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Information Table

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**INSTITUTE FOR STUDY ABROAD
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Wygonowska: Puts UO on tennis map

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ing the semifinals of the Polish Indoor Championships in 1996.

How did Oregon, which recruits against Pac-10 powerhouses such as Stanford and UCLA, obtain a player of Wygonowska's stature?

The answer is simple — apples.

"I had to ask her what her real reason was [for coming to Oregon], if it was because I was just such a great coach and she was so motivated to come and play for me," Griffin says of his first encounter with Wygonowska. "She said that she looked up in the encyclopedia under Oregon and saw that Oregon had the best apples in the world. She loves apples, so that made her decision right there. It kind of burst my bubble a little bit, but whatever it takes to get them here, I guess."

Wygonowska was immediately matched up against some of the best players in the country as the Ducks' No. 1 singles player. Understandably, her freshman season included frustrating growing pains when she finished with a 6-15 record.

"Last year she was thrown into the fire a little bit," Griffin says. "She struggled in the beginning, but you could tell she had the game she needed. She just needed a little bit of fine tuning."

This season, Wygonowska has refined her mental approach and

is reaping the benefits. She is 10-9 and has defeated two of the top players in the Pac-10 in California's Amanda Augustus and Arizona State's Reka Cseresnyes. Wygonowska also narrowly lost to Stanford's No. 1 Anne Kremer, ranked No. 120 in the world, after leading 6-2, 4-1.

Griffin says with those two wins and one loss he considers her 2-2 against the top four players in the conference (the other loss being to UCLA's Anica Cooper). He also says that record proves she is one of the conference's top five players, along with the aforementioned four. In fact, when the new national rankings come out on Feb. 17, Griffin expects Wygonowska to become the first Duck ever nationally ranked in singles.

"We're just trying to emerge [as a team]," Griffin says. "And the teams from the Southern Pac-10 haven't had a lot of respect for our programs up here. Especially when you can beat them at [No. 1 singles], they're going to start recognizing us. I have no doubt that they have more respect for our teams because Alina has been able to beat some of their best players."

Griffin and Wygonowska both say she is now more patient and mentally consistent than last season. She has also adopted the pro-

fessional mind-set of concentrating only on the task at hand, as opposed to dwelling on the past, according to both of them.

"What's very important, especially playing the top players in the Pac-10, is not showing any emotion," Wygonowska says.

However, Wygonowska's improvement process is far from finished. Griffin and Wygonowska say she needs to continue to work on her serve, among other aspects of her game.

The professional tennis ranks are becoming an increasingly viable goal for Wygonowska. Griffin believes fans could be watching her in the Australian Open in a couple of years.

"I've seen enough of the best tennis players in the world," Griffin says. "When you're a good athlete, you've got good footwork and you've got solid strokes all around like Alina has, you have the tools."

For now, Wygonowska is concentrating on the collegiate ranks and says she is having more fun than ever. During the next two seasons, she hopes to raise in the national rankings and, as Griffin says, permanently place Oregon on the collegiate tennis map.

Luckily for Griffin, Washington — with its apples — was not among the plethora of schools recruiting Wygonowska.

UO: Win at USC second ever for Oregon

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It must be said, however, that junior Sonja Curtis and freshman Angelina Wolvert have more than their share of grunt work cut out for them.

The two are being asked to shoulder the burden of containing the other team's inside players, contribute an inside presence on the offensive end and somehow manage to stay out of foul trouble to play at least 30 minutes a game.

It seems like a difficult task, but against the Trojans both lived up to that expectation.

The inside players of USC are no comparison to UCLA's, but the Ducks' 76-58 win still is a good start to build on after the loss to the Bruins.

Washington State, Oregon's opponent Thursday, is not having a memorable season, but the Cougars' inside players are solid. They should provide some kind of test for Oregon in a must-win game for the Ducks.

Washington's multi-talented power forward Amber Hall will test the depleted Ducks inside more than the Bruins did. Hall is exactly the kind of player who could cause problems for them. She scores and never quits chasing rebounds. Keeping the hyperactive Hall

from going wild in the paint could be a problem.

If she is contained and the Ducks can sweep the Washington schools for the second time this season and go 10-0 against them at McArthur Court during the Runge-era, they could very well be on their way back to the NCAA Tournament.

Role reversal

The Ducks' 18-point win at USC last Sunday seemed easy, but over the years beating the Trojans in Los Angeles has never been an easy task. That win was just the second ever for Oregon at USC, which plays in a tiny 1,200-seat arena that resembles a middle school gym.

Dominating the region

Oregon will test its 13-game winning streak against the three other Northwest schools this week.

The Ducks have won every game against Washington, Washington State and Oregon State since losing to Washington on Jan. 13, 1996.

Ryan Frank is the sports editor for the Emerald. His women's basketball notes appear every Wednesday in the Emerald.

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