

SPORTS NEWS



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Men's Tennis

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Bearcats knock off defending AE champ Hartford

Binghamton (12-9) made a statement to the reigning conference champions Saturday night, defeating Hartford 5-2 at the Binghamton Tennis Center. The Bearcats, who dropped a 5-2 decision to the Hawks last year, demonstrated their upgraded lineup and overall play against essentially the same Hartford lineup from a year ago.

"Hartford is a talented team," head coach Michael Starke said. "I just think we had greater intensity, discipline, focus and competitive spirit."

Binghamton captured the doubles point with wins at numbers one and three. The Bearcats then won four of the six singles matches to seal the victory.

Rao continues to elevate game

Sophomore **Akshay Rao (New Delhi, India)** spearheaded the win over Hartford with his commanding singles victory over the two-time reigning America East Player of the Year. Rao, who earlier teamed with senior **Brad Sherwood (Bronx, N.Y./Fordham Prep)** for a riveting 9-8 first doubles win, looked sharp in a 6-4, 6-1 win over Pedja Zdravkovic. Rao raised his overall singles record to 27-4, including an 18-3 dual mark.

"Akshay has taken his game to the next level," Starke said. "He took over that doubles match, and then defeated a player (Zdravkovic) who beat him 6-4, 6-2 last spring. He is a special player."

Doubles point pivotal for BU's success

Capturing the coveted doubles point has always played a key role in the outcome of BU's matches. Seven times last season, the Bearcats were involved in narrow 4-3 decisions which were decided by the doubles point, and countless others where momentum coming off doubles play had an impact on the rest of the match. Binghamton lost four of those 4-3 matches, including two defeats to America East rival Stony Brook with the last being in the conference semifinals. With the addition of freshman **Edwin Gerard (Queens, N.Y./Edgemont)** to the third tandem, and the formation of senior **Brad Davidoff (Roslyn, N.Y.)** and junior **Steve Spencer (Plantation, Fla./Nova)** at second doubles, Starke now feels his doubles unit can set the tone for the remainder of the match.

"Doubles represents a huge momentum swing," he said. "When you take the doubles point, you just feel you're a little better than your opponents, and the winning team tends to ride the crest of that wave. Especially for us, if Akshay wins his doubles match, he becomes so confident heading into his singles match. So with an incredible number one singles player, a 1-0 lead after doubles is almost like being up 2-0."

Up Next: Three home matches to finish

The Bearcats are into the stretch run, with three duals remaining before the conference tournament. The biggest will be an April 11 encounter with 2002 America East runner-up Stony Brook, which beat BU twice last year. The Seawolves have upgraded their lineup at the top two singles positions, and are considered a strong contender for the America East title.

2002-03 Schedule/Results (12-9)

SEPTEMBER

5 Thu.	ITHACA	W 7-0
7 Sat.-	@ Bloomsburg Duals	no scoring
8 Sun.	w/ Villanova, Lehigh	
17 Tue.	@ Siena	W 7-0
21 Sat.-	@ Cornell Invitational	no scoring
22 Sun.		

OCTOBER

6 Sun.	@ Williams	L 2-5
12 Sat.	BUFFALO	W 4-3
25 Fri.-	@ ITA East Regional	no scoring
29 Tue.	hosted by Penn	

JANUARY

25 Sat.	@ Army	L 1-6
26 Sun.	+COLGATE	L 2-5

FEBRUARY

1 Sat.	^Buffalo	W 5-2
	^Rochester	W 7-0
2 Sun.	^Niagara	W 5-2
	@ St. Bonaventure	L 3-4
8 Sat.	!Niagara	W 5-2
	!Bucknell	W 7-0
9 Sun.	!Marist	L 2-4
21 Fri.	@ Cornell	L 0-7

MARCH

9 Sun.	~ St. Louis	L 0-6
11 Tue.	@ Stetson	L 1-6
13 Thu.	~ Rhode Island	W 5-2
21 Fri.	%Manhattan	W 7-0
22 Sat.	@ St. John's	L 1-6
	@ Concordia	W 6-1
29 Sat.	vs. Boston (at Albany)	canc.

APRIL

5 Sat.	HARTFORD	W 5-2
11 Fri.	STONY BROOK	3:30 p.m.
13 Sun.	VERMONT	10 a.m.
16 Wed.	BUCKNELL	1 p.m.
25 Fri.-	America East Champ.	9 a.m.
27 Sun.	played at Yale	

+ played at Binghamton Tennis Center

~ played in Orlando, Fla.

! played at Cornell

^ played at St. Bonaventure

% played at Columbia