

Aztec Tennis Reporter

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SERVING THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY SINCE 1998

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FRIENDS: Steve Bartlett, left, and Larry Belinsky.

TEAMMATES AT CAL REUNITE AS AZTECS

Last year, when his wife accepted a job offer and they moved to San Diego, Steve Bartlett, a 1970s UC Berkeley tennis player, started showing up at the Aztec Tennis Center to hit practice serves.

He lives nearby. His wife, Adela de la Torre, is President of San Diego State University.

Bartlett soon tracked down Aztec tennis star Larry Belinsky, who played a year with Bartlett at Cal before transferring to SDSU in 1973.

The teammates had lost touch with each other.

Bartlett stayed at Berkeley, graduated, pursued a career in public health, married an educator, raised two

Continued on Page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Waske's 2012 Farewell Page 3
Who Are We Now? Page 4

Aztecs Entering 97th Season of Tennis

Alabama, USC, Yale Among Foes; Coaches Schedule 34 Home Matches

San Diego State's men's and women's tennis teams open the 2019 season with a joint doubleheader at home on January 20.

The Aztec women face Sacramento State, the men meet UC Santa Barbara. Both matches start at noon at the Aztec Tennis Center.

This season marks the 97th year since a men's tennis club was formed at San Diego State College in 1922.

Aztec women's coach Peter Mattera and men's coach Gene Carswell have booked 34 home matches.

The SDSU men face Alabama's Crimson Tide, coached by Aztec alumnus George Husack, at 3 p.m. on Feb. 3. The SDSU women meet Yale at 2 p.m. on March 19. Full schedules are online at go-aztecs.com.



ATR photos

AZTEC MATES: Aesha Patel of India, above, and Ellie Ashley of Australia.



The 2019 Aztec rosters draw students from nearly every corner of the globe. They are among the most geographically diverse Aztec teams in decades (see page 5).

By mid-December, 20 players

from 10 nations, including the U.S., were due to play.

Their homelands ranged from Argentina to Australia to India to Uzbekistan.

The Aztec men are Sander Gjoles-Andersen of Denmark, Rafael Gonzalez Almazan of Spain, David Hough of Australia, Jan Kirchhof of Germany, Ignacio Martinez of Weston, FL, Nicholas Mitchell of Ojai, CA, Arnaud Restifo of France, Fabian Roensdorf of



Peter Mattera Gene Carswell

Continued on Page 5

Aztec Ann Lebedeff Retires: U.S. College Champ, Hall of Fame Coach

In 1974, San Diego State's Ann Lebedeff and Karen Reinke Bishop won the U.S. Intercollegiate Women's Doubles Championship. It was the first national title earned by Aztec tennis players.

Now, after a 40-year coaching career at three schools that led to dozens of national awards and Hall of Fame honors, Lebedeff has stepped to the sidelines.

By one count, Lebedeff's teams won 654 victories, 2 NCAA national championships and 14 conference titles while at Arizona, Cal Poly Pomona and Pomona-Pitzer College.

"I have had a wonderful collegiate coaching career," she told colleagues and players on retiring after 19 years as head coach at Pomona-Pitzer.



Ann Lebedeff

"I leave with everlasting friendships of players I have coached and all the experiences we shared. I grew up as a person because of my players."

Lebedeff coached 77 All-Americans and earned five national Wilson Coach of the Year Awards (1990, 1992, 2001, 2008, 2016), and Wilson Coach of the Decade (1990-2000).

The International Tennis Hall of Fame praised her in 1999 with its Tennis Educational Merit Award. The Intercollegiate Tennis Association created an Ann Lebedeff Leadership Award, endowed by Billie Jean King. Finally, it welcomed her to its ITA Women's Collegiate Hall of Fame, Class of 2018.

Two '70s Cal Teammates Reconnect Under the Aztec Banner

Continued from Page 1

daughters, and remains a recreational player.

Belinsky helped lead the Aztec men's team to its first national notice, married a lawyer who helped him run two family businesses, raised a son and daughter, co-founded the San Diego Tennis Hall of Fame (to date it honors 56 inductees), and he has competed at USTA's highest senior levels.

Looking back to the 1970s and the early Open era, Bartlett recalled that college tennis teams regularly produced players who ranked in the top 10 to 20 in the world. (California teams were often the most successful).

"At Cal we did not have those great players but we had a lot of depth in good players," he said, "and Larry made the starting six as a freshman!



BERKELEY SHAKE: Larry Belinsky, left; Steve Bartlett in 1973.

"I think at his position he had the best win-loss ratio of anyone on the team that year.

"I enjoyed watching him play as he played with great touch and feel and fought for every

point."

Bartlett's arrival has rekindled a relationship rooted in tennis. He has visited Belinsky's home and played on his court, discovering the Belinsky family coat of arms carries a pair of crossed tennis rackets.

"I had him over to my house for some fun hitting and catch-up," Belinsky said. "I look forward to spending more time with both he and his wife in the near future."

In an email, Bartlett said "Now that my wife is here and totally committed to San Diego State University, I feel like I am now an honorary 'Aztec for life,' and look forward to supporting everything about San Diego State including the men's and women's tennis teams."

He added, "Go Aztecs!"

Aztec Tennis Reporter January, 2019

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 66th issue. To comment or subscribe, email aztectennisreporter@yahoo.com.



John Martin
Editor

ATR Looks Back: Aztec Waske's 'Unbelievable' Career, 2012 Farewell

By JOHN MARTIN

NEW YORK — The match on Court 16 at the 2012 U.S. Open lasted exactly two hours, the last two hours of Alex Waske's 12-year career on the international men's tour.

Waske and Dick Norman of Belgium were eliminated by Frantisek Cermak of the Czech Republic and Michal Mertinak of Slovakia, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (5).

Rooting for Waske from the sidelines were former San Diego State coach John Nelson of Honolulu and Larry Willens of San Diego, the two coaches who helped begin his college career in the United States in 1997 at the age of 23.

"They were there from the start and they should be there at the end," Waske told a reporter at Wimbledon, where he reached the second round in doubles. Earlier, Waske lost a first-round doubles match at the French Open.

Competing in the United States Open allowed Waske to play a kind of victory lap.

"Right now!" Willens shouted from the sideline on Wednesday as Waske and Norman scored a service break to lead, 6-5, in the final set. But unforced errors foiled Waske and Norman in a tiebreaker.

Refusing to strike a somber note about the defeat, Nelson said: "He's had an unbelievable career, starting as late as he did," which came after military service and university study. "I know he's disappointed today, but he came out, they went for it, they served for the match, things didn't go their way, but he's a winner."

Waske arrived at San Diego State ranked 187th in Germany, a former junior player whose coaches told him he lacked promise.

Waske said German officials often advise players to seek realistic goals. "They don't want you to shoot for a goal that's not in reach," he said. By contrast, Waske said, Nelson "mentioned becoming top hundred in the world, and that

was worlds away for me."

Nelson "was the first person ever believing in my tennis," Waske said. "He saw big things in me. He was the first one calling me that morning when I first broke the top hundred."

That was 2006, the year Waske and Andrei Pavel of Romania gained the doubles semifinals at the French Open, where they lost to top seeds Bob and Mike Bryan of the United States. In 2005, Waske and Jürgen Melzer of Austria gained the doubles semifinals at the Australian Open.

In eight Davis Cup matches representing Germany, Waske's record is 8-1, all in doubles except for a 2006 singles victory over Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand.

In 2005, Waske defeated Rafael Nadal, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, on grass in the Wimbledon warm-up tournament in Halle, Germany.

In late 2007, Waske suffered an arm injury that forced him off the tour. He was given a protected ranking by the ATP while he sought care.

"I've had three elbow surgeries, and it's killing me not to play," Waske said in 2011, "but

I need to pay my rent."

To generate income, Waske opened a tennis academy and training center, now called Waske Tennis University, near the Frankfurt airport.

At Waske's invitation, Willens, a longtime Aztec volunteer, worked at the academy. Among his students was Angelique Kerber. Waske praised Willens for his mastery of the game's mental aspects.

Waske employed nine coaches and attracted 30 young players from around Europe as resident students. He also evaluated young European players seeking American college tennis scholarships.

In December, 2011, a German newspaper, *Westdeutsche Zeitung*, called it "the most successful academy" in Germany or Europe. (Article adapted and abbreviated — The Editor).

The New York Times
August 29, 2012



John Martin/ATR photo

Aztec's Wimbledon fist pump.

Who Are We Now? 20 Aztec Players Drawn from Across the Globe

AZTEC WOMEN



Lauren Anderson
USA



Ellie Ashley
Australia



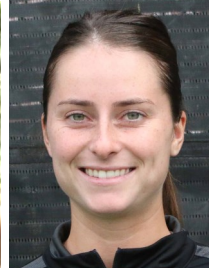
Magda Aubets
Spain



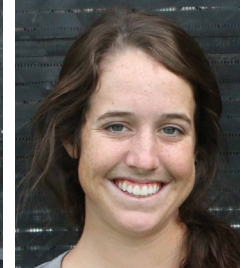
Shakhnoza Khatamova
Uzbekistan



Alicia Melosch
Germany



Jenny Moinard
France



Abbie Mulbarger
USA



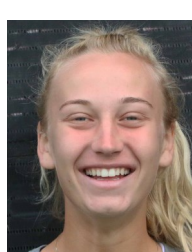
Nnena Nadozie
USA



Aesha Patel
India



Agustina Rimoldi Godoy
Argentina



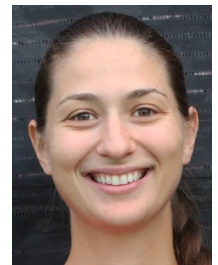
Mia Smith
Great Britain



Peter Mattera
Head Coach



Nico Vinel
Assistant



Tatiana Larina
Volunteer

AZTEC WOMEN

AZTEC MEN



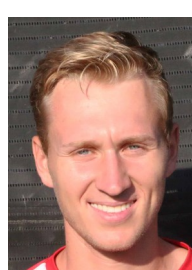
Sander Gjoles-Andersen
Denmark



Rafael Gonzalez Almazan
Spain



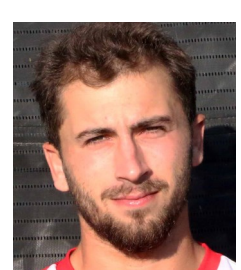
David Hough
Australia



Jan Kirchhoff
Germany



Ignacio Martinez
USA



Nicholas Mitchell
USA



Arnaud Restifo
France



Fabian Roensdorf
Germany



Gavin Spencer
USA



Gene Carswell
Head Coach



Jeff Thomsen
Assistant Coach



Larry Willens
Volunteer Coach

AZTEC MEN

Aztecs Enter 97th Season, Foes Include Alabama, USC, Yale

Continued from Page 1

Germany, and Gavin Spencer of San Juan Capistrano, CA.

The Aztec women are Lauren Anderson of Camarillo, CA, Ellie Ashley of Australia, Magda Aubets of Spain, Shakhnoza Khatamova of Uzbekistan, Alicia Melosch of Germany, Jenny Moinard of France, Abbie Mulbarger of Woodbridge, CA, Nnena Nadozie of Los Angeles, Aesha Patel of India, Agustina Rimoldi Godoy of Argentina, and Mia Smith of Great Britain.

"We've got a very deep team," said Coach Mattera. "The new people are really going to make us better at everything that we do both in



ATR Photo

Aztec Arnaud Restifo of France.

singles and doubles.

"Not only are they playing good tennis," he said, "but they've done a good job of representing the university which...is very important."

Among the women's home opponents are Yale, Cal Berkeley, Arizona State, and Quinnipiac, from Connecticut.. They face perennial powerhouse USC on the road.

On the men's team, the roster includes only one senior, Gjoles-Andersen, a top competitor.

"The great thing that we have going for us as we move forward," said Coach Carswell, "is, we've got a group of guys that really overcame some adversity last year."

One hurdle was a heavy travel schedule, a difficult experience for newcomers joining the team.

One bright spot in a losing season was an upset victory over third-seeded New Mexico in the Mountain West Championships.

"That showed that we're a team that was really going in the right direction," Carswell said.

"We've put ourselves in a pretty good position to, I feel like, compete for the conference championship."

How Coaches Assembled Aztecs from Across the Globe

They come from afar by building their worldwide rankings in an internet-based system called Universal Tennis Rating, asking their coach to make a helpful telephone call, or appealing by themselves directly to a coach.

Aesha Patel from India wanted to study in Southern California.

"Her coach back in India contacted me, said women's coach Peter Mattera.

"It's a long way, India to the U.S. She wanted to be where there was going to be some family members. We were lucky enough to be that university. She's a wonderful young lady, a very good student, and a very good player, a good athlete."



NEW ARRIVAL: Shakhnoza Khatamova of Uzbekistan sought a way to study and play in America. She reached out to an Aztec coach.

across the globe, they said, including the United States. This year, Aztec rosters compose a world atlas: North America (6), South America (1), Asia (2), Europe (9), and Australia (2).

"I get bombarded with players," said men's coach Gene Carswell. "Finding players isn't the tough part, finding the right player is the tough part."

Carswell visited Europe last summer to scout potential recruits. Better players are coming from countries where tennis is the leading sport, he said, describing a cycle that has vexed Americans for decades.

Both Aztec coaches are on the lookout for players from across the globe, they said, including the United States. This year, Aztec rosters compose a world atlas: North America (6), South America (1), Asia (2), Europe (9), and Australia (2).