



# 2017 SEC Men's Tennis Notebook

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Final

## Alabama

The Alabama men's tennis team finished the 2017 spring season with an overall 11-17 record. The Crimson Tide had one singles player and a doubles team that finished in the final ITA rankings of the 2016-17 year. Mazen Osama and Spencer Richey ended the year nationally ranked No. 15 in doubles, while Osama was ranked No. 29 in singles as well.

## Arkansas

The Razorbacks wrapped up the 2016-17 season with a 16-13 record, going 6-6 in conference play. Advancing to the NCAA Tournament for the 19th time in school history, Arkansas earned its second consecutive appearance for the first time in 14 years. Seniors Mike Redlicki and Jose Salazar were selected as two of the 64 singles players and one of the 32 doubles pairings that competed in the 2017 NCAA Division I Men's Tennis Championships. It marks the first time since 2004 that multiple Razorbacks advanced to the NCAA Championships and the first time that two singles and one doubles pairing advanced. Redlicki went 1-1 in the singles championship, defeating No. 63 Johannes Schretter of Baylor in the first round before falling to No. 55 Yuya Ito of Texas in the round of 32. Salazar fell in the first round to No. 13 Skander Mansouri of Wake Forest. The two teamed up in doubles to defeat Ohio State's 16th-ranked pairing of Herkko Pollanen and Mikael Torpegaard in the opening round, before falling to eventual national champions Andrew Harris and Spencer Papa of Oklahoma a round later. In the final Oracle/ITA Rankings, Redlicki wraps up his career as the No. 12 singles player in the country, while Salazar finishes 45th. The duo finish No. 10 in the final doubles ranking.

## Auburn

Auburn posted a 13-15 overall record in its first season under head coach Bobby Reynolds, and a 3-9 mark in SEC play. The Tigers lost to Ole Miss 4-1 in the second round of the SEC tournament. Seniors Conner Huertas del Pino and Max Hinnisdaels competed in the NCAA doubles championships, falling 6-3, 6-3 to No. 2 seed Martin Redlicki and Evan Zhu of UCLA in the Round of 32. The Auburn doubles tandem finished No. 22 in the Oracle/ITA rankings, and Hinnisdaels was No. 60 in singles. Graduating from the roster are Dante Saleh, Hinnisdaels and Huertas del Pino. The Tigers return eight players for next season.

## Florida

The Florida men's tennis team completed its season with a 19-10 record – one of the best records under head coach Bryan Shelton. In the regular season, UF blanked four opponents in a row to start the dual season, which was something that had not been done by any Florida team since 1969. The team also pulled off two upset wins over UCLA and USC, and moved on to earn a 9-3 conference record. It earned a top-3 finish in the SEC for the 26th time in program history, and advanced to the Round of 16 in the NCAA Tournament for the 16th time. Alfredo Perez and Johannes Ingildsen both represented UF in the NCAA Individual Tournament, where Perez advanced to the Round of 16 in the singles competition and the pair made it to the Round of 16 in the doubles competition. Eight players will return next season, but the Gators will lose seniors Maxx Lipman and Elliott Orkin, two of Shelton's first recruits at Florida.

## Georgia

Georgia rolled to its fifth consecutive Southeastern Conference Regular Season Championship and added the tournament title for the 10th time in school history during the 2017 campaign. The Bulldogs, which played host to the 2017 NCAA Tennis Championships, advanced to the NCAA semifinals for the 18th time in Manuel Diaz's 29 seasons as head coach before falling in a tight 4-3 battle with North Carolina. For their efforts this season, five Bulldogs — Nathan Ponwith, Robert Loeb, Wayne Montgomery, Jan Zielinski and Emil Reinberg — earned All-SEC honors with Ponwith securing the SEC Freshman of the Year Award. Diaz was tabbed the SEC Coach of the Year for the sixth time in his career and for the first time since 2007. Georgia's No.1 doubles duo of Robert Loeb and Jan Zielinski earned All-America honors with a No. 1 spot in the 2017 NCAA Doubles Championships, where they advanced all the way to the finals. Georgia finished with a 22-8 overall record, 11-1 mark in SEC play, and did so with a young team that included five underclassmen in its normal six-man lineup.

## Kentucky

Kentucky advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament after taking down Georgia State in a 4-0 sweep in the first round of the NCAA Tournament on the campus of Wake Forest. UK battled with the No. 1 team in the nation, Wake Forest, in the second round before falling, 4-2. Will Bushamuka earned his highest win of the season over No. 5 Petros Chrysochos in the loss. Bushamuka was named ITA Player to Watch for the second-straight season, while Nils Ellefsen won the ITA Ohio Valley region's Most Improved Player. Bushamuka advanced to the round of 16 of the NCAA singles tournament. During his run in the NCAA Tournament and the singles tournament, he took down five-straight ranked opponents. He finished the season at 16-8, with most of wins coming on the No. 1 court.

## **LSU**

Jeff Brown resigned as LSU's men's tennis coach after 20 years as head coach of the Tigers. Brown led LSU to a 312-205 overall mark, which includes a 116-116 record in Southeastern Conference matches. Brown led the Tigers to back-to-back SEC Championships in 1998 and 1999 and the Tigers advanced to the NCAA Tournament 17 times during his career. Brown led LSU to the national semifinals in both 1998 and 1999. LSU men's tennis tandem Jordan Daigle and Justin Butsch concluded their careers with a career record of 15-12 on the doubles court. Daigle notched 45 career wins on the doubles court, and with partner Boris Arias he became a part of the first doubles duo to earn All-America honors in consecutive seasons after earning 30 wins in two seasons, including three wins against the No.1 pair in the nation. The Lafayette, Louisiana native compiled a 38-32 record on the singles courts with the majority on court one. He was a member of the All-SEC First team in 2015 and was named to the All-SEC Second Team in 2016 and 2017. A 2016 SEC Academic Honor Roll recipient, Daigle graduated in May with a degree in sport administration. Butsch wraps his doubles career up with a 76-54 record, spending time on all three courts throughout his four-year career. With 90 career wins on the singles courts, Butsch has placed himself at No. 11 among the LSU all-time singles wins leaders.

## **Ole Miss**

Ole Miss finished the year at 17-10 and earned its 24th consecutive NCAA appearance. The Rebels advanced to the second round for the 24th straight year. Junior Gustav Hansson ended the year ranked No. 22 in singles and finished with a 21-13 overall record and another NCAA singles appearance. He earned All-SEC First Team honors for the second consecutive year. Fabian Fallert and Grey Hamilton began the year unranked and ended it at No. 20. The duo won the ITA Southern Regional Championship in the fall and earned their first ever NCAA Doubles bid. Fallert had an outstanding year in singles as well, finishing with a team-leading 25-6 overall record, 19-3 in dual matches and 10-1 in the SEC. He earned All-SEC honors. Off the court, the Rebels posted a cumulative GPA of 3.47 and every member of the team made the honor roll. The Rebels will return six of their top seven in 2018, including Hansson, Fallert and Hamilton.

## **Mississippi State**

No. 18 Mississippi State capped a stellar year on the tennis court with a 21-9 record on the season, which ranks as the most wins since 1998 for the Bulldogs. MSU secured its seventh-straight NCAA bid with a trip to Norman, Okla., but the postseason run was cut short by No. 14 Oklahoma in the second round. Individually, sophomore and third-ranked Nuno Borges became the first Bulldog in program history to reach the NCAA Singles Championship Semifinals, after reeling off four wins in Athens over the nation's best competition. On the season, Borges was 36-7 overall, with an incredible 26 ranked singles wins to add to his impressive sophomore campaign.

## **South Carolina**

The Gamecocks finished the season ranked No. 21 with a 21-7 record, the most wins in a season since the 1997-98 season and highest final ranking since 2012-13, and 9-3 in the SEC, a program record for SEC wins. South Carolina also tied a program-best regular-season SEC finish at third. The Gamecocks advanced to the Second Round of the NCAA Team Championships, defeating East Tennessee State University before falling to North Carolina (9) 4-1. Juniors, Harrison O'Keefe (70) and Gabriel Friedrich (46) fell in the First Round of the NCAA Singles Championships. The doubles team of O'Keefe and Dennis (16) fell in the First Round of the NCAA Doubles Championships.

## **Tennessee**

The Tennessee men's tennis team closed out the 2016-17 season with the start of the Chris Woodruff era. Woodruff was promoted to head coach after spending 15 years on staff as an assistant and associate head coach. He won Tennessee's only NCAA singles title as a player in 1993 and has led three players to the No. 1 collegiate ranking. Sophomore Timo Stodder wrapped up his breakout season at a career-best in the ITA rankings at No. 28. Five starters in the singles lineup are scheduled to return next season; Stodder will be joined by Luis Valero, Srdjan Jakovljevic, Scott Jones and Luca Wiedenmann.

## **Texas A&M**

The SEC regular season co-champions Texas A&M men's tennis team finished the season ranked No. 12 after advancing to the NCAA Round of 16 for the 14th time in program history. The Aggies were highlighted by a couple All-Americans as junior Arthur Rinderknech and AJ Catanzariti earned the commendation in doubles, while Rinderknech also earned his second straight All-American singles nod. The Maroon & White finished in the Top-15 for the eighth time in head coach Steve Denton's 11 seasons at the helm, having only accomplished the feat six times in the 25 years prior to Denton's arrival. Texas A&M finished the season 21-7 overall and captured their second SEC regular season title.

## **Vanderbilt**

Daniel Valent represented Vanderbilt men's tennis team in the 2017 NCAA singles tournament held in Athens, Ga. The Zurich, Switzerland native capped his junior campaign by falling in 2017 NCAA singles tournament round of 32. Then-No. 43 Valent earned his first-career NCAA tournament victory, defeating Columbia's 57th-ranked Victory Pham in three sets, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. On Thursday, Valent faced Virginia's now three-time All-American, Thai-Son Kwiatkowski. The Commodore fell to one of the leaders of the 2017 NCAA team champion in straight sets, 6-2, 6-2. Three Commodores appear in the final ITA rankings, No. 33 Klinger, No. 42 Valent and No. 121 Newman. Two doubles pairs wrap up the season ranked; No. 34 Binet./Klinger and No. 56 McPhee/Rowe.