



Grand Canyon University Women's Tennis 2009

A year removed from a return to national prominence, Grand Canyon University is back at it. The Antelopes advanced to the NCAA Division II National Tournament in 2008 under first-year coach Greg Prudhomme. With three veteran returners back from last year's team that finished 9-9 overall, 8-9 in NCAA competition, the Lopes are buoyed by a confidence that comes easy when you consider past laurels.

But every season is a cause to start over. This year, the Antelopes start with key components who put Grand Canyon women's tennis back in its proper place last year.

Among the West Region's best.

Sophomore Stefanie Griffin went 8-12 in singles matches in 2008. She was 6-13 in doubles play. Sophomore Stephanie Haldeman won eight of her 19 singles matches last season and nine of her 20 doubles matches. Junior Amanda Jackson went 6-12 in singles action and 8-10 in doubles play in 2008.

"It will be fun working with these girls and trying to build on the season we posted last year," Prudhomme said. "They are looking forward to a busy and competitive season."

The addition of 42-year-old senior Karen Peltin and 33-year-old junior Mandy Prudhomme adds immediate statesmanship to a team familiar with seniority, what with a national headline grabbing 60-year-old from a year's past. Prudhomme is the coach's wife.

Peltin held a Southwest Junior ranking, and was a state qualifier out of Sierra Vista Buena High School in the Tucson area. "She will be one of our best players in singles and doubles," Prudhomme said.

Mandy Prudhomme was ranked No. 1 in the Southwest in open mixed doubles. She was the No. 1 singles player at Glendale Community College.

Grand Canyon is also bringing in freshmen Veronica Brunk and Tatiana Sumenkova, a Russian-born player.

"The women's tennis team is bringing in a great mix of returning players and new players," coach Prudhomme said.

Assistant coach Nicolas Legros, originally from France, will serve as Prudhomme's right-hand supporting instructor. He is a former top 10-ranked NCAA Division II player.

"He brings in much expertise as a player and coach," Prudhomme said.

The Antelopes finished fourth in the Pacific West Conference last year in terms of winning percentage, but lost to all four Hawaii schools.

This year the Lopes, who had the likes of NCAA Division I Houston on its schedule last year, will play two of the Pacific Island schools prior to the PacWest tournament in Hawaii.

Prior to last year, the Antelopes had not won at least eight matches since current Assistant Athletic Director Ruth Ann Gardner completed her final year as coach in 2002.

If Prudhomme and the women's team has their way, this year will mark the first time in seven years the Antelopes will record double digit wins as a team.