

# Aztec Tennis Reporter

VOL 19 NO 1

SERVING THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY SINCE 1998

January 2018

## Aztec's Tennis Skills Prove Master Stroke For a Tennis Drama Headed to New York

Nearly two years ago, when the Old Globe stage director telephoned, looking for a teaching pro, Geoff Griffin, director of tennis at San Diego's



Balboa Tennis Club, answered.

Last summer, *The Last Match*, a play about two professional tennis players, opened Off Broadway in

**Griffin** New York City.

Thanks to a decision by director Gaye Taylor Upchurch, the two actors swung imaginary rackets with remarkably realistic ground strokes and serving motions.

For tennis players starved for authenticity in dramas about their sport, it was a delicious sight.

Griffin, a 1985 SDSU graduate and local tennis pro, tutored the San Diego actors.

Mary Carrilo, a former touring pro and TV tennis analyst, taught the New York actors.

*The Last Match* is an explo-

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## SDSU Opening 96th Tennis Season



**TALENT TRANSFERS:** Magda Aubets of Spain and Arnaud Restifo of France join SDSU's rosters in the 96th season.

Bolstered by transfer students from Clemson, Oklahoma, and Virginia Commonwealth, San Diego State's two NCAA Division One tennis teams embark this month on the 96th year of Aztec tennis.

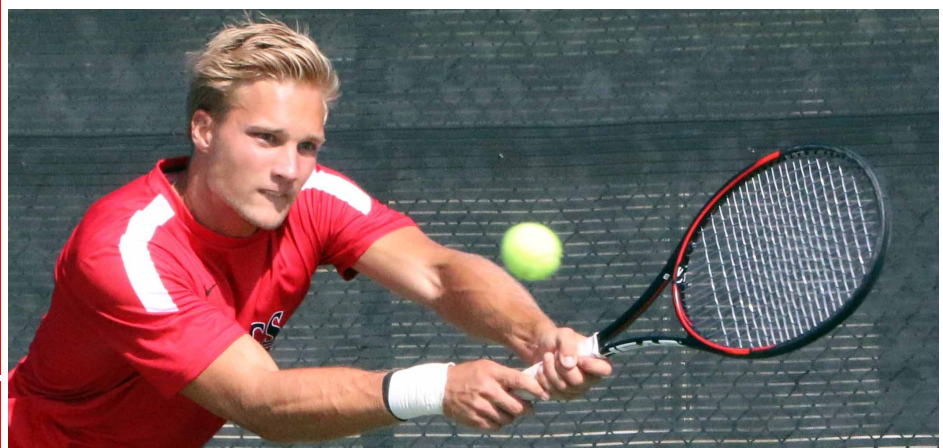
Led by head coaches Peter Mattera and Gene Carswell, the 19 student athletes (8 women and 11 men from 10 countries) are looking to

regain national rankings after difficult seasons last year.

"We're going to have a lot of depth," said Carswell, "and it's going to take the whole group, It's going to take the whole team.

"I'm optimistic about our chances and the best part about all this is our season will culminate here with our conference championship at San

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*Aztec Tennis Reporter Photos John Martin*

**COMPETITOR:** Joel Popov of Finland helps lead 2018 men.

# San Diego State Tennis Entering Its 96th Season

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Diego State. So that's the goal. The goal is to win the conference championship."

For Mattera, in his 24th year as head coach, the 2018 season looks promising.

"We've had a really, really wonderful fall," he said. "We have four new play-



**Mattera**

ers on an eight-person team, so half of it is a new team. We have two really good new freshmen, both from California," he said.

The new and returning teammates bonded well over the fall, he said, suggesting a cohesive group that will fight to claim matches for each other.

Mattera pointed to a series of ranked opponents — Dartmouth, USC, St Mary's and UC Berkeley among them — lined up for top matches,

"About 80% of it is at home," he said.

"We've got a schedule that gives



**Aztec Berta Acero of Spain lines up a backhand.** *Aztec Tennis Reporter photo*

us a lot of good opportunities to get some nationally ranked wins, get back in there.

We've got a lot of great home matches so we don't have to travel which usually increas-

## Aztec Wins Pro of Year Honors

Tole Marinkovic, who led the Aztec men in 1989-90 under Coach Hugh Bream, has been named 2018 Pro of the Year for San Diego by the United States Professional Tennis Association,



**Marinkovic**

As a senior teaching professional at the San Dieguito Tennis Club, and for the city of San Marcos, Marinkovic trains approximately 100 play-

ers, many of them top-ranked USTA women's league competitors.

The award, for top USPTA male pro, will be presented in mid-January.

A native of Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Marinkovic chose to play at SDSU, he said "because of the chance to stay in San Diego afterwards."

Among his Aztec teammates: George Husack (currently University of Alabama men's head coach), Jeff Belolli, Hunter Galloway, Kerry Safdie, Bill Kearsley, Dana Gill, Mike Bucon, Kelly Mountain, and Scott Del Maestro.

es your chances for success."

The Aztec men, meanwhile, are traveling extensively, visiting Alabama, Mississippi, Nevada, and Idaho, as well as Malibu, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Fresno.

Carswell described the schedule as a way to toughen his players for greater competitiveness. He called the result a way "to



**Carswell**

get us tougher and to get us closer together, I think, as a group." By season's end, he forecast, the squad would be playing at a level well within the quality of top 75 teams.

In Tuscaloosa, the Aztecs will face Alabama's Crimson Tide, coached by George Husack, the San Diego State team captain in the 1991 season. He later coached Santa Clara for five years and served as a top assistant at USC before moving to the

## Aztec Tennis Reporter January, 2018

Aztec Tennis Reporter is a newsletter created in 1998 for players, coaches, alumni, and friends of San Diego State tennis. Neither the university nor its athletic department is responsible for its content. This is the 64th issue. To comment, or subscribe, email [aztectennisreporter@yahoo.com](mailto:aztectennisreporter@yahoo.com).



**John Martin**  
Editor

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## SDSU Graduate's Tennis Skills a Master Stroke for Play Headed to New York

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ration by playwright Anna Ziegler of the fears and aspirations of two players in a U.S. Open semifinal

"It was about what it was like to be older and the young upstart trying to prove himself, and it could have been in any aspect of life," said Jules Boracks, a devoted San Diego theater goer and longtime recreational player.

"Tennis was a perfect metaphor."

Upchurch wanted realism, she told *ATR*, without distractions. "It was definitely a challenge figuring out how to put tennis on stage and have it still feel exciting, but not so bogged down in reality," Upchurch said.

"None of them had played tennis before but they were actually very athletic," said Griffin.

"Because the racquet was imaginary, if you could work really hard, you could teach them a pretty good swing,

"It wouldn't go over the fence in real life, but the fact that they *didn't* hit it over the fence made them look better than they really were."

A 1977 high school graduate who later taught tennis in Europe, Griffin passed up playing Aztec tennis, choosing to buckle down and finish his college studies between 1983 and 1985. He earned a marketing degree.

Griffin became tennis director for the Balboa Tennis Club at San Diego's Morley Field in 1989, four years after graduation.

For *Last Match's* New York staging, TV analyst Carrillo saw a duty to impart confidence.

*The New York Times* reported that Carrillo showed the actors "how to test the tension of the racket by hitting it against the palm, how to swat a ground ball and make it leap into your hand, how to strut back to the baseline after a successful point.



*The New York Times*  
**POISE: Alex Mickiewicz, left, and Wilson Bethel prepare to "hit" their serves in *The Last Match*.**

"You give them a little attitude," Carrillo said. "It's a ritual."

*Times* Critic Ben Brantley wrote that the play's "real setting is the crowded interior of the players' minds."

He called *The Last Match* an "essay on how we invest in athletes as symbols and reflections of our own mortality."

Near the end of his review, he exalted:

"The routine back-and-forth of a hard-fought match finally approaches the ineffable radiance of one of those moments that tennis fans live for.

"Time seems to stop in such moments," he wrote, "even as it extends into eternity."

Eternal thanks for the master stroke of Geoff Griffin, an SDSU graduate — **John Martin**

## AZTECS IN THE LAND OF OZ



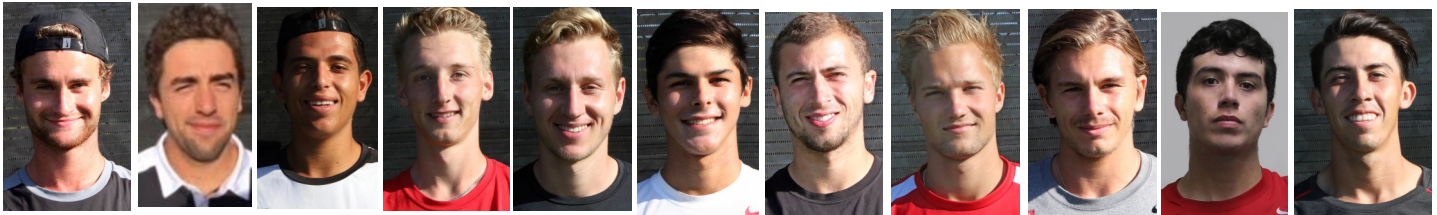
*ATR Photos*

**TENNIS TOURISTS: Aztecs Indra Erichsen, left, and Silvia Tornier of Hamburg, Germany, sit in Melbourne's sunshine at the 2017 Australian Open. As an Aztec doubles team, the pair was awarded All Mountain West Conference honors in 2002 and 2003. Together, they won 36 doubles matches, an exceptional winning percentage of .857.**

## 2018 Aztecs : The Players and Their Opponents, Home and Away



Acero Aubets Buth Diaz Moinard Mulbarger Nadozie Smith



Anderson Cevallos Gonzalez Hough Kirchoff Martinez Mitchell Popov Restifo D Torre R Torre

## Aztecs Enter a 96th Season: The Players and Their Matches

*Continued from Page 2*  
SEC In 2015.

Husack was a 1989 teammate of Tole Marinkovic (see box, page 2).

The 2018 women are Berta Acero, a sophomore from Logrono, Spain, Magda Aubets, a junior transfer from Virginia Commonwealth, from Lleida, Spain; Jana Buth, a senior from Kaiserslautern, Germany; Paola Diaz de Regules, a senior from Mexico City; Jennifer Moinard,

a junior transfer from Clemson from St Jean De Monts, France; Abigail Mulbarger, a freshman from Manteca, CA; Nnena Nadozie, a freshman from Los Angeles, and Mia Smith, a sophomore from Tunbridge Wells, UK.

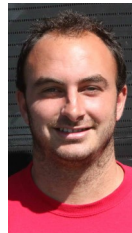
The men are Santiago Cevallos, a



Thomsen



Willens



Vinel

senior from Queretaro, Mexico; Daniel de la Torre, a sophomore and his brother Raul de la Torre, a junior, both from Calexico, CA; Sander Gjoels-Andersen, a junior from Klampenborg, Denmark; Rafael Gonzalez Almazan,

a sophomore from Madrid; David Hough, a sophomore from Traralgon, Australia; Jan Kirchoff., a freshman

from Berlin; Ignacio Martinez, a freshman from Weston, FL.; Nicholas Mitchell, a sophomore from Ojai, CA; Joel Popov, a sophomore from Tampere, Finland, and Arnaud Restifo, a sophomore transfer from Oklahoma from Nice, France.

Jeff Thomsen is assistant men's coach, Larry Willens volunteer men's coach, and Nico Vinel assistant women's coach.

### Aztec Men Home

Loyola Marymount Jan 27  
Brigham Young Jan 27  
Pac Coast Doubles Mar 2-4\*  
SDSU Invitational Mar 15-17  
Denver Mar 21  
Washington Mar 23  
E. Washington Mar 27  
Utah State Apr 1  
New Mexico Apr 6  
Air Force Apr 8  
Mountain West Apr 27-29  
\*La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club

### Men Away

UCSanta Barbara Feb 2  
Cal Poly Feb 3  
Mississippi State Feb 9  
Alabama Feb 11  
UNLV Feb 16  
Oregon Feb 17  
Pepperdine Feb 25  
Boise State Mar 30  
Apr 13 Nevada Apr 15  
Fresno St  
NCAA TBA

### Women Away

Cal Berkeley Feb 1  
Grand Canyon Feb 24  
Hawaii Feb 25  
Arizona State Mar 2  
UNLV Mar 30  
Fresno State Mar 17  
Long Beach State Apr 7  
Mountain West Apr 26-29  
NCAA May 11-13

### Aztec Women Home

UC Riverside Jan 21  
UC San Diego Jan 27  
UC Irvine Jan 28  
UC Davis Feb 3  
Pt Loma Nazarene Feb 5  
Brigham Young Feb 10  
San Diego Feb 11  
USC Feb 16  
Cal Poly Feb 17  
Furman Mar 6  
St Mary's Mar 10  
Dartmouth Mar 16\*  
CS Fullerton Mar 23  
USF Apr 8  
Nevada Apr 13  
San Jose State Apr 21  
\*Rancho Santa Fe Tennis Club