

ASU Men's Tennis Takes Down Elon

Written by :Paul Blascovich
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In the team's third league win in six days, Appalachian State University men's tennis defeated Southern Conference opponent Elon, 5-2, at The Jimmy Powell Tennis Center on Wednesday. The Mountaineers (9-5, 3-1 SoCon)

have now won five of their last six matches, while Elon (7-10, 4-2 SoCon) suffers its first home SoCon loss in 15 matches.

In doubles, Appalachian's No. 3 pair of senior Steve Karendal (Kernersville, N.C./Lees-McRae) and junior Andrew McKinnon (Mooresville, N.C./Lake Norman) fell behind early but rallied to win five of the next six games to pick up an 8-5 win. The Phoenix responded as Elon's top doubles pair took an 8-3 decision at No. 1 doubles.

ASU seniors Alex Markov (Pernik, Bulgaria/Hawai'i Pacific) and Alain Humblet (Montreal, Quebec/DE Mortagne) trailed 4-5 in the decisive match before the Mountaineer pair won four straight games to capture an 8-5 win and the doubles point.

In singles action, sophomore Matt Saltsgaver (Winter Park, Fla./Winter Park) made quick work of his No. 6 match, winning 6-1, 6-1. Karendal soon followed with his 6-1, 6-2 rout on the No. 5 court, putting the Apps up 3-0 and within one team point of winning the match.

Humblet came through with the match-clinching point in his match at No. 3 singles, shutting out his Elon opponent in the second set for a 6-4, 6-0 win.

Elon notched its first team point with a win in the No. 4 slot, as Jordan Kaufman stole a 6-2, 6-3 victory for the Phoenix.

Mountaineer Philip Kloc (Melbourne, Australia/Mentone Grammar) survived a hard-fought first set and broke serve in the second set to take the No. 2 match, 7-6(7-3), 6-4.

In the final match on the court, Markov hung tight with his Elon opponent, but Cameron Silverman triumphed, 7-5, 7-6(7-5) to close the day with a second point for the Phoenix.

On Thursday, the Mountaineers return to Boone to host The Citadel in their first outdoor match on their home courts. Action kicks off at 2 p.m. at the ASU Tennis Courts.

Appalachian Women Fall to UNCG

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In the team's first outdoor match on its home courts, Appalachian State University women's tennis fell to Southern Conference opponent UNCG, 6-1, at ASU Tennis Courts on Wednesday. The Mountaineers (9-7, 2-3 SoCon) have now lost three straight matches for the first time this season, while the Spartans (10-4, 5-0 SoCon) are victorious in their last five matches.

At No. 3 doubles, Appalachian won the first two games before UNCG snapped into action to win eight straight for an 8-2 win. In the No. 2 match, UNCG broke serve twice in the early goings and led 3-6 before Appalachian seniors Gisela Fernandez (Guadalajara, Mexico/TEC Monterrey) and Gabriela Celi (Orlando, Fla./Lake Howell) rallied to tie the match at 7-7. In the end, the Spartans held strong and took the last pair of games for the 9-7 win to clinch the doubles point.

ASU's top pair, juniors Ellie Linsell (Southampton, England/Cheam) and Jennifer Ansari (Greensboro, N.C./Walter Hines Page), were unable to recover from losing serve early and lost 8-5 to UNCG's regionally-ranked No. 9 Niltooli Wilkins and Lucy Dougherty in the Spartan doubles sweep.

In singles action, UNCG's Lucy Dougherty picked up a 6-0, 6-2 win at No. 4, while Alex Whitehead added a Spartan victory at No. 2, 6-3, 6-2, to put UNCG in front, 3-0.

Appalachian freshman Gabby Gabriel (Weddington, N.C./Providence Day) broke the visitors' momentum with her 6-3 first set before jumping out to a 4-1 lead in the second. Though her Spartan opponent leveled the set at 4-4, Gabriel picked up the final two games for a 6-3, 6-4 victory to stave off the shutout.

At No. 5 singles, UNCG was tripped up but eventually won, 6-3, 6-4, to take a 4-1 overall team lead and clinch the match for the Spartans.

Mountaineer Celi turned a 4-1 first-set lead into a 6-4 win but stumbled in the second, as UNCG equalized with a 6-1 set. In the decisive set, Celi led 3-2 but was unable to hold on as the No. 3 singles match went to Spartan Annette Rios, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

In the final match on the courts, Appalachian's top individual, Linsell, dueled UNCG's Niltooli Wilkins, ranked No. 17 in the Carolina region. Linsell took control of the first set, winning five straight games to close out a 6-2 win, but Wilkins regained her footing and stole a 5-0 lead in the second en route to a 6-1 win. In the final set, Wilkins opened up a 3-0 lead and held on for the 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 victory.

The Mountaineers return to action on Saturday when they host Western Carolina at 1:30 p.m. ASU rounds out the weekend with a roadtrip to Chattanooga on Sunday at noon.