

ASU Women's Tennis Edged by Radford, 4-3

Written by Paul Blascovich

Sunday, 19 February 2012 09:13

Despite winning three matches, the Mountaineers were unable to hold off the Highlanders, as Appalachian State University women's tennis was edged by Radford, 3-4, at the Burleson-Burrows Tennis Center on the Campus of Virginia Tech on Saturday. The team result came down to the final singles match, but Radford (4-2) was able to pull out the victory over Appalachian State (3-3). Juniors Jennifer Ansari

(Greensboro, N.C./Walter Hines Page) and Ellie Linsell (Southampton, England/Cheam) triumphed in their doubles match at No. 1, winning easily by an 8-3 margin. Radford picked up the No. 2 win, 9-7, and Blakeley Bean (Alpharetta, Ga./South Forsyth) and Gabby Gabriel (Weddington, N.C./Providence Day) were unable to pull off a win at No. 3, falling 8-9 (5-7). With the Highlanders in front, 1-0, the Mountaineers looked to singles action to regain control of the match.

Sophomore Jessica Thaggard (Acworth, Ga./Etowah) notched the day's most comfortable win, taking her No. 4 match in straight sets, 6-3, 6-3. Junior Kim-Lea Dinh (Maisons-Alfort, France/Lycee Eugene Delacroix) also won in two sets, taking the No. 6 match 6-4, 7-5.

Linsell picked up her first set in the top singles spot but faltered in the second. She regained her composure in the decisive set and stole the Mountaineers third singles point, 6-4, 0-6, 6-2. The Highlanders secured two-set wins at No. 2 and No. 5 singles, knotting the score at 3-3 with No. 3 singles as the final factor in the match.

Appalachian's Gabriela Celi (Orlando, Fla./Lake Howell) recovered from a first set loss and captured the second set, but in the end, RU's Mia Drobnjak clinched the match-winning point, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

With the loss, ASU evens off at 3-3 on the year but looks to regain momentum at home, where the team is 2-0 and has yet to allow a team point this season.

The Mountaineers return home to Yonahlossee Racquet Club to face the Buccaneers of ETSU on Sunday at 2 p.m.

Radford 4, Appalachian State 3

Feb 18, 2012 at Blacksburg, Va. (Burrows-Burleson Tennis Center)

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Singles competition

1. Ellie Linsell (ASU) def. Petra Dajevic (RAD) 6-4, 0-6, 6-2
2. Hannah Crawford (RAD) def. Jennifer Ansari (ASU) 6-0, 7-6 (7-5)
3. Mia Drobnjak (RAD) def. Gabriela Celi (ASU) 6-3, 4-6, 6-3
4. Jessica Thaggard (ASU) def. Gemma Valls (RAD) 6-3, 6-3
5. Taylor Newman (RAD) def. Gabby Gabriel (ASU) 7-5, 7-6 (7-3)
6. Kim-Lea Dinh (ASU) def. Meg Napolitano (RAD) 6-4, 7-5

Doubles competition

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1. Jennifer Ansari/Ellie Linsell (ASU) def. Mia Drobnjak/Taylor Newman (RAD) 8-3
2. Hannah Crawford/Meg Napolitano (RAD) def. Gisela Fernandez/Gabriela Celi (ASU) 9-7
3. Petra Dajevic/Gemma Valls (RAD) def. Blakeley Bean/Gabby Gabriel (ASU) 9-8 (7-5)

Match Notes

Radford 4-2

Appalachian State 3-3

Order of finish: Doubles (1,2,3); Singles (4,2,6,5,1,3)

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Appalachian Men's Tennis Sinks East Carolina, 5-1

After a rough start to the season, the Mountaineers are gaining momentum, as Appalachian State University men's tennis pulled off a 5-1 defeat of East Carolina at Deer Valley Racquet Club on Saturday. With their second-straight victory the Apps level off to 2-2 on the year, both wins coming at home, while East Carolina slips to 7-3.

In the battle for the doubles point, Appalachian played a non-traditional lineup, opting to split its regionally-ranked senior pair of Philip Kloc (Melbourne, Australia/Mentone Grammar) and Alain Humblet (Montreal, Quebec/DE Mortagne) among the top two spots. ECU took the early advantage in the doubles portion, breaking twice for an 8-3 win at No. 3.

At No. 1 doubles, Appalachian's duo of Kloc and Sebastien King (Montreal, Quebec/George Vanier) found themselves evenly matched against their Pirate foes, as the teams held serve through ten games. With the match deadlocked at 5-5, the Mountaineers scored a break for the 6-5 advantage and serve; ASU would win 8-6.

With the doubles point on the line, ASU's No. 2 team of Humblet and Alex Markov (Pernik, Bulgaria/Hawai'i Pacific) broke in the seventh game to take a 4-3 lead and held serve for eventual 8-6 victory, clinching a 1-0 lead for the Mountaineers.

In singles, Kloc dominated his match at No. 2, breaking in the second game of the match.

Leading 4-1, he broke serve again and easily took the first. In the second set, Kloc remained in the driver's seat, jumping out to a 3-0 lead and cruising to the 6-1, 6-1 win.

At No. 3, Humblet looked overpowering after breaking serve in the first game, but his ECU opponent held tough. The senior managed to hold serve and win the set, before picking up two breaks and a 3-0 lead to start the second. Humblet went on to win 6-4, 6-2, giving the Mountaineers a 3-0 lead, one point from clinching the match.

Appalachian's Markov and ECU's Joran Vliegen, ranked No. 105 in the nation, engaged in a fierce duel at No. 1 singles. With Vliegen taking first serve, Markov broke serve in the fourth game to take a 2-1 advantage. In the next game, Vliegen broke back, leveling the match at 2-2. When Markov took another break to go up 4-3, Vliegen responded with a break to tie the set, 4-4. The first set came down to a back-and-forth tiebreaker in which Markov finally triumphed, 7-6 (9-7).

The second set played equally close, as Markov and Vliegen alternated games again. This time, both held serve to load the scoreboard, 6-6. In the tiebreaker, Vliegen fought off two match points to win the tiebreaker and set with four straight points, 7-6 (8-6).

Meanwhile, the other Mountaineers managed less-dramatic outcomes. At No. 4 singles, King picked up a pair of breaks in the first set and broke open the second set. The sophomore kept the pressure on and completed the 6-2, 6-2 win to clinch Appalachian's fourth point and the overall victory.

As the top individuals continued their lengthy match, senior Steve Karendal (Kernersville, N.C./Lees-McRae) took the court at No. 5 singles. Though he needed a late break to take the

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first set, the Mountaineer opened up a 4-0 lead in the second, finishing his Pirate opponent, 7-5, 6-2.

As the last players on the court, Markov and Vliegen kept their swordfight interesting. With the decisive set tied 4-4, the combatants broke service on each of the last four games, knotting the set, 6-6. In the final tiebreaker, Vliegen opened up a 5-1 advantage, and though Markov battled back, ECU finally got on the scoreboard with the 6-7 (7), 7-6 (6), 7-6 (5) win.

Due to time and court space constraints, in addition to ASU having already clinched the match, the No. 6 singles match was not conducted.

The Mountaineers return to action on Thursday when they travel to take on Gardner-Webb at 2 p.m. Appalachian then travels to Johnson City for a showdown with ETSU on Saturday before returning to Boone to host Belmont at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 26.