean King, Rosie Casals, and others, cracking the top 10 four times in singles and ranking number one in doubles.

There was, as yet, no Aztec women's team. Valerie's father, George, knows this

(Continued on Page 4)

Aztecs See Strong Year For 2 Teams

San Diego State's men's and women's tennis teams are preparing for strong seasons they believe will lead back to the NCAA playoffs.

"I'm optimistic," said Men's Coach John Nelson. "Potentially, we could be better than last year."

The men reached the NCAA Sweet 16 finals in Athens, GA. Led by Alex Waske of Germany, they upset Washington and Pepperdine to win the NCAA regionals.

Oliver Maiberger, who ran up a 22-match winning streak, and Valentino Pest, a hero in the Pepperdine match, are returning for their second season.

"We have a solid team right now," Nelson said, indicating that mid-year (Continued on Page 4)



Pest

Bart McGuire had just announced a shocker: The Women's Tennis Association was moving its year-end Chase Championships out of the United States to Germany.

A mostly American venture with a worldwide schedule, the WTA is growing increasingly aware of Europe and Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

As head of the WTA, McGuire, a mild-mannered lawyer with the trim look of a studious jock, stared down the barrel and took questions from reporters beneath the stands of Arthur Ashe Stadium.

(Disclosure: McGuire and I have known each other for nearly 25 years, beginning when we were residents of Pelham Manor, NY; he holds a 2-0 career advantage over me on clay).

Now, my former neighbor was telling the international tennis press as gently as he could that except for the U.S. Open, New York was no longer going to be a prime venue for the hottest tour in tennis: the women.

McGuire ticked off the reasons: more prize money in Munich, up from \$2 million to \$3 million; world-class

Women's Tour: Career Path for Aztecs?

amenities for players and media; a way to shorten the season and ease travel stress; and recognition of Europe's growing strength in tennis and television ratings.

As the news sunk in, a question formed in my mind: What role, if any, do college players from America have in a globalized WTA? Over the last 15 years, perhaps 15 Aztecs have played satellites and main draws. This year, Julie Chidley and Katia Karrento played in Europe.

McGuire's reply was diplomatic (he played an off-stage role in the Iran hostage crisis 20 years ago and remains the soul of discretion).

"We have a number of players who have come through the colleges, then gone on to successful professional careers," he said.

"That's probably not the



Aztec Tennis Reporter Photos

McGuire

Ziegenfuss

most prominent career track for top-level players. I mean, it's a different way of professional development.

Does WTA see colleges as a source of players?

"It has not historically been a significant source of players at the very top level," he said. "It has been a source of players in the Top 50 or the Top 100."

The hard, conventional wisdom is that going to college first wastes time.

But Aztec Valerie Ziegenfuss, whose daughter is just embarking on the tour (See "The Ziegenfuss Legacy," Page 1) sees an opportunity.

College players are not a significant factor yet," she says. "But I am hoping that with Allison's entry after two years (in college), this may be a pathway that other kids will follow."

Ziegenfuss thinks young players with promise will find college a place to develop

skills they need on the tour.

"Unless you are a phenom," she says, "it's very difficult. If you go to college...it will put a head on your shoulders."

"College teaches you organizational skills," Ziegenfuss says. She joined the tour in 1968 at 19, the same age as Allison.

"Getting your clothes washed, checking into hotels, traveling on a college team, you do all that," she says.

The only drawback: lack of match play. With only two team matches a week, she says, some players still need to develop match toughness.

Even so, Ziegenfuss, who teaches top 14-year-olds to win International Tennis Federation points, says top college players, such as the USD's Zuzana Lesenarova, adapt quickly.

"Lesenarova (a Russian) used our American college system and our tennis system, and now she's out on the circuit."

If Ziegenfuss is right, despite all the misconceptions, college may well turn out to be an important career path into the WTA.

If so, Mr. McGuire will be more than happy to see you.

· **John Martin (1957)**

Dear ATR: Appreciation, Correction, Appraisal, and Thanks

Dear ATR: I especially liked the most recent issue (Vol 2, No 3). Perhaps (it was) because of the team's success this year and the subsequent trip to Athens. We appreciate *Aztec Tennis Reporter*.

**Rick Bay
San Diego**

The writer is Executive Director of Athletics and Special Assistant to the President of San Diego State.

Dear ATR: I played on the San Diego State team in 1978-79 and enjoy *Aztec Tennis Reporter*. It's very neat to get it, fun to see all this stuff.

I just read the article about Chris Numbers (1990-91) playing Hong Kong Davis Cup (Vol 2, No 3). It says (he was) the first (Aztec) invited to the NCAA championships in both singles and doubles. I have to report a correction: I actually played in the NCAA Championship in 1979 in both singles and doubles. So, I might have been the first one to be invited in both events.

**Pat Kearney
San Diego**

Editor's Note: Our apology to Pat Kearney. Chris Numbers was told (and told us) he was the first but obviously was not.

Dear ATR: I especially enjoyed the coverage of the recruitment of foreign players (Vol 2, No 2). It is controversial and I believe it has improved American tennis. Title IX is something else. Limiting scholarships for men's tennis because women don't play football is just patently absurd.

**Bob Combs
Havelock, NC**

Dear ATR: Thanks for sending the *Aztec Tennis Reporter*. You've done a great job with it. Your efforts are much appreciated.

My desire is to share the success of my dream, as a

gesture to say thanks and to praise others for their patience and understanding.

At the 2000 National 45 Hard Courts, with a very talented partner and friend, Bob Wright, we won the Gold Ball.

Am I making too much of this? Maybe so, but dreams are what fuel life. Whether you're Pete Sampras or just an amateur like me, living life with a purpose is what it's all about.

**Larry Belinsky
Rancho Santa Fe**

Until now, the writer was a doubles finalist in the National 40 Clay Court, National 45 Hard Court, and National 45 Grass Court Championships.

Where Are We Now? The Great Search Continues

1970

Karen Reinke Bishop (1973-74) plays two-women volleyball at Moonlight Beach % couple of times a week+and stays in shape by raising five children seven days a week at home. As an Aztec, she won the national collegiate doubles title in 1974 with Ann Lebedeff, who now coaches Pomona Pritzer. Until two years ago, Karen played tennis regularly at the La Jolla Recreation Center, then discovered beach volleyball and a surprising number of former tennis players who come to compete. Before transferring to San Diego State, Karen attended Pasadena City College, where she won the



BISHOP'S BROOD: Steve Bishop, holding lamb, and Karen (Reinke) Bishop (1973-74), have five children, from left, Jeff, 16; Trevor, 15; Matthew, 13; Kelly, 11; and Joel, 10. As an Aztec, Karen won national college doubles title in 1974.

Southern California junior college championship. She won the Ojai singles crown as well as the doubles title with partner Lebedeff. She was unbeaten in singles in team play in her junior and senior years and recalls winning %almost

every tournament+except Tucson (in her senior year). Playing in the national college championships at Kalamazoo, MI, she reached the round of 16 before losing in three sets in a tiebreaker to %one of the twins from Arizona State.+(Who

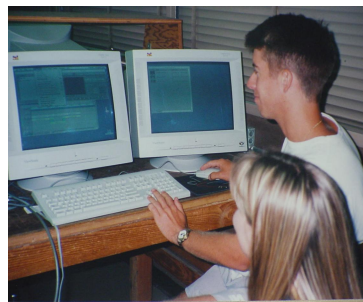
says tennis players have total recall?) %I would have beaten her,+she recalls, %would have been ranked fourth.+It was, she says with a laugh: %One of those coulda, woulda things.+Her husband, Steven, is an attorney.

Blair O'Hara: Documentarian from Down Under

There are no words of narration, only music and the sounds of play and work.

More than a dozen Aztec tennis players from the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 teams are the stars of a unique series of videos produced by Blair O'Hara, an Australian who played sixth singles and doubles and is now completing his final year of classes.

O'Hara is a natural television performer who, as a communications major, has a gift of presentation. For a class project, he played a crocodile



ATR Staff Photos

AUSSIE AUTEUR: Editing tapes, center, with a fellow Aztec, Crystal Fambrini, O'Hara, who performs on tape, left, and on court, right, has created canvases showing the two Aztec teams in 2-year span .

hunter who clowns his way onto a mock tv cooking show to explain the best ways to prepare a tasty dish.

And as a fly on the wall for the tennis

teams, he succeeds in producing stirring images.

All the elements are here: the pep talks, the drills and exercise, the road trip to Santa Bar-

bara (and Adam Webster's house for overnight stay and meals by Adam's mother, Elaine), the jokes and the gritty, yet cheerful, spirit, as the Aztecs

compete in intercollegiate tennis.

All he needs now is a duplicating machine and an O'Hara shelf at Blockbuster.

• J.M.

Videotapes Showing Aztec Tennis Life in 2 Years On and Off the Road



FRAME-BY-FRAME: Three scenes from O'Hara's chronicles of Aztec players in the midst of competition.

Reality Bites: Players Face Money Woes

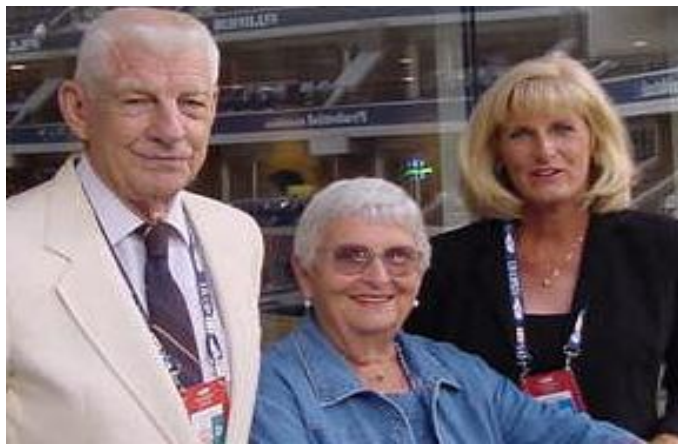
(Continued from Page 1)
year's expenses, which remain to be paid.

Three fifth-year athletes, their eligibility exhausted, are struggling to come up with funds to replace money they expected from the Athletic Department. Under ordinary circumstances, Blair O'Hara, Laura Aguero, and Lisa Papi would be eligible for tuition assistance while they complete class requirements. But budget cuts caused the department to curtail assistance.

O'Hara, an Australian who lost many of his general education credits when he transferred from Weber State, lacks 24 units for a degree. (See Documentarian from Down Under, Page 3). To earn money, he teaches tennis part time and washes the SDSU tennis courts.

Aguero, a Mexican citizen, is tutoring athletes in Spanish and business. As a foreigner, she and O'Hara pay \$250 per unit. Papi works within the department for needed cash.

Coach Peter Mattera says the staff feels an obligation to help because we demand so much of their time+ representing SDSU.



ATR Staff Photo

COACHING CLAN: Retired Aztec coach George Ziegenfuss with wife, Jean, and daughter, Valerie.

The Ziegenfuss Legacy

(Continued from Page 1)
because he coached Aztec tennis teams in parts of three decades (1940s, 50s, 60s), while keeping his day job as Aztec basketball coach.

He encouraged her (Valerie) to go into tennis at 9 or 10, he recalled. The senior Ziegenfuss is a member of the Aztec Hall of Fame. She entered the tournaments. She succeeded in spite of my coaching, he laughs.

So why didn't Granddaughter Allison become an Aztec?

It was a last-second decision, says Valerie. About flipped. All along, it was SDSU. Then, after a recruiting

trip...Allison decided she wanted the adventure of going away to school.+

San Diego State's loss was Arizona State's gain. After two years of Pac 10 competition, Allison emerged as a top college player and now has turned pro, following in her mother's footsteps.

At week's end, Jean Ziegenfuss, wife, mother and grandmother, stood high above the Ashe Stadium center court and beamed: We're very proud.+

For good reason: Granddaughter Allison was on her way, and the Ziegenfuss legacy had a new chapter.

Aztecs See Strong Year For 2 Teams

(Continued from Page 1)
foreign transfers could bolster the Aztecs' prospects even more.

Two newcomers have already arrived: Nick Varvais, who played number two singles at UC Irvine, and Khalid Naffa, who played for Saddleback College in Orange County and won an ATP point this summer in Jordan.

Coach Peter Mattera says the women also appear headed for a big year. We look pretty strong, he says.

Senior Whitney Wells of Fresno returns for a final season; Juniors Julie Chidley of Riverside and Katey Becker of Orange County will be joined by sophomores Lindsey Hedberg of Austin, TX; Katia Karrento of Aland, Finland, and Emelie Bengtsson of Stockholm, Sweden.

The newcomers are freshman Erin Polowski of Boise, ID, and sophomores Silvia Tornier, of Hamburg, Germany, and Kristine Avendano of San Diego, who won a spot in a tryout.

We were impressed with the very first ball she (Avendano) hit,+said Mattera.

Last year, the Aztecs fought their way to the NCAA regional finals in Winston-Salem, NC.



Aztec Tennis Reporter

FOR THE
SAN DIEGO
STATE
TENNIS
COMMUNITY

Founder-Editor:
John Martin
202-222-7140
Circulation:
Lori Mitchell

Tennis Coaches
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 265