

# ETSU overpowers women's tennis with 6-1 victory

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In women's tennis action last weekend, the Bulldogs fell 6-1 to the Eastern Tennessee State University Buccaneers in their penultimate home game for the 2010 season.

"The match went OK. ETSU is a good team. They beat an ACC team this year," Head Coach Lise Gregory said. "Everybody competed well, as usual, which is fun to see a group of people competing that hard across the board."

Despite a high level of competition, multiple close matches and a win from senior Louise Bottomley, the team could not overpower the tennis talent from Johnson City.

"It was disappointing as a whole just because we would have had to have played really well to beat them, but we could have done it," said Bottomley, who played No. 5 for the Bulldogs on Saturday.

The team said the loss was a disappointment but they know they played a difficult ETSU team.

"Obviously they're a really good team because they're first in their conference," said No. 4 player Nicole Schon. "But I think if you look at individual scores, everyone had really close matches and we competed just as well as them."

The Buccaneers also boasted a nationally ranked player, Yevgeniya Stupak, who faced Leslie Smith at the No. 1 spot.

"Stupak was an awesome player," Bottomley said. "She was in the ranking last year, so playing against a nationally ranked player is definitely hard work."

The lineup and scores for the day's match were Smith at one (1-6, 0-6), Stephanie Schon at two (4-6, 3-6), Devon Cavanaugh at three (6-7, 3-6), N. Schon at four (4-6, 1-6), Bottomley at five (6-4, 6-3) and Sarah Brinkley at six (2-6, 4-6).



Photos by Stephanie Schon - Staff Photographer

**Nicole Schon returns a volley during her first match against ETSU. Schon returns a serve during her first match. Schon lost 4-6 in the first match and 1-6 in the second to the ETSU Buccaneers.**



Bottomley, who has now increased her personal record to 10-3 on the season, was the day's only victory and an outstanding performer, according to N. Schon.

"Louise played really well and was doing all the right things, like coming in to the net and taking advantage of short balls," she said. "I think she had a really good match."

Bottomley's gameplay also impressed Gregory.

"Louise has been playing good all year, but had a consistently good match on Saturday," she said. "She tends to have some ups and downs, but that was the most consistent I've seen her from the beginning to end."

However, England native Bottomley remains focused on the bigger picture.

"I played well and got a good result, but in the end the team didn't win and that's most important," she said.

According to the team, the opening doubles matches set a negative tone for

the Bulldogs.

"I think in doubles in general we got a little bit of a slow start and were a little intimidated," Gregory said.

Bottomley, who plays at doubles No. 2 with Cavanaugh, agreed.

"Our doubles didn't really get off to a good start," Bottomley said. "But that's just the way the cookie crumbles."

The doubles pairings and scores were Smith and S. Schon 8-4, Bottomley and Cavanaugh 8-4 and N. Schon and Tania Mateva 8-3.

Although the slow doubles start cost the team a victory, it did not stop them from looking for positives in the action.

"We were more aggressive and we worked on a more transitional game," N. Schon said. "It's not going to happen overnight, but in time I think we're going to start beating the top teams."

Sister and teammate Stephanie Schon agreed.

"Coach was proud of us and said a

lot of us are doing the necessary things to get better, and she always talks about the process instead of the results and everybody did that," she said.

The team also said they gained some valuable learning points from the defeat.

"I feel like we can learn that we can compete with these kinds of teams and I think that's good," Bottomley said. "We just need to go one step further and beat them because we are definitely capable of doing that."

The Bulldogs, who are now 12-7 on the season, kick off the Big South Conference tournament next weekend.

"I think we are all really excited because as long as we're all playing well on the day, we can beat anybody," Bottomley said.

With only one match left in the regular season, Gregory said she is focusing on the to-do list until the tournament.