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#### Credits

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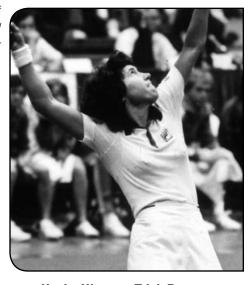




Junior Tara Simpson



Second-Year Head Coach
Jill Hultquist



Husky History - Trish Bostrom



## **Season Outlook**

Last year was very trying for the Husky women's tennis team. First-year coach Jill Hultquist and her squad had to overcome injuries, youth, and a getting-to-know-you learning curve.

The results might show that the ride was a bumpy one, with the Huskies winning only three times in 20 matches and snapping a streak of nine-consecutive appearances in the NCAA Championships. But, Hultquist is putting the 2006 season behind her and looking at the positives that are making the 2007 campaign look much brighter.

"It was a tough year," recalled the second-year coach who was an assistant with Washington from 1997-2002. "But the one thing I remember is that when the girls got down a little bit, they still were able to get their spirits back up high and worked really, really hard, which I appreciated.

"Each time that the scores weren't in our favor, the girls still came out to practice and looked at the positive side of the things and not the negative things."

The positives this year are that the Huskies have four talented scholarship newcomers on the squad that are going to push the four returning letter winners for spots in the top of the singles lineup. Hultquist is hoping that the mix of players and the fact she has a full year of directing the program under the belt will mean more wins for the Huskies.

"Last year we had some challenges to overcome and I think this year we've overcome some of those challenges," said Hultquist. "We added four new girls to our team that are letting me hope that we can break back into the top 25 this year."

#### **Newcomers**

If the Huskies are going to reverse their fortunes in 2007, a hodgepodge of new players will need to have stellar first seasons in the program. Hultquist crossed the ocean for two of her newcomers, gave a new home to a player displaced by Hurricane Katrina and welcomed a talented freshman from California.

Mathilde Cor (Ugine, France) arrived on campus in August from France with big expectations. Hultquist is counting on the transplant to compete for one of the top spots in the singles lineup and anchor one of the spots in the doubles rotation.

"Mathilde is a very smooth player that uses her backhand as a weapon," remarked Hultquist about the junior-eligible transfer. "She is a smart player on the court and has the opportunity to play No. 1 for us. She has a great serve and moves real well on the court and has a good work ethic."

Cor will have to learn on the fly if she is to adapt quickly to collegiate tennis. She did not participate in the fall while waiting for her eligibility to be cleared by the NCAA and missed out on an opportunity to gain valuable experience.

Another Husky with similar circumstances as Cor is Aleksandra Malovic, who joined the team at the start of the winter quarter in January. Malovic, from Alpendoorn, Netherlands, earned a scholarship based on a strong recommendation from a European contact. She too is expected to contribute right away for the Huskies.

"She is a big hitter from the baseline and will make a definite impact in both singles and doubles," said Hultquist of her relatively unknown freshman. "I'm impressed early on and look forward to getting to know Aleksandra as a student-athlete."



A third newcomer that Hultquist is looking forward to getting familiar with is Joyce Ardies. The Brazilian transferred to the UW from Tulane after Hurricane Katrina caused the university to cease its women's tennis program. Hultquist welcomed Ardies to her new home after a recommendation from her former coach. It is a match that Hultquist is confident will be fruitful for both sides.

"Joyce is a hard-worker and very dedicated to tennis and academics," said Hultquist. "She is an all-around student-athlete and is the kind of person that we want to help build the Husky program back up to where we want it."

Ardies, who is also a somewhat unknown quantity, debuted for the Huskies in the fall and faired well. The São Paulo native was 2-2 in singles action and advanced to the Round of 32 in the ITA Regionals. She displayed a solid all-around game and will be counted on to contribute in the singles and doubles lineup.

The fourth newcomer being counted on to have a stellar first season for Washington is Morgan Ramser. The Granite Bay, California native was injured in the fall and did not participate in any tournaments. But Hultquist thinks Ramser has the tools to make a huge impact for the Huskies.

"Morgan is probably one of the most talented tennis players I've ever seen," which are strong words coming from Hultquist, who has coached several All-Americans and faced many of the



## **Season Outlook**



top players during her playing days. "She has the potential to be great (and) has been blessed with natural ability and all the tools."

Health has been a concern with Ramser and has kept her from practices in both the fall and early winter. Hultquist calls Ramser one of smartest doubles players on the squad and is hoping that she will be able to contribute there when healthy.

"She'll definitely be playing doubles and if we can keep her healthy, she'll have all the opportunities in the world to play singles," said Hultquist.

The final new face on the Husky roster is a local freshman walk on from Edmonds, Wash. Summers, who competed in high school for Meadowdale, will provide depth for the Huskies, but may have to wait behind several others to crack the lineup early in her career.

"She started tennis a little later in life," said Hultquist about Summers. "There is room for her game to grow and because she is athletic, she is a really quick learner. I think the best days are still ahead for her."

#### **Returnees**

While Hultquist is depending on her newcomers to return Husky tennis to national prominence, success is equally dependent on continued improvement from her four returning letterwinners.

Perhaps her most valuable player last season was Tara Simpson. The Vancouver, B.C. native led the Huskies with 15 wins as a sophomore (15-17 overall). Simpson split time at the No. 2 singles (2-5 record) and No. 3 singles (7-6). She will be counted on playing in that range of the singles lineup again this season. But

what Hultquist likes about Simpson is that the Canadian has higher aspirations.

"She has got a will to win," said Hultquist.
"Tara is a really competitive girl and really wants to play No. 1 for us. She is definitely vying for the top spot."

"She was our most consistent player last year and I'm hoping to be getting much of the same from her this year."

Another returning player that will need to continue to develop for the Huskies is sophomore Victoria Brymer. The Californian played mostly at No. 2 singles as a freshman for the Huskies and was often overwhelmed. With a year of experience under her belt and blossoming talent, 2007 could be a breakout year for Brymer.

"Victoria is a very gifted athlete," said Hultquist. "She has really good hands when it comes to tennis. She is an emotional player and has the potential to be a really good player if she puts in hard work. She has the kind of potential to be our number one player."

Junior Allison Rainey (Mercer Island, Wash.) is another experienced returnee who should battle hard for the Huskies in 2007. Rainey, one of three Washingtonians on the roster, played No. 4 and No. 6 singles for the Huskies last year. She suffered a foot injury midway through the season that left the Huskies struggling to fill out a lineup, but is fully healed and ready to pick up where she left off. In her freshman season, Rainey was 15-7 from the No. 4 through No. 6 singles spots.

Allison will win at all costs and is very mentally tough on the court," said

Hultquist. "She is a very dedicated tennis player and you can always count on her to be able to stay out on the court and give it her all."

The last, but not least, Husky on the roster is Melinda Wong. The walk on proved to be invaluable for the Huskies last season. The former Washington State High School singles champion arrived on the scene and was thrown right into the lineup for the Huskies.

She started last year 7-5 for the Huskies, but found Pac-10 action overwhelming from the No. 5 and No. 6 spots in the lineup. Despite the struggles, Hultquist discovered that the freshman was a battler and expects bigger things from Wong in her second season.

"(Melinda) is a fighter on the court and vastly improved over the summer," said Hultquist. "She will definitely see playing time in both singles and doubles for us this season."

With a roster of nine bodies, Hultquist has adequate depth in her second season at the Husky helm — a luxury she was not afforded in her first season. Only time will tell if the second squad under Hultquist's control has turned the proverbial corner. But, right now, the Husky coach is preaching patience.

"I think you have to give a new coach at least three or four years to prove what they can do," explained Hultquist. "My goal is to see what I can do over that time and get us back into the top 25 or higher. I feel we can do that, but it takes baby steps."

