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In a New Climate, Collegians Playing Pro Tennis Events

Aztec Julia Trunk of Germany won 21 matches in the 2010 SDSU season, ranks seventh with 68 career singles victories, and won conference academic honors all four years.



Julia Trunk

She was “not ready” to turn pro when she entered college

in 2008, she said. But in 2012, when she joined the women’s tour, she discovered it was too late.

“The girls I was playing were the age I was when I entered college,” she said.

A fiercely competitive college player, Trunk won only 2 of 15 pro matches and ranked 1,209 in the world when she abandoned her dream.

But now, in a reversal with apparent NCAA blessings, college coaches are finding ways to sharpen their players’ skills at a professional level while they are still at-

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Aztecs Enter 92nd College Tennis Year



Aztec Tennis Reporter Photos

Freddy Gelbrich of Isernhagen, Germany, returns for sophomore year as an Aztec.

Germans Flood His Roster

A tide of talented Germans has surged onto the 2014 Aztec men’s tennis team, landing five of nine positions and promising to lend a distinctly Teutonic quality to Aztec tennis fortunes.

On the roster are Thorsten Bertsch of Mannheim, Freddy Gelbrich of Isernhagen, Hendrik Jebens of Stuttgart, Jonas Meinzer of Buggingen, and Max Boewer-Stelter of Berlin.

“They all want to come,” said Gene Carswell, head coach of the men’s team.

“Good people know good people, and we certainly have had a stream of good Germans in the past, and so we ended up with two more.”

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Aztec Milen Ianakiev, a Bulgarian, lives in Germany, where his father is a tennis pro.

Harvard, USC, Duke Among 23 Opponents Coming to San Diego

San Diego State’s two inter-collegiate tennis teams launch their Spring 2014 seasons on January 18th with a pair of doubleheaders at the Aztec Tennis Center.

The Aztec women, coached by Peter Mattera, in his 21st season, face UC Riverside in the morning and Cal State Fullerton in the afternoon.

The Aztec men, led by Gene Carswell in his 10th year as head coach, meet Nevada Reno in the morning and UC Riverside in the afternoon.

Begun as a men’s tennis club in 1922, the Aztec tennis program enters its 92nd year with 23 home matches (see page 4 for times). The public is invited. Admission is free.

Both teams are defending champions in the Mountain West Conference. Both lost in the finals of the 2013 conference tournament. The women received an invitation to NCAA post-season play and fell to Baylor, 4-1, at Evanston, Ill.

Working at Carswell’s side, Assistant Men’s Coach Jeff Thomsen, and volunteers Larry Willens and Derek Siddiqui have helped assemble a squad of nine players who will face eight teams in home matches.

Assistant Women’s Coach Lindsey Gamp, in her 9th season, has worked with Mattera to assemble a team that will play 15 opponents at home.

Their top foes include USC,

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tending university and college classes.

Aztec Steve Adamson played SDSU tennis (1996-99), toured the pro circuit (1999-2001), and now operates the Steve Adamson Junior Tennis Academy at the Pacific Beach Tennis Club.

College should come first, he said. "That way you've got your education in the bag. If good things happen, you've got a career. If not, you've got something to fall back on."

The trend, Adamson said, is for the world's top juniors to go to college, and still play pro events during the fall season. Juniors Cameron Norrie of Great Britain, recruited by Alabama, and Wayne Montgomery of South Africa, recruited by Texas A&M, both held top 10 ITF rankings during 2013.

In a major shift, Adamson said, college coaches now actively schedule their players into qualifying rounds of Challenger professional tournaments, allowing their top competitors to sustain a high level of play. Previously, the schools and the NCAA frowned on the practice. No longer, Adamson said.

"The college coaches don't jump on you if you want to play pro. If they want to keep you, that's an accepted thing now," he said.

One of Adamson's students, Zoe Scandalis, earned a top 10 NCAA ranking as a USC fresh-



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NCAA Champion Steve Johnson of USC at French Open.

man and is now a junior. "The pro tournaments in the fall were not as accepted" even two years ago, he said. . Now, he said "USC pays for them to go to all of these tournaments as the fall schedule. They're going to South Carolina, they're going to Toronto to the Challengers," Adamson said.

"Why do you need to make the choice to go pro?" he said. You can have the best of both worlds, still playing pro and you're in college."

At San Diego State, Adamson said, the men's tennis coach, "Gene (Carswell) just started doing that with the Futures here."

One example of the newfound success of college-trained players, Adamson said, was Ohio State's Blaz Rola of Slovenia, an All-American all four years who won the 2013 NCAA singles title in May, then leaped to 185th in the world.



Adamson

Steve Johnson, who played all four years at USC, joined the men's tour in 2012 after winning the NCAA men's singles title in 2011 and 2012. Would he have been better off turning pro before college?

"I wasn't ready," he said. "I didn't want to be a floater on the Futures and Challenger qualifying."

"It's been the best decision I think I could have made," he told *ATR*. "I got stronger, I got a million times better in college." In less than two years on tour, Johnson ranked 150th, earning \$464,000.

Defending Mountain West Champs, Aztecs Enter 92nd Year of College Tennis

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Louisville, Harvard, and South Florida.

Also at home, the men face William & Mary, North Carolina Wilmington, Penn, Duke, UCSB and Hawaii.

Together, the two rosters contain

17 players. The men: Max Boewer-Stelter, Thorsten Bertsch, Juan Florez, Freddy Gelbrich, Milen Ianakiev, Hendrik Jebens, Andranik Khachatryan, Jonas Meinzer, and Hunter Nicholas. The women: Laura An-

tonana Iriarte, Kristin Buth, Kennedy Davis, Isabelle Hoorn, Hailey Johnson, Olivia Larsson, Tami Nguyen, and Dora Somoracz.

Last year, the women ranked 39th in the nation, the men 43rd.

As Germans Flood His Roster, Coach Carswell Explains: 'They All Want to Come'

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Jebens and Meinzer came in the fall. A third German, Boewer-Stelter, arrived in January, replacing Marvin Tawasi of Mosbach, a German sophomore who left after the fall season.

Another new Aztec, Milen Ianakiev, lives in Elz, Germany, where his father, a Bulgarian, is a teaching pro connected to the Bulgarian Davis Cup

team, Carswell said.

Last fall, the leading Aztec men's player was Bertsch, a German sophomore who earned ATP points at Laguna Nigel.

"If we were to pencil in that lineup today, based on the fall

results," Carswell said in October, "he would definitely have earned the number one spot."

Aztec Alex Waske, one of the first Germans to attend San Diego State, led the Aztec men to the NCAA

Sweet Sixteen in 2000, then turned professional and became one of the world's top doubles players.

Aztec Oliver Maiberger of Germany won the 2001 NCAA National Men's Indoor Doubles Championship with Ryan Redondo of San Diego. Maiberger won All-America honors in five categories and was inducted into the Aztec Athletic Hall of Fame in 2009.

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Spanning 60 Years, Aztec's Family Tree Reveals a Tennis Dynasty

In 1953, Sister Mary Helen stepped into Bill Jack's eighth grade classroom in Pacific Beach, with only one thing in mind.

"You, you, and you," she said, "are going to learn to play tennis."

Jack and two classmates looked at each other, uncertain tennis was for them.

The principal was insistent. "You better hurry up. You're representing St Brigid's in the city tournament in three weeks."

That afternoon, at a nearby recreation center, Jack and his two companions checked out worn racquets and used balls and walked onto an asphalt court, puzzling over lines, strokes and scoring.

Three weeks later, Jack won his first tournament match in the 1953 Harper Ink Interscholastic tournament in San Diego.



Bill Jack holds his 1956 trophy.

"I got the bug really about a year after we started," Jack said. "At the time, I had no idea about trying to hand this down to the family."

In 1955, Jack reached the Ink final. In 1956, he won the Bob Carrothers Sportsmanship Award, in memory of the 1940 National Junior Champion from Coronado.

At San Diego State College, Jack led the Aztec men's team all four years. As a senior, he won both the California Collegiate Athletic Association singles and doubles titles.

In 1960, Jack, the son of a building contractor, started a banking career in Los Angeles. He married Mary Hill, a fellow Aztec, and began a family.

Their son Steve played high school tennis and two years at Pasadena City College, recruited by the legendary Jerry Tarkanian.

When their son Michael began playing tennis in high school, both plunged in.

"I played almost every day through high school and college," Michael said.

"I had one of the best coaches in the area – my father, who literally worked with me almost every day for the first year or two to develop my strokes and tennis IQ."

In 1983, Michael graduated magna cum laude from Cal State Northridge. His tennis game was good enough for a summer on the



tennisrecruiting.com

In December, Devon Jack ranked 120th in the nation.



CSUN Sundial

In 1983, Mike Jack led men from Cal State Northridge.



SDSU Del Sudoeste

In 1958, Bill Jack led Aztec men's team to 11-1 record, won all-conference honors in singles and doubles.

European satellite circuit before entering Georgetown Law School, where he graduated cum laude.

Two years ago, Michael Jack's daughter, Devon, then 13, switched to tennis after excelling at soccer and baseball.

"I have passed along the tennis gene to my daughter," he said. He and his wife, Nam, said Devon, playing number one singles, helped San Marino High win the California Interscholastic Federation Division II title the last two years.

In December, Devon Jack ranked 29th in Girls 16s in Southern California and 120th in the nation. Earlier, she ranked 119th among all sophomores in America.

"My goal is to play college tennis," she told *ATR*.

"Hopefully a Division One school, maybe an Ivy League school back east."

In July, she won a national level 3 regional tournament in Norman, Okla, and was undefeated in a USTA zonal competition in Salt Lake City, and won a USTA Girls' 16 tournament title in Scottsdale.

"She's following in my father's footsteps," said her father, Mike.

"My grandparents give me a lot of support," Devon Jack said. "They're always there; they come to a lot of my tournament matches and my high school matches. I love them."

In 2007, Bill Jack and his doubles partner, Mike Lo, ranked fifth in the 65-plus national doubles standings, winning the Fiesta Bowl Scottsdale Senior title in Arizona. They led their Flint Canyon Tennis Club team to the USTA Senior League finals in Florida.

Asked if he saw a family genetic tennis connection, Bill Jack laughed: "Do I look like a Nobel Prize winner?"

"I don't know anything about the cell makeup or the DNA, or anything like that," he said with a chuckle.

"I guess I owe Sister Mary Helen a debt of gratitude," Jack said.



Devon Jack, 15, holds 2013 trophy.

ATR Readers Invited to 23 Home Matches at Aztec Tennis Center



Boewer-Stelter



Bertsch



Florez



Gelbrich



Ianakiev



Jebens



Khachatryan



Meinzer



Nicholas

DATE	DAY	M/W	OPPONENT	TIME
Jan 18	Sat	Men	Nevada	
Jan 18	Sat	Women	UC Riverside	9 am
Jan 18	Sat	Men	UC Riverside	
Jan 18	Sat	Women	CS Fullerton	4 pm
Feb 1	Sat	Women	UC Davis	12 noon
Feb 6	Thurs	Women	UC Irvine	2 pm
Feb 10	Mon	Women	Hawaii	2 pm
Feb 18	Tues	Women	USC	2 pm
Feb 23	Sun	Women	Loyola Marymount	12 noon
Feb 27	Thurs	Women	South Florida	2 pm
Mar 4	Tues	Men	William & Mary	
Mar 8	Sat	Men	UNC Wilmington	11 am
Mar 12	Wed	Men	Penn	
Mar 13	Thurs	Men	Duke	
Mar 14	Fri	Women	Louisville	2 pm
Mar 19	Wed	Women	Harvard	2 pm
Mar 23	Sun	Women	Boise State	2 pm
Apr 4	Fri	Women	Nevada	11 am
Apr 5	Sat	Men	UC Santa Barbara	12 noon
Apr 6	Sun	Women	San Jose State	
Apr 9	Wed	Women	San Francisco	2 pm
Apr 9	Wed	Men	at USD	3 pm
Apr 15	Tues	Women	USD	2 PM
Apr 16	Wed	Men	Hawaii	



Antonana



Buth



Davis



Hoorn



Johnson



Larsson



Nguyen



Somoracz

Photos:
Aztec
Tennis
Reporter



Carswell



Thomsen



Willens



Siddiqui



Mattera



Gamp

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