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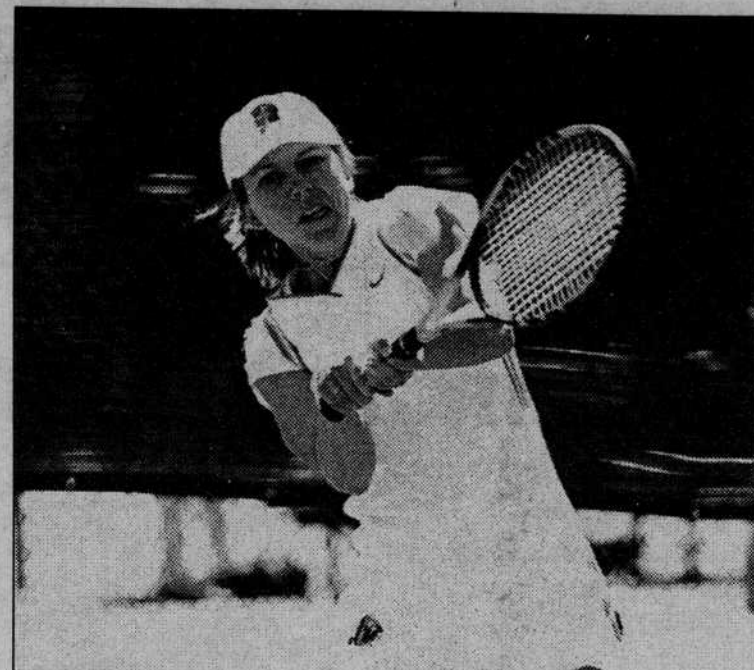
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No. 61 Alina Wygonowska and No. 62 Monika Geiczys represent the first Oregon duo to ever be ranked at the same time.

Women near NCAAs

The women's tennis team is on the verge of an NCAA tournament berth despite a mid-season slump

By Robbie McCallum for the Emerald

Yet another Oregon athletic team is on the bubble of reaching the prestigious field of 64.

The women's tennis teams is on the verge of qualifying for the NCAA Tennis Championships beginning May 13, its destiny lying in the hands of the NCAA selection committee.

Despite a rough stretch of matches to end the season, the Ducks are still ranked No. 49 in the latest ITA polls. But the selection committee does not decide the field of 64 on rankings alone.

"They take a number of things into consideration; strength of schedule, conference rankings, big wins," head coach Jack Griffin said.

Although the Ducks finished ninth in the Pacific-10 conference with a 1-7 record, all but one of the teams ahead of Oregon are ranked in the top-25.

"It's a strong region, definitely the toughest, but that helps us," Griffin said. "We have nine teams in the top 30. You can't say that about other regions."

Despite a stretch of games in which the Ducks lost nine of ten matches, the team still has quite a case for a tournament berth.

The Ducks finished the season strongly, defeating UC-Irvine and

Long Beach State convincingly.

Oregon has three major upsets to its name: No. 20 Arizona, No. 30 San Diego State and No. 50 UC-Irvine. The latter two being convincing 6-3 wins.

On Feb. 11, the Ducks pushed No. 8 UCLA to the brink before falling 5-4 in doubles.

The strength of the Oregon schedule is also a plus. Of the 20 teams Oregon has faced, 14 were ranked in the top 100 and nine were ranked higher than the Ducks.

"Things are still up in the air," Griffin said. "It's going to come down to a lot of things."

While the team situation is uncertain, Oregon has two individual players in contention for NCAA berths.

Senior Alina Wygonowska and freshman Monika Geiczys are ranked No. 61 and 62 respectively. The Polish players have remained in the ITA rankings for most of the season, marking the first time in team history that two players have been ranked at the same time.

Wygonowska and Geiczys, along with sophomore Janice Nyland will represent the Ducks at the Pac-10 championships on April 27 in Ojai, Calif. Wygonowska and Geiczys will also represent Oregon in doubles competition.

"If they can have a good win at Ojai, they can get a good draw at the NCAAs," Griffin said.

The remaining singles players compete in the Pac-10 invitational, also in Ojai.

Oregon will know whether it will have qualified for the NCAA tournament next week.

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