

## SPORTS

## Tenth-Ranked Men's Tennis Wins Tourney, Battles On

By Bristy Parker  
Decree Staff Writer

The NCWC men's tennis team looks to make a long run in the NCAA tournament, now that it has won its second consecutive conference championship and finished the regular season with an overall 16-1 record.

The Bishops, a deep team with players from 11 countries and five continents, were dominant in USA South Conference action, winning all six matches, four by 9-0 scores. In the tournament match-ups, the Bishops defeated Methodist in the semifinals, 9-0, and runner-up Christopher Newport, 6-3, in the finals.

Their successful season incorporated a common goal. Everyone was focused on winning the conference tournament, earning a top-ten national ranking and finishing with a high placing in the NCAAs. Beating Williams College, ranked number seven in the country, proved to the nation that the Bishops were not a fluke.

"It's a good feeling to know that we can compete with the best in the country and an even better feeling to know we are one of the best teams in the country," said third-year coach Dominic Modise.

Looking back over the season, Anti Saari remembers fall semester's "long practices, conditioning and hard work." While there were many important wins, he singled out the Williams match as a highlight so far, noting that it gave the team considerable confidence. "After that," said the junior from Finland, "we knew we could beat anyone."

Coach Modise, two-time conference Coach of the Year, was pleased with the second consecutive conference title, but said his team has set its sights higher in 2010. "It's so different when your goals are higher than winning the conference tournament," he said. "We respect it, but were at the level now where we want to win the NCAAs."

The players echoed their coach, saying their work is far from finished. Noting that last year's USA South title "was awesome," Russian Alexey Rummyantsev said the second title "was a great win, but expected." German teammate Dominic Forsdike agreed. "We were expecting to be conference champions again because

## Women's Tennis Team Completes Record Year

Burlington—The women's tennis team of North Carolina Wesleyan saw its 2010 season end April 17 as the Bishops fell to top-seeded Methodist University by a 7-2 score in USA South Tournament action.

The Monarchs took 2-of-3 tiebreaks and earned a trio of three-set victories in singles play to advance to Sunday's title match. NCWC freshman Bristy Parker picked up the Bishops' lone singles point, while Samia Kacher and Kristin Seidel teamed for a doubles win.

Methodist took a 2-1 lead in doubles play with victories at #1 and #3. The pivotal point came at the top slot where MU's Kaitlin Flaherty and Katherine Meindl scored a 7-4 advantage in the tiebreak for a 9-8 victory.

In singles play, Flaherty earned a three-set win over Kacher at #1, while Rachel Purser knocked off Seidel in a three-setter at #3. The Monarchs took #2, #4, and #5 in straight sets, with Parker earning NCWC's final point with a 6-3 win in the third set over Jennifer Hamel.

Wesleyan had reached semifinal play with an 8-1 win over Greensboro on Friday. The Bishops took all three doubles matches, while Kacher, Emelie Lundgren, Carole Ateba, Tori Jones, and Parker were all straight-set winners at #1, #2, #4, #5, and #6 singles.

Under Coach Dominic Modise, the Bishops have completed the season with a program-best 9-4 overall record, six USA South victories, and four All-Conference honorees. It's worth noting that five of the team's top six players are freshmen.

(Article courtesy of Sports Information)

our goal was beyond the conference," he said. Brazilian Marcelo Prata called the USA South tournament title "one more step to achieving our goal."

As conference champs, the 10th-ranked Bishops earned an automatic bid to the NCAAs. Last year's team made it to the second round with a win over the University of Mary Washington. Then it was outgunned by Emory University in the second round after some of NCWC's international players had already returned to their home countries for the summer.

This year, the Bishops have set lofty goals for themselves. "Our goal is to make the top 8 by winning regionals' 1st, 2nd and 3rd round," said Forsdike.

## Lax Will Build on 1-12 Record in First Season Back

After operating as a club sport in 2009, the Wesleyan women's lacrosse team completed its first full season, winning 1 and losing 12.

Competing in the USA South Conference, the Bishops recorded their first victory under coach Ramona Walters, a 9-8 win over LaGrange College in Georgia. The team was led by senior Sarah Matulich who scored 27 goals and 4 assists in 13 games. Junior Lauren Young ranked second with 14 goals, and three others scored two goals apiece, as Wesleyan played all season with a roster of 12 players, or the number each team is expected to field at the beginning of a match.

After the season Walters was interviewed by the Decree sports staff.

**Q.** What was the high point of the past season?

**A.** The high point came during the half time of our Greensboro game. Something clicked and the team was able to recognize their true potential. We went into that game with 9 girls and held our own against the #2 team in the conference. We did not win but the girls gained more from each other in those 60 minutes than any skill I could have taught.

**Q.** Compare the team at the beginning of the season to the one at the end?

**A.** At the beginning of the season it was easy to see we were a NEW program. Most of the girls had never picked up a stick before, but by April we became a lacrosse team. In just a short amount of time their game awareness developed far beyond what I expected. They were thinking two, three and sometimes four plays ahead without being prompted. The most improvement came from the defense. These girls blew me away with their hard work.

**Q.** In what areas would you like to see the most improvement next year?

**A.** I would like to see the most improvement in the basics next year. Passing and catching is essential.

**Q.** There were 12 players on the roster. How many had played lacrosse prior to the season?

**A.** Captain Sarah Matulich (soccer) was an avid lacrosse player growing up, as well as junior Lauren Young (soccer). Both did

## In Golf Steep Decline Follows Impressive Fall

By John Kostet  
Decree Staff Writer

The NC Wesleyan Golf team summarizes their spring season with mixed feelings and results, as they finished fifth in the USA South Conference, two spots better than last season, but still far from the goals set in October.

On April 18th, Methodist University took home their eighth consecutive USA South Men's Golf Tournament title at Mill Creek Golf Club near Burlington. NC Wesleyan's closest finish was freshman Kristoffer Idestål who tied for 15th place with a three-day total of 232 (74-79-79). The other Bishops came in 23rd, 27th, 28th and 31st out of the 35 participants.

Last fall expectations ran high for Wesleyan golf, as the "best freshman class in the nation" set a new school record, earning a ranking of 9th in the nation. But the 2009-2010 season began to unravel when one of its best players, Jack Gilbert, decided to leave after only half of the semester. A few weeks later Mark Cole resigned as head coach, and by the end of the semester three more players decided to either quit or leave the program.

"We'll take each round as it comes and prepare well." Prata said he wants the team to "play each game as if it was our last and without fear."

Added Modise: "I expect them to fight and represent the school and program," he said. "I want them to show that NCWC athletics are getting better every day, not just in tennis. The nation has to watch out for all the sports."

Modise explained that the doubles matches will be a key to success in the NCAA tournament. "We are going to work on doubles until we drop," he said, "and the guys understand that."

Doubles partners Rummyantsev (Russia) and Clayton Sonn (South Africa) have seen dramatic improvement over

the course of the year. "We complement each other," Rummyantsev said, explaining that Sonn is "a smart consistent player and he fights for every ball, whereas, my serve and experience is strong. Before the season, my return of serve and his serve were not that good, but with all the practicing together we became better and dominated."

Saari concurred with Rummyantsev's assessment. "In doubles, you have to know your partner's strength so you can pick up the slack and maximize the strength," said Saari who, with Russian Anton Filonov, often forms the team's number one tandem.

In identifying the keys to the team's success over the past two seasons,

**Q.** And how can having played other sports (i.e. soccer or volleyball) help in making the adjustment to lacrosse?

**A.** Because lacrosse is a spring sport, my dual athletes come into season in shape and ready to go. Virtually all sports have the

same concept; move to space, keep your knees bent, communicate, find the open girl, I can go on and on. This makes the transition from one sport to the next much easier than if the young lady had never participated in athletics a day in her life.

**Q.** Twelve is the minimum for fielding a full team. Did this put you at a disadvantage against other teams that had substitutes?

**A.** To a certain extent, of course we were at a disadvantage. In 75+ degree weather the girls were forced to play 60 minutes of lacrosse with no subs and in many cases down one, two, or even three players. They went into these games knowing it was going to be a battle; they may not have had the strongest stick skills on the field but there wasn't one team that was in better shape. Our last home game, the girls were hit with a blow. Lakwanua and Alyssa were unable to play due to injury. So already we are going into the game without two essential components of our transition game—the center, who



Sarah Matulich scored 27 goals to lead the Bishops. SI photo

(soccer), Lakwanua Hicks (basketball), and Aylisha Thompson played their first lacrosse in our club season of 2009. Chloe Smith, Shamika Grenardo and Farrhyn Stanley joined the program fall of 2010.

**Q.** For newcomers, what's the most difficult part of the game?

**A.** Patience. Without a doubt. By the time you get to college, you know what you are good at. So learning a brand new sport can be wearisome on the nerves. Taking the time to learn the basics and technique of the game is the most time consuming and frustrating. However, it is the most important and rewarding.

"Things seemed to be in disarray after Coach Cole left, but I don't want to blame it on Coach Doino who was thrown into the situation," said Coelho, who chose to focus on academics this semester.

Coach Doino agreed about the unique situation. "The guys were great and understanding, and I'm glad I had the chance to coach them," he said. With far more knowledge on the technical aspects of basketball than golf, Coach Doino focused on improving the mental aspects of the game. "With such a young team, being able to be mentally tough was a big key to me," Doino said.

Freshman Dane Anderson said he liked Doino who "made the whole experience fun." But he also cited the limited amount of practice, as did Soini, who did not play the fall season due to academics. By spring, he said, "I never really got my game going in time."

Soini added that the ideal solution would have been to have a full-time coach, a PGA pro. "But that would probably exceed our budget," Soini said.

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coach and players alike cited the strong bonds formed on and off the tennis court. Coach Modise noted that there's an element of trust involved in a team. "I couldn't go to war without those guys," he said. "I trust their attitude and energy. They're competitive and tough. It's all about supporting each other when the match is on the line. We spend a lot of time together so it's all about that positive energy transferring to the courts and the team working together."

Rummyantsev summed it all up by saying, "We want to win and give our best team spirit. No team is like us, we are like a family, and that goes a long way."

takes all the draws, and a core defender who plays a huge role on our end. All we can do is roll with it. If we were a team that dwells on the negative, we wouldn't have gotten anywhere this season. We played that game with nine players and lost 11-8. That is an accomplishment in itself.

**Q.** What other advantages do teams in your conference seem to have over the Bishops?

**A.** Other teams have experience, girls who have been playing lacrosse since they were young. You give us a few years and we will be right up there with the rest of them.

**Q.** Looking ahead, what are your goals for recruitment?

**A.** As much as I love how in shape the girls are during the season, I would like to have a handful of subs for them on the sidelines. I'm looking to bring in strong student-athletes who can take on a leadership role early in their careers. This program has a long way to go, but building a good foundation is key. Currently we have young ladies from up and down the East Coast interested in NCWC. I'm looking for that versatile athlete who wants to make a statement and is willing to work for it.

## Softball Team Is Defeated in Second Round

By Jarad Brown  
Decree Editor

The Wesleyan softball team won its opening contest of the USA-South Conference tournament, but that might be the only highlight of the team's season.

The Bishops followed the victory with back-to-back losses in the conference tournament to Christopher Newport (8-0) and Ferrum (9-4) to conclude their season.

The losses came after NCWC began the tournament with a 3-0 victory against Averett. The team finished its season just 12-22, and a dismal 4-14 in conference play.

NCWC opened its season with six consecutive victories which included four different contests in which the Bishops scored at least 10 runs.

That production tapered as the season progressed, though, as the team finished with a collective .263 batting average and just 98 RBIs, a tally 45 fewer than the team allowed to opposing teams.

The team sat at an even .500 after the opening 20 games of its season, but the Bishops were losers of 13 of their final 14 regular-season contests which included a stretch of 10 consecutive losses.

Despite the tough finish to its season NCWC did enjoy a 7-9 home record and an even 3-3 record at neutral sites. A disappointing 2-10 record on the road, though, played a major role in the team's subpar record.

Though the season was a disappointment for many, the future is bright for the Bishops. The team will graduate just three seniors, only one of whom led her squad in a statistical category. Senior Kate Braun paced the team with a .424 on base percentage and 24 runs scored, but her production could be matched by junior Brittany Nichols next season. Nichols led the team with a .335 batting average, .570 slugging percentage, and 25 RBIs.

The team will also return pitchers Kacie Brandes and Ashley Driver, who combined to start all 34 of the squad's contests.

Brandes, a junior, won seven games for the Bishops and Driver, a sophomore, recorded 20 starts on the season, only adding to her experience.