

Tennis: Injuries devastate women

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When we started this year, we were around there, too, and we were able to get up to 55 this year, and we qualified for regionals. So, yeah, since I've been here, the program has gotten only better and better."

Oregon loses only one senior, Jeff Thomsen, heading into next season, but Kergroach, a junior, is also departing to return to his native Paris for personal reasons. The loss of Kergroach (20-10), who is ranked No. 52 in the Rolex Collegiate Tennis Rankings, will be a big one for the Ducks, Russell said.

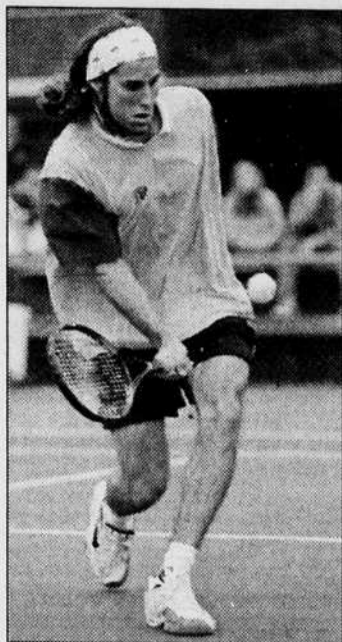
"He's really been a wonderful addition to what we've tried to do here," Russell said. "He's helped raise our level as a program."

Among the returning players for Oregon will be Navarro (11-17), who played No. 3 singles and No. 2 doubles, and Guillermo Carter (14-16), who played No. 2 singles and No. 1 doubles with Kergroach.

Noting the Ducks' winless record against league competition, Navarro said the team plans to make its mark in conference play next season.

"This year we competed very close with all the Pac-10 schools we played," Navarro said. "Next year we want to beat them; we want to get more wins."

Although the women's team (4-16 overall, 0-8 Pac-10) was not able to repeat its 1997 trip to the NCAA Regional Championships, head coach Jack Griffin said he was impressed with his team's resiliency despite a rash of injuries



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Guillermo Carter is the top candidate for the No. 1 singles position next season.

that forced it to juggle its lineup all season.

In fact, Oregon was never able to play its original starting lineup in a dual match.

"I think it's about as tough a season as you can go through as far as with injuries," Griffin said. "I mean we made it through, and we didn't have unbelievable results, but we stayed together. And I think we're close as a team, and we're all on the same page of where we're going. I think we've developed a little character."

Next season, Griffin said he expects a different storyline for the Ducks.

As opposed to this season, when Oregon consistently played two walk-ons, Griffin said he will have eight players on scholarship next season. He said he counts on intense battles for spots on the traveling team.

Team captain Allison Sosnow, who had 48 career singles and 36 career doubles wins, is the lone scholarship Duck who will not return. Griffin and Wygonowska both said Sosnow's leadership and play will be sorely missed.

"She's not a player I recruited, but she's a player that I would have liked to have had on my team anywhere that I've coached," Griffin said.

"It's tough for her to leave, but I think she understands she has an impact on the progress this program is going to make in the years to come."

Wygonowska (18-17), ranked No. 50, will lead Oregon from the No. 1 singles position again next season, joining five other returning lettermen and at least three expected recruits.

Sosnow said she expects the team to use this frustrating season as a learning experience.

"I kind of saw how over the four years the team really progressed, and the level [of play] stepped up," Sosnow said. "Let's just say, it couldn't be any worse than it was this year."

"I think people are just looking forward to having a good year and a healthy year."



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Sophomore Alina Wygonowska led the women's team from the No. 1 singles position with an 18-17 record.

Michael Jordan awarded fifth Most Valuable Player award

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar holds the record for MVP awards with six

By Chris Sheridan
The Associated Press

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Michael Jordan won his fifth Most Valuable Player award Monday, beating out Karl Malone and moving within one of the record set by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Jordan, trying to lead the Chicago Bulls to a sixth title this decade, accepted the trophy at a suburban hotel not far from his

team's practice facility.

He received 1,084 points to 842 for Malone, last year's surprise winner, from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters who cover the league's 29 teams. Jordan got 92 first-place votes to 20 for the Utah Jazz forward.

"This accolade will not be cherished until I have a sixth championship," Jordan said.

Jordan previously won the award in 1988, 1991, 1992 and 1996, and would have a chance to match Abdul-Jabbar's mark if he stays in basketball. Bill Russell of the Boston Celtics is the only other



JORDAN

was his lowest since his second year in the league.

He also had some of his worst career numbers in shooting percentage (46.5), free throw percent-

age (78.4), rebounds (5.8) and assists (3.5), but the voters rewarded him for leading the Bulls to a 62-20 record — tied with Utah for the best in the league — despite the absence of teammate Scottie Pippen for 35 games after undergoing foot surgery.

Gary Payton of Seattle was third with three first-place votes and 431 points. Shaquille O'Neal of the Los Angeles Lakers finished fourth with 311 points, including the other first-place vote.

The Bulls lead the Indiana Pacers 1-0 in the Eastern Conference final, with Game 2 tonight.

five-time winner. Russell presented Jordan with the award today. Jordan led the league in scoring for the 10th time, although his 28.7 average was his lowest since his second year in the league.

Last 10 NBA MVPs

- 1998: Michael Jordan, Bulls
- 1997: Karl Malone, Jazz
- 1996: Michael Jordan, Bulls
- 1995: David Robinson, Spurs
- 1994: H. Olajuwon, Rockets
- 1993: Charles Barkley, Suns
- 1992: Michael Jordan, Bulls
- 1991: Michael Jordan, Bulls
- 1990: Magic Johnson, Lakers
- 1989: Magic Johnson, Lakers

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