

Aztec Tennis Reporter

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AZTEC TENNIS TIME TRAVELERS RETURN TO CAMPUS

Two Aztec tennis veterans traveled back to campus from their native Germany in recent months and found a lively landscape well beyond the Aztec Tennis Center.



Indra Erichsen of Hamburg (see Pg. 2) appeared before a business class studying management and corporate governance.

Stronk

Benedict

Stronk of Berlin joined classroom discussions in sports management (see Pg. 3).

"The sports MBA coordinator put together a class of a couple of my classmates, alumni," Stronk said, "so we talked to the current class of the sports MBA for a couple of hours.

"Oh, I loved it," he said. "we all basically talked a little bit about ourselves, about our current jobs, about our challenges we may have faced in the past, what current topics are out there. And then, some of the classmates, prepared some

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UNBEATABLE: Aztec Robin Parts won all 19 of his singles matches.

Aztec Men Surge Back, Race to MWest Finals

In a total turnaround, the Aztec men's tennis team surged back from a difficult season a year ago when it scored only 3 victories in 18 matches.

This season, it won 11 of its first 14 matches.

Then, standing on the brink of a season-ending loss to top-seeded Utah State in the Mountain West Championships, the Aztecs trailed 3-1 but refused to concede. They won three final singles matches to claw their way to the finals.

"It was a great college tennis match to be a part of" said Aztec Head Coach Gene Carswell.

"We have a lot of respect for Utah State. They are well coached and their players have so much fight in them. Robin Parts did what he's done all year long for us. It was great for him to earn the clinching point and advance us into the championship match."

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Aztec Women Retake MWest, Fall in NCAAs

The Aztec women won the 2024 Mountain West Conference championship, defeating UNLV 4-2, in the final round in Las Vegas.

The victory came eight days after the Aztecs lost to the Rebels in the final match of the regular season. It restored the trophy to San Diego State after just one year away.

"The team did an absolutely wonderful job of being very resilient this Spring, dealing with a lot of challenges and injuries," said Aztec Head Coach Peter Mattera.

Aztec Yasmine Kabbaj was named Mountain West Player of the Year and ranked 97th in the nation as the team entered the NCAA playoffs.

"They played very inspired tennis and stayed together, which all championship teams must," Mattera said

"All credit to them, at the end of the day they were tough as nails and never ever gave up on the cause, which was to win the Conference tournament."

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Aztec Tennis Time Traveler: Indra Erichsen

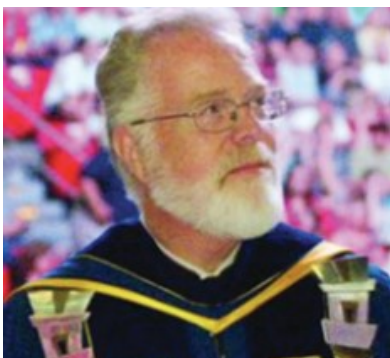


MANAGEMENT 444: Last fall, Aztec Indra Erichsen (2002-2005) spoke to the students of SDSU Professor William Sannwald’s class in Business Ethics and Corporate Governance. She teaches similar topics in Germany at the Hochschule Flensburg, University of Applied Sciences. After playing tennis at San Diego State, Erichsen obtained a graduate degree at Columbia University in New York before returning to Hamburg area in northern Germany.

Steve Weber, 15-Year San Diego State President, Aztec Tennis Fan

When San Diego State christened its 12-court Aztec Tennis Center in 2008, the university’s president was standing on the baseline applauding (metaphorically).

Steve Weber, an enthusiastic reader and letter writer to *Aztec Tennis Reporter*, spoke that day to past and present players and fans who had come to



**Steve Weber
1942-2024**

celebrate the opening. It had taken 11 years to sort out the financial and physical arrangements.

Later, Weber presided over a reordering of Aztec cultural symbols to show respect for native Aztecs.

“I thought, unlike Dis-

ney, a university has an obligation to historical and cultural accuracy. By making the Aztec Warrior more appropriate, I believe we saved the symbol.”

Weber served as SDSU president from 1996-2011 and worked on at least one NCAA committee in that time.



GRAND OPENING: In 2008, President Steve Weber, third from right, cut ribbon to celebrate completion of 11-year campaign to construct the Aztec Tennis Center off Remington Road.

Aztec Tennis Time Traveler: Benedict Stronk



POWER SHOT: Aztec Stronk in 2006 action.

TIME TRAVELER

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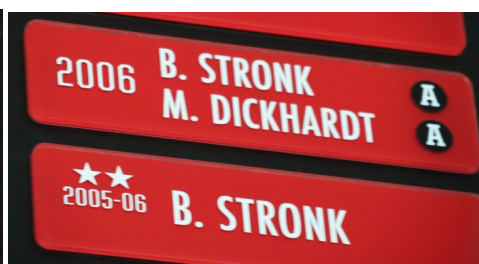
cases they presented. “

Stronk played on the Aztec men’s team in 2005 and 2006. His name and the name of his doubles partner, Markus Dickhardt, adorn a high wall in the tennis center.

Stronk has made a career in the business world of sports.

“I work for a professional sports agency called SPORT-FIVE. I work in partnership sales. I basically acquire sponsors for the assets we work with. So, basically with professional football teams, soccer teams, basketball teams, we have cooperation with the NBA too.

“So, many different assets all around the world. We represent athletes as well as



STRONK’S WALL HONORS

German athletes like Manuel Neuer. He’s probably the best goalkeeper in the world right now in soccer.

“We also have Alexander Zverev, currently the best German tennis player. We have a sales cooperation with him, so we represent him and we are looking for sponsors for him. He’s top 10 in the world.

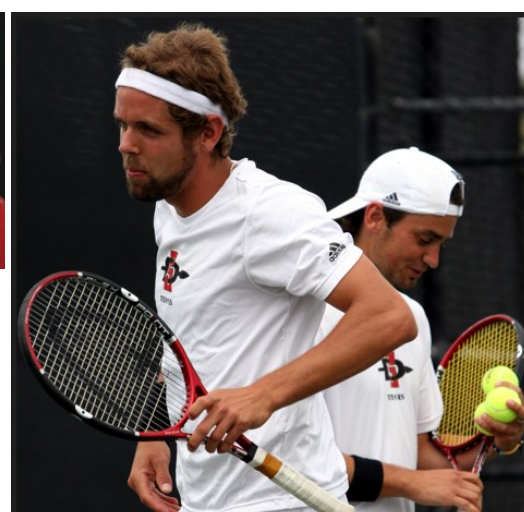
One of his early jobs after SDSU graduate school was with Aztec Alex Waske in Frankfurt. His “academy was on the sport side pretty successful already, but on the business side not so much yet. So, I created the marketing strategy, built a new website and social media channels, and communication strategy,” Stronk said.

“After I did my bachelor’s degree here at SDSU, I went to the SDSU sports MBA program, which is basically a regular MBA program but with a focus on sports, so the topics were sports-related.

And the sports MBA coordinator put together a class of a couple of my classmates, alumni, so we came and actually talked to the current class of the sports MBA for a couple of hours.

Some of the classmates also prepared some cases they presented to us and that was also pretty impressive.

“This program has a very,



WINNING MOMENT: Stronk, left, and Markus Dickhardt, winning 2006 All American honors.

very good reputation internationally as well and so it was definitely great to meet all these young people.”

Asked how he chose to attend San Diego State, Stronk recalled his first steps after completing his army service. “I was looking, because I just ended kind of my professional tennis career and was thinking, okay, what’s next? And I love tennis, so my friend told me, it’s Christian Groh who also studied here. He told me ‘Listen, Benny, I’m talking to Gene Carswell, the men’s head tennis coach here at SDSU. Maybe you’d be interested in coming.’

“And then I talked to Gene. This place is amazing, so that’s how I ended up here. And we have a long tradition here at SDSU with German tennis players.”

This year, with tickets from Carswell, Stronk attended the SDSU-New Mexico basketball game with former Aztec tennis teammate, Armando Carrascosa.

Back on campus after many years out in the world, Stronk had an endearing way of describing the game, calling it “one of the coolest sports experiences I’ve ever had.”

2024 AZTEC WOMEN'S TENNIS

16-7
 Pepperdine 4 SDSU 0
 SDSU 4 Loyola Marymount
 SDSU 5 UC San Diego 2
 SDSU 4 Maryland 2
 SDSU 7 Hawaii 0
 SDSU 7 Long Beach State 0
 California 5 SDSU 2
 SDSU 5 Portland 2
 Washington 4 SDSU 0
 USD 5 SDSU 2
 SDSU 4 Utah State 2
 Boise State 4 SDSU 3
 SDSU 4 Nevada 1
 SDSU 4 Wyoming 0
 SDSU 4 vs Air Force 0
 SDSU 4 New Mexico 3
 SDSU 4 Colorado St. 1
 SDSU 4 Fresno St. 1
 UNLV 4 SDSU 3
 Mountain West Championships @ Las Vegas
 SDSU 4 Utah State 0
 SDSU 4 Colorado State 2
 SDSU 4 UNLV 2
 NCAA Championships @ Los Angeles Tennis Center
 UCLA 4 SDSU 0

2024 AZTEC MEN'S TENNIS

16-7
 SDSU 4 Brigham Young 3
 SDSU 4 Sacramento State 1
 UC Irvine 4 SDSU 1
 SDSU 4 Idaho 3
 SDSU 4 UC Riverside 0
 SDSU 4 Point Loma Nazarene 0
 SDSU 4 USF 3
 SDSU 4 St Mary's 0
 Loyola Marymount 4 SDSU 3
 SDSU 4 Gonzaga 0
 Arizona State 4 SDSU 1
 SDSU 4 Tulane 2
 SDSU 4 Texas Tech 1
 SDSU 5 Portland 2
 Boise State 4 SDSU 3
 Nevada 4 SDSU 2
 SDSU 5 Air Force 2
 SDSU 4 New Mexico 3
 SDSU 5 UNLV 2
 Utah State 4 SDSU 0
 Mountain West Championships @ Las Vegas
 SDSU 4 Nevada 1
 SDSU 4 Utah State 3
 Boise State 4 SDSU 1

Coached to Recovery, Aztec Men Surge To Mountain West Final



COACH CARSWELL CONFERS WITH TEAMMATES, SPURRING REVIVAL



Continued from Page One

There, the season ended with a 1-4 defeat by Boise State, crowning the 2024 campaign with a remarkable 16-7 record.

Maiberger Aztec Johannes Seeman won Player of the Week honors in the Mountain West Conference for a third straight year, matching achievements by Aztec All American Oliver Maiberger (2000-2003), the only SDSU tennis player in the Aztec Athletic Hall of Fame.



Gonzalez Fitzmaurice

Aztec Eugenio Gonzalez Fitzmaurice also won 2024 Player of the Week honors. Last season, he earned Freshman Player of the



Coach Thomsen Makes a Point

Week honors twice. On Senior Day, the Aztec men's team honored Parts, Andre Saleh, Chikaya Sato, Seeman, and Bora Sengul.

Carswell said: "I think we learned a lot from last year, and we took on the adage that it's not what happens to you, it's how you deal with it. "These guys worked hard to improve each individual, kind of different areas within their own play.

"And I would say that it helps having a nice grad transfer addition who came in and brought some additional experience, in Robin Parts, and what a season he had."



Seeman



Sato

Aztec Women Win Mountain West Title, Excel in 102nd Year



LEADER: Yasmine Kabbaj led her Aztec teammates to a 16-7 season and conference title.

Continued from Page 1

Mountain West Player of the Year honors were awarded Aztec Kabbaj of Morocco, a junior year transfer from Florida International University.

Another FIU transfer, Andjela Skrobonja of Serbia, helped keep the lineup strong for a second year. In 2023, she won Player of the Week honors twice and joined the all-conference singles team.

That year, according to goaztecs.com, she and Aztec Dariya Detkovskaya, another transfer, “were the only Aztec combo to reach double digit doubles wins and were ranked as high” as 59th in the nation.

This year, she qualified for the 2024 NCAA Singles Championships after winning 21 singles matches.



TWO HANDS: Aztec Andjela Skrobonja won 21 of 29 singles matches this year.



TARGET: Andreea Velcea connects.

When Kabbaj skipped two matches in mid season to compete for a place on her home country’s Olympic team, Skrobonja filled in for her in the number one singles slot and won victories at both Utah State and Boise State.

Skrobonja stood as high as 71st in the nation in singles and she and Andreea Velcea won 13 of 17 doubles matches and All Mountain West doubles honors.

In the NCAA first round, they led a 42nd ranked Bruin doubles team 5-4 when UCLA clinched the doubles point. The Aztecs fell, 4-0, at the Los Angeles Tennis Center.