

# Aztec Tennis Reporter

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## One Day, Two Upsets: Aztec Tennis Chemistry Changed

### How Defeating #21 South Carolina and #37 Arizona Energized SDSU's Teams

By late February, San Diego State's tennis prospects looked grim. The Aztec men had lost half their eight matches, the Aztec women had suffered five consecutive defeats. Six weeks into the season, neither squad held a ranking.

Then, on a single day, February 20, the clouds parted and the teams scored simultaneous upsets on their home courts at the Aztec Tennis Center.

The Aztec men routed 21st ranked South Carolina, 7-0. The Aztec women stunned 37th ranked Arizona, 5-2.

The twin victories set off a positive chain of events. Within days, both teams began winning streaks that pulled them into national rankings: The men rose to 35th by adding victories over 75th-ranked Rice, 6-1; 22nd-ranked Cal, 4-2; 65th-ranked Boise State, 4-0; William and Mary, 4-1, and 51st ranked Iowa, 5-1.

"Our guys -- every position -- are starting to expect to get it done," said Coach Gene Carswell,



**Marko Goles-Babic**



**Freddy Gelbrich**

"And without a doubt, winning breeds winning. It's becoming a habit for us. And because it's becoming a habit, these guys are starting to look at themselves a

little differently."

So did the Mountain West Conference. It awarded four consecutive player of the week honors to four Aztec men: Thorsten Bertsch (March 4), Hendrik Jebens (March 12), Freddy Gelbrich (March 18), and Marko Goles-Babic (March 25). In all, Gelbrich won the award three

times (Feb. 18, March 18, and April 8). Goles-Babic won it twice (Jan. 21 and March 25).

After their Arizona victory, the unranked Aztec women jumped to 43rd in the nation and Tami Nguyen was chosen as Mountain West Player of the Week (Feb. 26).



**EYE BALL: Tami Nguyen spots it.**

"That was our first ranked win of the year and also

seems to have been a little bit of a turning point," said Coach Peter Mattera. "The girls, af-

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# On Duty Now: Chair Umpires for Most Aztec Tennis Matches



Lea Borck



Jill Spencer



Vickie Berrettini



David Isaacs



Bob Christianson



Mark Kasimatis



Mike Kelly



Bob Berrettini



Mario Moreano



Mary Lynn Baker



Andre Lalias



Willie Daniels

A team of six uniformed chair umpires now conducts every Aztec conference tennis match under a mandate by the Mountain West Conference. The 16 umpires here were among those who served at the Aztec Tennis Center in 2015.



Jeanne Shane



Tony Perez



Fredde Ramos



Eric Mann

In all, about 30 umpires work San Diego's college tennis circuit of five colleges and universities: San Diego State, USD, UC San Diego, Point Loma Nazarene, and San Diego Christian.

The most seasoned umpires serve at professional tournaments, including the U.S. Open

"I think it's really important, especially playing the no-ad format," said Gene Carswell, Aztec men's coach. "You want it to be decided by the tennis and you don't want to have an unfair call."

Their presence has another impact, said Umpire Mario Moreano: "It cuts down on disputes." Aztec women's

coach Peter Matera agreed: "It certainly helps keep the matches flowing better."

Some calls surprised players,

suggesting they had rarely heard them made in college matches previously patrolled by three officials roving from match to match.

"Foot fault!" said Umpire Jeanne Shane during an April Aztec match. The USD player looked startled, then grinned, shook his head, and served again.

In another match, Umpire Mark Kasimatis called "Point penalty! Audible obscenity." A USD player bristled, muttered to his coach, then sat down in silence.

When an Aztec player challenged his service call, Umpire Bob Christianson

leaned forward and said: "I've given you my opinion." End of discussion. Dawn of new era.

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# Where Are We Now? The Great Search Continues (1922-2015)

**1 GENE CARSWELL:** I'm in my 12th season as head coach. Lanie and I have three kids now: Spence, 12; Duncan, 10, and Jori, 6. All hit tennis balls. This team was great, made NCAAs, won the conference. We had quality leaders: Benny Stronk, Markus Dickhardt, nobody would be denied a championship and got it done.

**8 DONTIA HAYNES** died in a motorcycle accident in 2005. A scholarship was established in his memory.

**9 MATT BITTNER:** I am living in San Diego. For two-and-a-half years I have been the Operations Supervisor at McGregor and Associates. We manage health benefit trusts, primarily for labor groups. I am not married, no children, enjoying the freedom of single life. After 8 years away, I have started hitting the courts again every couple weeks!

**2 DANIEL JUNG:** I'm a partner at Baumann AG, a management consulting (executive search) firm in Frankfurt. Married (our son arrived in March). Still hit the ball (tennis *and* golf) and follow Eintracht Frankfurt, my favorites!

**3 NIMA OSAREH:** I'm a pharmacist working in Washington, DC, (that's where I earned my degree from the College of Pharmacy at Howard University). I'm engaged to be married. Am I still playing tennis? Yes, quite a lot: three or four times a week, often with friends who also played college tennis!

**4 CHRISTIAN GROH:** I live near Encinitas with my girlfriend. I was at Indian Wells with Tommy Haas (full-time on his 2012-13 comeback). I work with Taylor Fritz, #3 junior in the world (best U.S. junior) and some weeks with the USTA.

**5 ARMANDO CARRASCOSA TORREA:** I'm an actor on Mexican television. Beginning about three years after this team picture was taken, I started playing characters in popular TV series ("Contrato de amor," "Pobre Diabla," "Profugas del Destino," and "Lateniente."). My newest telenovela is airing in the USA on Azteca America!



**6 BENEDIKT STRONK:** I am living in Frankfurt, working for the Schüttler Waske Tennis-University, founded and managed by Aztec Alex Waske. I do the marketing and love it! Not married, but most likely this will change sometime soon, same with the kids ;)

**7 OLIVER MAIBERGER:** I am living in Salzburg, Austria, working for Sirona Dental as Manager Sales Controlling Asia Pacific/Latin America. I spent 3 years in Asia (2 in Tokyo, 1 in Seoul) for Sirona. Not married, no children. I haven't been playing tennis much, started a

new sport (the triathlon) and finished my first Ironman in Frankfurt last year. I'm preparing for next triathlon now.



**12 DEVIN BOWEN:** I live in Fort Worth with my wife, Jackie. I'm assistant coach for Texas Christian University's men's team. I

**10 EUGENIO ROMERO:** I'm living in Ensenada. I own a brewery called Cervceria Wendlandt (glass left). I'm married and our daughter arrived in January. I play tennis for fun once in a while. Thanks for making this report!!! All my teammates are welcome to check out our brewpub or brewery at any time!



**11 MARKUS DICKHARDT:** I am married, living in Munich, Germany. We have a little daughter, 2 years old, and a second baby on the way. Still playing tennis (Bundesliga), but only for fun. Working

am still a huge Aztec fan and very happy to see Coach Carswell's success this year'.

in my own online businesses. One is called SchlagerPlanet.com, the largest online platform for German music. The other is a social media agency, Die



Ganze Welt ("The Whole World")

## How Two Upsets in a Single Day Changed Aztec Tennis Vision

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ter that match, said 'Hey, we're on a good path, making good progress, we just beat a very good team.'"

The women immediately began a surge, defeating Grand Canyon, 6-1; 48th-ranked Hawaii, 5-2, and North Texas State, 4-3.

Even when an inevitable letdown arrived — back-to-back 7-0 drubbings at the hands of 4th ranked USC and 9th ranked Cal — the Aztec women refused to fold without a fight. Against USC, Aztec Tami Nguyen took a set from 18th ranked Guilana Olmos, and Aztec Jana Buth won a set off 85th ranked Meredith Xepoleas.

Against California, Nguyen won the first set from 27th ranked Klara Fabikova and Aztec Paola Diez de Regules took a set from Cecilia Estlander.

The men refused to let down after their astonishing rout of the Gamecocks. Instead, they overpowered the 22nd ranked Cal Bears. Veteran volunteer men's coach Larry Willens was delighted. According to Carswell, Willens said: "Wow, this group has really become a team."

As the regular season ended, the Aztec women won seven of their last nine matches and finished at 13-10. The Aztec men also won seven of nine and finished at 17-7. The men ranked 38th in the nation, Freddy Gelbrich ranked 125th in singles



*Aztec Tennis Reporter Photos*

**SISTER POWER:** Aztecs Jana Buth, left, and Kristin Buth.

and Gelbrich and Hendrik Jebens ranked 60th in doubles.

At the Mountain West Conference tournament in Albuquerque, the Aztec women

fell in the quarterfinals, losing 4-3 to Wyoming in a marathon three-and-a-half hour match. "It was a great battle and really a terrific season I am very proud of them," said Mattera.

The Aztec men defeated UNLV but lost 4-1 in the Mountain West semifinals to Nevada.

Aztec Gelbrich and Nevada's Moez Chargui were selected as the 2015 Mountain West Conference's Co-Players of the Year.

In the 2015 NCAA Championships, the Aztec men drew their first post-season invitation in ten years. As at-large entrants, they upset 21st ranked University of San Diego, 4-3, in the first round, avenging a 4-2 loss to the Toreros a month earlier. Aztec Santiago Cevallos won the deciding point with a 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (3) victory over Ciaran Fitzgerald. The next day, the USC Trojans, defending NCAA champions, defeated the Aztecs 4-0. It was SDSU's best NCAA showing in 12 years. In 2002 and 2003, the Aztec men also reached the second round. In 2000, coached by John Nelson and led by Alex Waske, they defeated Washington and Pepperdine to gain the NCAA Sweet Sixteen.



**TOUCH:** Santiago Cevallos nails it