

Aztec Tennis Reporter

Founded 1999

SERVING THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY

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A SPECIAL NIGHT ON THE EVE OF WAR

War dims memories, so let's remember:

Three days before hijackers blew a hole in America's confidence on 9/11/01, Venus and Serena Williams scaled the peak of tennis.

In prime time the sisters slugged it out, not before the Queen but in Queens.

Watching at home on TV, some thought the sisters were only going through the motions. But inside the stadium, especially during the second set, it was slam-bang tennis; two superb athletes going toe-to-toe.

When it was over (and Venus won our hearts with cheerful comments) a warm glow filled the stands.

Ed Bradley of CBS News *60 Minutes* said:

"To go from a lilly white sport played at country clubs to having two black women play for the national championship in a stadium named for Arthur Ashe, that's pretty special."

It was a moment we

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John Martin photos for Aztec Tennis Reporter
'DELICIOUS CHOCOLATE': Serena Williams, left, at U.S. Open, and Venus Williams, right, at Wimbledon early in their careers.

Confused? Shuffles Grip Colleges 'Hourly'

Early in August, the normally staid *New York Times* exploded one morning in a burst of fiery words to headline a national college sports story:

"Chaotic...ill-fated... final days...ruins...hell..."

The *Washington Post* called it an "implosion."

It was the looming demise of the Pac 12 conference, raising questions of where San Diego State was headed.

Asked how college tennis would be affected, coaches scratched their heads.

"It changes hourly," said

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'Portal' Transfers Talented Newcomers to Aztec Tennis

Recruited under the NCAA's Transfer Portal, Aztec coaches have been adding teammates for the 2024 season.

By early September, the women had added Gloria Alogo of Mallorca, Spain, a sophomore transfer from the University of

North Texas; Yasmine Kabbaj of Fes, Morocco, a junior from Florida International University; Zoe Olmos of Fremont, CA, a senior from Cal State Fullerton; and Myah Petchey of London, a senior from the University of Oregon. Rania

Azziz of Decines, France, is a junior who transferred last season.

Andjela Skrobonja of Sombor, Serbia, and Andreea Velcea of Timisoara, Romania, are two seniors from Florida International.

The men's team has added graduate students Matt Che from Notre Dame and Robin Parts from Wisconsin.

An Aztec Looks Back: Hitting (by Chance) With a Guy Named Pete (Sampras)

By Alex Waske
(1998-2000)

Aztec Waske emailed his ATP tour diary to Aztec Tennis Reporter from the road. This episode took place in 2002.

ADELAIDE, Australia —

Dear Diary: We went to book flights to Auckland and a friend was supposed to get somebody to hit with me at noon.

The travel agent took a little longer than expected. I got to the courts at 11:55. I went to the office to check which court I am on and who I hit with: Court 4 Sampras + Waske.

Yeah, right! I thought it was a joke my buddy made and was expecting him to show at 12 with a grin on his face but the lady in the office told me that Pete was looking for a right-hander to hit with before his match against



Alex Waske ATR Staff Photo

Todd Martin.

So I took my stuff and ran to the courts where Pete was already stretching and waiting for me! I introduced myself, had a pulse of 220, and went on the court.

It was very windy. He took the side against the wind, and I had a hard time against his flat, hard strokes to get under the ball. I was on my toes, ran after ball; he was on the back of his

feet, didn't make a step, but still did not miss a shot.

It was a good hit. I was satisfied, and when it came to serves, I shot some bullets over (still the wind at my back) and Pete just stepped aside. He wanted no business trying to return those. He was laughing about how hard I hit them.

His coach tried to walk towards the area I was hitting them. I don't know why, but I hit him really hard. Pete laughed even harder. His coach mumbled something about World War III.

It started raining and we stopped. I would have loved to play a couple of points, but...

They thanked me for my time (like I wouldn't get up at 4 a.m. to hit with him). So I replied, "My pleasure." and left.

I had a flight to catch!

Venus V Serena (2001): A Special Night on the Eve of War

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all could feel good about tennis.

Bradley smiled when a reporter sitting next to him remarked: "Such a delicious chocolate," referring to the combatants, whose beautiful dark skin glistened with achievement. The final score: Venus defeated Serena, 6-2, 6-4 and with it, captured her second consecutive U.S. Open women's singles trophy

For the next 48 hours, the sisters' pictures flashed across the globe



John Martin for ATR

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Aztec Tennis Reporter is a newsletter created in 1999 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 80th issue. *Aztec Tennis Reporter* invites letters. To comment or subscribe, email its editor,

John Martin, at jjm2144@gmail.com.



on electronic wings. Then, in the 9/11 burst of exploding jet fuel, their images and sport vanished in a blaze of shock.

As we pass the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, let's not forget what happened that night elsewhere in New York. Let's remember Ed Bradley's remark. It was, indeed "pretty special."

On the eve of an attack that dragged America into its longest war, two great athletes broke through the shackles of racism to cover themselves with glory.

— John Martin

This article first appeared in ATR 17, Vol 3, No 7, 2001.

An Aztec Coach Looks Forward and Back after a Difficult Season in 2022-23

After an unusual season in which the Aztec's captured the 134th Pacific Coast Men's Doubles title but won only three team matches all year, *Aztec Tennis Reporter* asked Coach Gene Carswell to assess the season. The conversation took place in May.

ATR: Was this the most difficult season for you?

Coach Carswell: Without a doubt, having to be away from the team for the illness and the surgery. It's always hard to be away from your guys. And then to come back and have so



SHOULDER TALK: Coach Gene Carswell leans toward Tim Shulz van Endert during a 2013 match.

many matches where we were knocking on the door. Even some of these 4-0 results. With Harvard we were in multiple three-set matches and they're a top 10 team in the country. We knew that we could

compete with everyone. It was just what was it going to take for us get over the hump?

ATR: Were there other factors?

Carswell: Yes. You have some injuries. And then, that devastating earthquake in Turkey that affected our group as well. Bora Sengul is from Turkey. That definitely impacted him. And so, it was difficult on many fronts. But we're looking forward to next year, and we've got a few guys already on the slate to join the team and so we're looking forward to bigger and better things."

What's Next for College Tennis? Conference Shuffles Confuse Future

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one coach, confirming that the departure of USC and UCLA joined by Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Arizona State, and Utah, signaled a dizzying scramble of college sports.

Almost gleefully, it seemed, sportswriters took turns describing what they thought could happen. One frequent option (or fantasy) was the creation of a single giant nationwide conference of the top 26 college football teams. Some-

times basketball was dragged along.

What took a back seat were the sports that make no money. College Tennis? Travel, racquets, shoes, uniforms, equipment, scholarships, facility?

There's nothing new about this. In 2001, *ATR* asked a leading sports columnist what he thought.

"You can't lump together golf, tennis, swimming,

track, soccer, and baseball, and lower level football and basketball, with participants in big-time football and basketball," he wrote. "The requirements, burden and benefits of big-timers are inherently different from the rest. They are professional (under paid) entertainers chosen to maximize ticket and other revenue."

In spite of this

year's turmoil, Aztec tennis is showing great skill at mastering the confusion.

The 2024 men's and women's spring seasons are shaping up as a masterful mix of longtime foes from across the country and Mountain West conference, as well as occasional newcomers from as high as the top ten in the country. Not surprising, perhaps, for a sport in its 102nd year at San Diego State.

— Editor's Note

Aztecs Book 20 Home Matches for 2024 Season

2023-24 AZTEC MEN'S TENNIS 2023

Sept 25-26 USTA Mens Pro Futures
@ Albuquerque

Sept 30-Oct 5 All American TBD

Oct 6-8 UCSB Fall Invitational
@ Santa Barbara

Oct 13-15 USD Veterans @ USD

Oct 19-22 ITA Fall Championships
@ Pepperdine U, Malibu, CA

Oct 26-29 SoCal Intercollegiate
Championships @ USC, Los Angeles

Nov 1-5 ITA Fall Champ
ionships

@ San Diego

Nov 3-5 Jack Kramer Club Collegiate
Invitational @ Rolling Hills, CA

2024

Jan 11 SDSU vs Brigham Young @ SDSU
10 am

Jan 12 National Collegiate Tennis Classic,
Palm Desert, CA

Jan 21 Loyola Marymount @ SDSU 10 am

Jan 21 Sacramento State @ SDSU 3 pm

Jan 27 UC Irvine @ Irvine

Feb 3 Cal Poly @ San Luis Obispo

Feb 16 University of Idaho @ SDSU 2 pm

Feb 21 UC Riverside @ SDSU 2 pm

Feb 21 Point Loma Nazareth @ SDSU 5 pm

Feb 24 USF @ San Francisco

Feb 25 St Mary's @ Moraga

Feb 29-Mar 3 Pacific Coast Mens Doubles
Championships @ LaJolla

Feb 29 TBD @ SDSU 2 pm

Mar 11 Gonzaga @ SDSU TBD

Mar 15-17 SDSU Spring Invitational @
SDSU

Mar 22 University of Portland @ SDSU 2 PM

Mar 28 Boise State @ Boise

Mar 30 University of Nevada @ Reno

Apr 5 Air Force Academy @ SDSU 2 pm

Apr 7 New Mexico @ SDSU Noon

Apr 18 UNLV @ Las Vegas

Apr 20 Utah State @ SDSU noon

Apr 24-27 Mountain West Championships
@ Las Vegas

2023-24 AZTEC WOMEN'S TENNIS 2023

Sept 29-Oct 1 SDSU Fall Classic # 1 @ SDSU

Oct 19-24 ITA Regionals @ SDSU and USD

Nov 3-5 SDSU Fall Classic # 2 @ SDSU

2024

Jan 20 SDSU vs UCSD @ SDSU 12 noon

Jan 27-28 ITA Kickoff @ Pepperdine

Feb 2 SDSU vs Arizona @ Tucson, AZ

Feb 3 SDSU vs Maryland @ Tucson, AZ

Feb 14 SDSU vs Hawaii @ SDSU 2 pm

Feb 16 SDSU vs Long Beach @ SDSU 1 pm

Feb 18 SDSU vs California @ SDSU 12 noon

Feb 24 SDSU vs Portland @ University of

Washington, Seattle, WA 1 pm

Feb 25 SDSU vs Washington @ University of
Washington 12 noon

Mar 3 SDSU vs Utah @ SDSU 12 noon

Mar 6 SDSU vs USD @ USD 2 pm

Mar 15 SDSU vs Utah State @ Utah State

Mar 17 SDSU vs Boise St. @ Boise State

Mar 24 SDSU vs Nevada @ SDSU

Mar 28 SDSU vs Wyoming @ SDSU

Mar 30 SDSU vs San Jose @ SDSU

Apr 5 SDSU vs Air Force @ AF

Apr 7 SDSU vs New Mexico @ New Mexico

Apr 12 SDSU vs Colorado St. @ SDSU

Apr 14 SDSU vs Fresno @ SDSU

Apr 19 SDSU vs Las Vegas @ Las Vegas

Apr 24 – 27 Mountain West Championships
@ Las Vegas (Darling Tennis Center)

Aztecs Dominate USTA District

New Aztec transfer Robin Parts and Aztec Alexander Mandma won the 2023 USTA District doubles title after Parts lost the singles final to Aztec Chikaya Sato, 1-6, 6-0, 6-3.

Sato teamed with Aztec Mathieu Josserand to reach the doubles final, where they lost 6-7, 7-6, 16-14 to Aztecs Parts and Mandma.

Sato, a native of Japan, transferred to San Diego State last year from Penn State. Last Spring, Sato teamed with Aztec Johannes Seeman to win the 134th annual Pacific Coast Men's Doubles Championship at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club.