

A Touch of Class In K. C.

By RUSSELL RAWLINGS

Although its only 5:30 in the morning, Atlantic Christian's tennis team is up and on the move. For sure they are moving slowly, but they are nevertheless moving. It's only Tuesday morning, and the week will be a long one, but great things are on the horizon for the players and coach Tom Parham.

It starts slowly, Morris wins, as expected. Staub wins, as expected. Aldridge wins a tough match after a first round bye, as expected. Roger Ossmin wins, as expected. Cruise and Niaz lose to tough first round opponents, as expected.

What was to follow was anything but expected.

Tennis players use the term "treeing" for a player who goes far beyond previous performance records to reach a new high in achievement. That's the technical explanation. To state it simply, when someone "trees" they are playing out of their minds.

Brian Staub treed.

His lead was followed by some solid play in singles from Ossmin and Morris. Then the doubles game came into play. Ossmin-Aldridge should have been seeded and set out to prove it. Morris and Staub were underrated to a great degree, and four wins later everyone knew it.

It's two days later, Wednesday evening around 8:45. By this time the NAIA Tennis Tournament has usually been decided. This time around that was not the case. It was all tied. East Texas State had 22 points, as expected. Atlantic Christian also had 22 points, which no one expected.

The rest is pretty much history. East Texas flexed its powerful tennis muscles, which had been strengthened by a full slate of scholarship players. Atlantic Christian stayed right in there to fight it out, and before the week was over Atlantic Christian College had by far its greatest athletic accomplishment of all time.

The fact that Parham's teams had been to the national finals nine years in a row was in itself the greatest thing to ever happen to AC athletics. But this time there was a new twist. The Bulldogs hadn't only made it to the national tournament and made a good showing, they were now number two in the country. The whole country. Number two.

We're flying back now, its around noon Saturday. It is difficult to think that it has all happened so fast. A week ago Atlantic Christian was just another team that had built a solid tennis program through the years but never had been able to break through and play with the big boys, head-to-head.

Now AC is number two, and not so very far away from being number one. A scholarship here, another performance like Staub's, and who knows, the Bulldogs could just be calling themselves the best in the country. It sounds like a little too much, but its right there if Atlantic Christian wants it. Parham has more than proven himself with his efforts in the past. Now if someone will just give him half of what the other schools have, number two could be number one. They weren't all that far from being number one this year.

We're sitting in the Atlanta airport. Atlantic Coast football coaches Bo Rien, Mike McGee and Dick Crum just happen to be waiting for the same flight, and Praham walks over to strike up a conversation. I sit back and size up the situation, thinking about the four coaches. Everyone knows who coaches State, Duke and Carolina. I know who has coached the number two team in the country. Thus I don't feel overly impressed to be riding on the same plane with these three coaches. They're just on the plane. I'm sitting with the number two in the country. Who's there to impress.

There is also this family in Kansas City which enters into the picture. It's sad that only the team and a few other people in Wilson have ever met Mr. and Mrs. Bob Mullet, and their son Mark. The three of them are there every year to make the team feel at home, even when some of the players are 12,000 miles away from home.

There are more thanks to be handed out along the way, but for the most part it is the effort of Parham and his players, and it didn't just happen in a week. It started when the snow was swept off the courts in January and it will continue throughout the summer, even though the 1978 season is officially over. They're in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Sweden, and who knows where getting ready for 1979.

Parham will also be ready for 1979, and the years that follow. Even with better players it will be tough to better the effort of the past week, but the chance will be there for it to happen, and that is about all that Parham is asking for.

By better players I simply mean the new man here or there that can break it open in KC. As for better people, Parham couldn't take all the scholarships in the world and improve on Tom Morris, Roger Ossmin, Jay Aldridge, Brian Staub, Asad Niaz and Billy Cruise. By the very same token, AC couldn't take all the money in ther world and improve on Parham.

Scholarship For Tracey

We are proud to welcome Tracey Eubank to Atlantic Christian College. Tracey is a freshman from Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the reason she is special is because she is the first girl to ever receive a tennis scholarship from Atlantic Christian. She has been awarded a \$700 scholarship for the 1978-79 tennis season.

Tracey has only been playing tennis for four or five years, but in that short time, she has had an impressive string of victories. Her high school, First Colonial, won the Virginia State Tournament held in Lynchburg in May, 1978. Tracy was ranked number two for First Colonial during that victory.

Just last week, Tracey was

playing in the Women's Open Tournament held at Virginia Beach, and she advanced to the semifinals before being eliminated. Other tennis victories for Tracey include several Country Club tournaments and placing first in the District Tournament in doubles.

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