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GRIZZLY WOMEN'S TENNIS TEAM
IN BOZEMAN THIS WEEKEND
FOR REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

by DAVE GUFFEY
UM Sports Information Director

MISSOULA--

How does a tennis team go from 4-13 to 17-4 in just one season?

University of Montana women's tennis coach Paul Larson needs just one word to reply--"depth."

Larson and his Grizzly team will attempt to continue its banner season this weekend, May 9-10, as it competes in the Regionals in Bozeman hosted by Montana State University.

"I knew we had some good players coming in," said Larson, who is in his second season as head coach. "I just wasn't sure how good. After a week in school and watching the new players, I knew we'd be good."

A couple of new players Larson is talking about are No. 1 and 2 players Birgette Giaever (pronounced Burr-Geet-Ah Gave-Er) and Diane Wortman. Giaever, a sophomore from Oslo, Norway, has compiled an impressive 15-6 singles record. Wortman, a freshman from New York, has an even more impressive mark at 19-2.

"I'd heard a lot about Diane," Larson recalled. "She was recruited by several schools to play basketball (she's 5-11), including the University of Tennessee. I knew she was a good athlete. She wasn't in that great of shape early, but now, after steady improvement she's one of the most consistent players we have."

"As far as Birgette," Larson said, "I knew she was good, and after I'd seen her play, I was feeling better and better about our team. She's played some of the best players in the region and beat them."

(over)

If a combined record of 34-8 for the Grizzlies' top two players isn't enough, then there's Lynanne Otto, the "veteran" on the team.

Otto, only a sophomore, is a perfect 21-0 in singles this season. UM's No. 1 player last season, she has gone to three sets with only a handful of her opponents.

"The players at No. 3 aren't as good as at No. 1," said Otto, who is from Minnesota. "I was impressed with the caliber of play of our new players, but I really didn't know what to expect as far as the team goes. We're really playing as a team this year, and of course we have a lot more depth."

Jane Heintzman, a junior from Missoula, is another member of last year's squad. This season is no surprise to her.

"We're a lot deeper this year," the No. 4 player said. "Last year we were pretty good one through three, this season we're solid one through six. We are all fairly close when we play each other. Plus I think we're a lot more serious this year. I knew we'd have a good year."

UM's number five singles player, Cathy McDonnell, has an 8-9 record, while the only senior on the team, Colleen MacNamara from Missoula, sports a 13-7 record. Waiting in the wings is freshman Julie Eckmann, a letter winner on the Grizzly women's basketball team.

Larson said there are two national tournaments the team can advance to. The team with the most points advances, as well as the top finisher in the No.1 and No.2 slots from the Regionals. Both tourneys are held June 3-11 in conjunction with one another in Baton Rouge, La., and are hosted by Louisiana State University.

"One, two and three, and the rest of the team have shots at titles this weekend," Larson said, adding, "I expect Bozeman and Oregon State to be our main competition."

"I'd be totally flabbergasted if someone from here doesn't show up down there (LSU)," he said.

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