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—The Editor

Tale of 2 Continents: Some Aztecs Playing A Grass Court Circuit

TAURANGA, New Zealand Ð After church in this seaport town of 90,000, a schoolteacher stepped forward to address the visitors: “You must come to lunch. I’ve got a grass tennis court.”

At a modest home on the outskirts of town, amid flowing wild grass, vivid flowers, and fruit trees, Bruce Kitchingman wheeled out an aging lawn-mower, pushed it beneath a bower, and plunged into the backyard.

In ten minutes, the lanky New Zealand homeowner had trimmed his court-sized space, dragged a net into position, and pronounced it Centre Court.

Despite the absence of chalk lines (for which the host apologized), we hit for nearly an hour, stopping only to retrieve balls from flower beds and orchard.

At lunch, Kitchingman recalled his visits to Wimbledon 25 years earlier while he and his wife, SDSU Athletic Dept

Aztec Men Win 2005 Mountain West Title

MOUNTAIN WEST VICTORS Aztecs smile in triumph after 4-2 defeat of Brigham Young in finals of 2005 conference championships at San Diego’s Barnes Tennis Center. From left, Oliver Maiberger, assistant coach; Eugenio Romero; Gene Carswell, head coach; Armando Carrascosa, Markus Dickhardt; Dontia Haynes (top); Daniel Jung (middle); Benedikt Stronk (kneeling with trophy); Matt Bittner; Christian Groh, and Nima Ossirah. The team earned bid to NCAA Championships.

After 4-5 Start, 13 Straight Triumphs and the Crown

Rebounding from an indifferent start to a promising season, San Diego State’s men’s tennis team regained supremacy in the Mountain West Conference with a season-ending blitz of 13 consecutive opponents, including the MWC Championship final. There, the Aztecs claimed a 4-2 victory over Brigham Young University, earning a berth in the NCAA Championship playoffs for the first time since 2003.

Against 24th ranked California in the NCAA regional event, the SDSU team fell, 4-1.

Daniel Jung won the lone Aztec point, defeating Ken Nakahara, 6-2, 6-2.

The Mountain West Conference chose Aztec Gene Carswell as Coach of the Year and five Aztecs won all-conference team honors: Markus Dickhardt, Armando Carrascosa, and Benedikt

Aztec Alex Waske Vaults to the Top

WIMBLEDON Ð San Diego State All-American Alex Waske of Germany (1998-2000) has jumped to tennis highest ranks.

In June, Waske defeated the French Open Champion, Rafael Nadal of Spain, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, in the Gerry Weber Open in Halle, Germany. The victory snapped Nadal’s winning streak at 24 matches.

In May, Waske teamed with Tommy Haas to win the deciding point in Germany’s 2-1 victory over Argentina for the World Team Cup title.
Aztec Grass Circuit: Learning to Hack, Roll, Shave, Weed, and Enjoy

Continued from Page 1

Brenda, were working in London. Long after their return to New Zealand, he said, the couple negotiated a compromise. "She said I could put in a court," Kitchingman said, "as long as I did not build fences."

That way, he explained, it left room for her to plant a garden and him to create a place to play his beloved sport of tennis.

He spent about $1500 for golf course seeds and hiring a worker to power roll the turf.

Kitchingman has played many championship finals on his Centre Court over the years, maneuvering his two sons into the sport in their childhoods, rallying and competing with them in fierce matches, and sending them off into the world, thinking, no doubt, that every proper home has a grass tennis court.

— John Martin (1957)

Summer on Grass
An Aztec’s Delight

LONG BEACH, CALIF — Last summer I journeyed to San Diego to visit an old friend and fellow Aztec player, Jim Kellogg, who had built a lawn tennis court in his backyard.

It wasn’t lawn tennis in the classic sense. Jim’s court is no longer than two service courts. One side is longer by 20 feet than the other. Sometimes you hit the ball into the swimming pool or under the swing, or you chase your shot barefoot over the fence into a prickly ravine. You play with various balls (plastic-covered foam works best). You obey only the rules you and your children make up, and soon you achieve the desired goal of all racquet sports — to have fun.

Jim’s inspiration has caused more lawn courts to spring up. My court building method? Simply hack out and mow it, then patiently wait for it to overcome the growth, infested back yard, roll it as flat as Salt Lake, position the sprinklers off to the side, and lay down some gorgeous green Kentucky Hybrid Bermuda (35 cents a square foot).

Roll it, shave it, nurse it, and weed it. Try to keep the dogs off and in a few months, throw up a net. Voilà! It’s lawn tennis, but perhaps it has a more practical application for these leaner times. It’s mini tennis, with a devotion to fun over duty, a truly grassroots approach to teaching children about our great game.

Then after the racquet sports, the net comes down and you can play croquet, or hold foot races, or even do a bit of lawn bowling, which is what Jim’s friend Duncan Depew enjoys on his slightly larger backyard court. Jim says Duncan’s court is better, and this has prompted Kellogg to renovate his grass court.

I call me crazy but I am going to overhaul the whole thing, he says Jim. My court is not as flat as it could be, and I am going to move the swing set and get more feet. And my diligent efforts? In spite of two successful garden parties, there is much to improve. Hopes run high for the glory of spring, which kicks off with a lawn scalping, then patient waiting as the Bermuda hopefully grows in, sturdy and green, then more lawn rolling, nursing, weeding, and lots of summer fun. — Tom Penner (1984)

Dear ATR: Where Have You Been?

Dear ATR: I got my last copy in December (2004) and now it’s July. What’s going on?

— Name Withheld on Request

Dear NWOR: After six years of publishing a free printed newsletter, we are streamlining operations. To save time (and conserve the editor’s funds), ATR is going digital, offering a free, full-color edition delivered online. To each reader, I guarantee that, as always, your name and address will never be sold or shared with anyone. Thanks very much for your support all these years.

Please send your email address for The Next Thing.

Cheers, John Martin, Editor

Dear ATR: You certainly do a super job. Most interesting, learning of (Alex) Olmedo’s original trip to California (Coming to America ATR, Vol 6, No 2).

Dan Magill Co-Chairman and Curator ITA College Tennis Hall of Fame, Athens, GA
Hugh McArthur: I’d be 94 in September. I’m a retired businessman. I live in Mission Hills with my granddaughter, Sarah. McArthur (she’s a writer). I was the top Southern California high school player in my day while at San Diego High. I won at Fullerton and Ojai and many San Diego tournaments. I was the county men’s champion a number of times. I went to state college, quit, got married, and went back to it. In 1940, I started a little business at 3d and G Streets with several friends. About 1949, we built a steel yard down on Harbor Drive, where the bridge now goes across to Coronado. We moved 1,000 tons of steel out of there. We had 80 people; then we repaired and sold tractors and farm machinery from International Harvester. I sold the business in 1972 and retired at 62. I played tennis all the time I was working and I stayed with it until I was 78. My teammates? Maurice Hoke studied to be an engineer. Last I saw of Ben Hayward, he was running a big apartment building on Sixth Avenue, across from Balboa Park; Ned Anthony (the son of a Bank of America officer) was working in the parts department of an automobile agency; Hal Hanson (not identified in picture) became a banker.

Maurice Hoke

Ben Hayward

Ralph Hargraves

Julius Rainwater

Leslie Wilbanks coached one of the best teams in San Diego State history according to the 1932 Del Sudoeste yearbook. A native Midwesterner, Wilbanks coached movie stars and celebrities in Hollywood after leaving San Diego State. A stylish dresser and devotee of flashy sports cars, Wilbanks tried acting but died in a mysterious 1940s shooting incident that Los Angeles police ruled a suicide. To this day, some family members told ATR, they suspect that fun-loving Wilbanks, who lived his life to the fullest, was the victim of foul play.

Ben Hayward made his fortune in real estate and kept up his tennis for many years. Ben Press described him as a very good player and a stalwart in the Balboa Tennis Club. He made sure kids were invited to play. It was one of the few times we got to play with new balls. Hayward became an excellent golfer, Press said, and served for years as director of a major golf tournament held each summer at the Desert Inn Hotel in Palm Springs.

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Aztec Men Regain Mountain West Crown; Carswell Coach of Year

Stronk in singles and Jung and Donita Haynes in doubles.

In succession, the Aztecs defeated William & Mary (4-0), Harvard (5-2), UC Santa Barbara (5-2), Utah (6-1), BYU (4-3), UNLV (5-2), USD (5-2), Hawaii (7-0), Denver (5-2), New Mexico (5-2), Air Force Academy (5-2), UNLV (4-3), and BYU (4-2).

During the year, Stronk defeated two highly regarded players: 13th-ranked Arnaud Lecloerec of Virginia Commonwealth, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(5), and 32nd-ranked Alex Vlaski of Washington, 7-6(5), 7-6(9).

In March, Brown, the eventual 2005 Ivy League champion, and Rice University topped the Aztecs by identical 4-2 scores at the Blue Gray Championship in Montgomery, Alabama.

That was the Aztecs' bottomed out, Carswell said. With a 4-5 record, the Aztecs stiffened and began their winning streak. In the conference championship tournament, Stronk won the deciding point, beating Nima Roshan of BYU, 6-7(1), 6-3, 6-0.

With a 16-6 record, the Aztecs rose to 35th in the nation, 40 places higher than last year. Stronk was 77th in singles, Markus Dickhardt 94th; at one stage, Armando Carrascosa ranked 112th.

Stronk was twice Mountain West player of the week; Haynes, Dickhardt, and Carrascosa were chosen for the honor once each.

With Two Big Upsets, Aztec Women Flirt with Top 25, Gain NCAA Bid

Starting the season near 65th in U.S. college tennis, San Diego State's women's team staged two of the year's biggest upsets, defeating 8th-ranked Washington, 5-2, and 28th-ranked Michigan, 4-3, pushing them briefly into the top 25.

At season's end, they earned an at-large place in the NCAA Championships, where they fell to Arizona State, 4-0, in the Los Angeles regional.

It was the Aztecs' 18th post-season appearance.

"We are happy that we were selected," Coach Peter Mattera said. "This is a great reward for...a great season."

It wasn't easy. Struggling to create momentum, the Aztecs fell to 12th-ranked Southern California, 7-0, to 42nd-ranked Pepperdine, 4-3, and to 17th-ranked Cal Berkeley, 5-2, before winning six of their final eight matches. That string included a 4-3 victory over cross-town rival USD. The Aztecs lost to BYU, the eventual champion, in the semifinals of the Mountain West tournament. With a final won-loss record of 16-11, the SDSU women ended the regular season ranked 47th. In 2004, they compiled a 9-15 record and ranked 72nd in the U.S.

In April, Dita Hauerlandova won Inside Tennis' player of the month award.

Hauerlandova and Indra Erichsen both earned Mountain West player of the week awards.

In her final year at SDSU, Erichsen won the 2005 Intercollegiate Tennis Association West Region Cissie Leary Sportsmanship Award after being chosen for the all-Mountain West Conference team for the fourth time in four seasons. She compiled a 13-9 record playing with four doubles partners.

The ITA citation praised Erichsen's dedication and commitment to her team, which enhanced (its) performance and exemplified the spirit of college tennis.

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FOR THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY

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