

Women's tennis drops three more, record now 1-10

By Alex Snyder
Old Gold and Black Reporter

The women's tennis team made several changes to its line-up this past week in order to try and turn around a slow start in the season. The Deacons are currently ranked No. 50 in the country, but have struggled in recent matches. After losing a close match to No. 34 Michigan at home, the team hit the road to face two more top 25 opponents. The Deacs ended a string of tough weekends with losses at No. 19 Notre Dame and at No. 25 Illinois.

The Deacs entered the match against the Michigan Wolverines in hopes of their second home win of the season at the Wake Forest Indoor Tennis Center March 1. The doubles pair of sophomore Karin Coetzee and junior Aimee Smith led the team to an 8-1 victory at No. 1 doubles after defeating Michelle DaCosta and Leanne Rutherford of Michigan. Sophomores Katie Martzolf and Danielle Schwartz, playing at No. 2 doubles, continued their winning streak by defeating the Wolverine pair of Jennifer Duprez and Kaitha Tipimani. Martzolf and Schwartz, who won 8-4, took home the victory at No. 2 doubles for the third straight match.

After capturing the doubles point, the Deacons looked poised for victory until they were tripped up in a handful of three-

set matches in singles. Coetzee, currently ranked No. 98, defeated DaCosta 6-4, 6-4 at No. 1 singles. Freshman Sandie Knight also won, defeating Joanne Musgrove in a close match at No. 6 singles, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. Both Martzolf, at No. 2 singles, and junior Elizabeth Proctor, at No. 3 singles, lost in third set matches. Smith was also defeated, by No. 92 Leanne Rutherford in straight sets. As the match ended, the Deacs lost, 4-3.

"Losing the close match in Michigan was tough," Smith said. "I had played against (my opponent) all throughout junior tennis, so it was a hard loss to take."

However, the team continued its weekend determined to overcome their recent losses. "Over the past couple weeks we have had a few close matches that came down to the end," Proctor said. "We have fought hard throughout every match no matter how highly ranked the team has been. As for future matches, I think that our hard work will pay off and that the 4-3 matches will start to go our way."

The Deacs began their two-game road trip at South Bend, Ind., against the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. No. 19 ranked Notre Dame proved to be too much for the Deacons, who dropped all but one match. The Deacons lost the doubles point against a myriad of ranked opponents. Coetzee and Smith were defeated, 8-2, by No. 31 Katie

"Even though we came up short, everyone gave their greatest effort and fought until the end."

Elizabeth Proctor
Sophomore

Cunha and Kristina Stastny. Martzolf and Schwartz faced an uncommon defeat at the hands of Lauren Connelly and Alicia Salas by losing No. 2 doubles, 8-4. The only Deacon pair to take their opponents to three sets was No. 3 doubles Smith and Knight, who were defeated by Caylan Leslie and Jennifer Smith, 8-5.

Martzolf, currently ranked No. 65, continued a string of stellar singles performances by picking up the only win for the Deacons. She defeated No. 73 Salas 6-3, 6-2 at No. 2 singles.

"Playing a highly ranked opponent was fun," Martzolf said. "I went out there and played as if I had nothing to lose."

Smith said, "Katie has been playing really well lately. Her positive energy radiates throughout the team."

Coetzee was defeated by No. 44 Leslie in straight sets, and Schwartz was also defeated by Notre Dame's Cunha in straight sets. Smith and Knight both fought to the third set in each of their

matches, but the Deacons eventually fell 6-1 to Notre Dame.

The team finished up the weekend by facing Illinois at the Atkins Tennis Center in Urbana, Ill. In an attempt to jumpstart the team, several line-up changes were made, including shifting Martzolf and Schwartz from No. 2 doubles to No. 1 doubles and moving Smith from No. 4 singles to No. 3 singles.

"Whenever things aren't working, you need to make some changes," Schwartz said. "We have been making lots of different changes, and I am confident that things will start falling into place."

In No. 1 doubles, Martzolf and Schwartz were defeated, 8-1, by Illinois' Jennifer Illini Tiffany Elkloy and Brianna Knue defeated Proctor and Knight at No. 3 doubles in a very close 8-6 match. Coetzee and Smith played down to No. 2 doubles, and picked up a huge 8-3 win over Eldina Fazlic and Eva Choe.

Smith said, "The position doesn't really matter to me, it's just the opponent across the net that matters."

The star of the match against Illinois for the Deacs was Smith, playing for the first time at No. 3 singles this season. Smith defeated Fazlic in straight sets, 6-3, 7-5.

"The loss (against Michigan) fired me up to play the Illinois match, knowing that I did have a chance to turn the weekend

around," Smith said. "I was very determined to pull through that match."

Martzolf showed leadership again this weekend as she defeated No. 121 Elkloy in three sets, 7-5, 3-6, 7-5. However, the Deacons lost at Nos. 1, 4, 5, and 6 singles, and dropped the match to Illinois, 5-2.

"At Notre Dame and Illinois, even though we came up short, everyone gave their greatest effort and fought until the end," Proctor said. "We were competitive and played well at every spot."

Throughout this adversity, the Deacs' team unity and support has continued to be apparent. "This past weekend, I felt that everybody competed really well and played relaxed confident tennis," Smith said. "We just didn't come out on the winning end. We are gradually getting better and better, learning from our individual and team losses in order to make improvements."

With the three setbacks, the Deacons' record now stands at 1-10.

"The next step is getting ready for Clemson and Old Dominion this weekend," Schwartz said. "I think we are all looking forward to the outdoor season."

The team looks to improve its record March 8 at 10:30 a.m. as they play host to No. 22 Clemson in the outdoor opener in the ACC for the Deacons, and will be held at Leighton Stadium. They will then host Old Dominion March 9 at noon.

Green breaks own school record, qualifies for NCAAs

Junior to be joined by five other Deacons at NCAAs March 14-15

By Russell Hoernig
Old Gold and Black Reporter

Junior middle distance runner Nikeya Green automatically qualified for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Boston, Mass. at the USA Indoor Championships March 1. Green had a career day by

breaking her own school record in the 800m run.

"She had a beautiful race," Director of Track and Field Head Coach Annie Schweitzer-Bennett said. "I was very pleased with the race, especially getting the automatic bid. She did it with such grace and beauty."

Green ran a time of 2:05.43 in the preliminaries, which was good enough for fourth place and qualified her for the finals March 2. Though she only placed sixth in the finals, it was an outstanding achievement for Green.

"It felt great," Green said. "My

running is on the right track."

Freshman Lindsay Neuberger also competed for the Demon Deacons at the USA Indoor Championships. She threw for a mark of 48-9 in the shotput, placing her in 11th.

Another notable Demon Deacon in action was former track superstar Jill Snyder, who now runs for Adidas. Snyder, also an assistant coach for the track and field team, ran a personal best time of 4:20.90 in the 1500m distance run. Snyder was a five-time All-American when she attended Wake Forest from 1998-2001.

A few other members of the track and field team were in action at the Virginia Tech Last Chance Meet in Blacksburg, Va. March 1.

In the women's 3,000m distance run, freshman Rachel Mistur ran a time of 10:23.13 for tenth place, while junior Catherine Fortin-Major finished 12th with a time of 10:27.52.

Freshman Ashley Dunigan, and seniors Elizabeth Washam and Jill Kovalcik also competed on the women's side. Dunigan competed in the mile and finished 17th with a time of 5:12.24. Washam captured 11th in the pole vault with a mark

of 10-11.75. Kovalcik competed in several events, finishing 22nd in the 60m Hurdles and 26th in the 200m run.

On the men's side, senior Jimmy Butler finished the mile in 4:27.10, which was good enough for 27th place.

Next weekend, the team will be competing in South Bend, Ind. at the Notre Dame Last Chance Meet. Only a few members of the team will be in action once again, as this is the tournament portion of the season for indoor track.

Most of the team is currently getting ready for the outdoor

season.

However, there are still six members of the team preparing for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships March 14-15 in Fayetteville, Ark., including Green.

"I'm going to race," Green said. "And hopefully everything will fall in place."

The team hopes everything falls into place for all six NCAA competitors in the next two weeks.

The outdoor season begins March 21, when the Deacons will host the Wake Forest Invitational.

C O L D

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