

# “BREAK POINT”

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE BUCKNELL MEN’S TENNIS PROGRAM



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## A NOTE FROM THE COACHES’ CHAIR



As we wrap up the competitive portion of our Fall schedule and get into the individual training and instruction, using what I have seen from my student-athletes during the Fall matches, I thought I would highlight some of the happenings on court from the Men’s tennis team. Everything this Fall has been geared towards our first match on January 14, 2017 when we open the Spring season against #8 ranked University of North Carolina. While tennis is a result orientated sport and wins and losses are important, this Fall from the standpoint of a new coach, was about improvement and seeing what we needed to work on in practices. That being said we had an overall 62.3% winning percentage in the Fall while competing in events at St. Joe’s University, Bucknell Invitational, Navy Invitational and the Princeton Farnsworth Invitational. We struggled in doubles in the Fall and that was as much about finding good chemistry amongst the doubles teams and trying new tactics and employing new strategies, as it was about the wins and losses. We will certainly focus



upon doubles in the remainder of our Fall practices.

Getting to Bucknell after the start of the Fall semester, I spent a good deal of my time getting caught up on the recruiting portion of college tennis as well as developing a Spring match schedule from scratch. With the “unpredictable” weather in Lewisburg, PA in the early Spring and limited access to indoor courts close to campus, we will play 23 of our 28 matches away from campus. While this is less than ideal from a negative impact upon my student-athletes time, it is something I have started to work on for the 2018 spring match schedule. From an experience standpoint, I think the players are looking forward to our extended Spring trips to Chapel Hill, NC, New York, NY, San Diego, CA and Baltimore, MD.

While I take over a program which graduates the all-time wins leader at Bucknell University, Nick Bybel, we return 8 players to the fold and welcome two strongly recruited Freshman, Colin Sacco from Brightwaters, NY and Max Palmer from Houston, TX both players will have an immediate impact on our program both on the tennis court and in the classroom. We have changed the way in which we practice and train – I have incorporated as much individual work into the week as team practice time, in order to treat each individual student-athlete as an individual, and really focus upon improving specific aspects of their game, whether it be tactical, technical or stroke production and the players have really enjoyed and flourished with the individual attention. I am hoping this can continue through the rest of our Fall practices and into the Spring. I honestly believe that we have an opportunity to win the Patriot League Championship this year as well as challenge the all-time regular season team victories and have set that as our on-court goals this season. Our primary goal is to repeat as an ITA All-Academic team

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## CATCHING UP WITH NICK BYBEL '16



Since graduating in May I returned to South Carolina/Georgia to prepare myself for my tournaments over the summer. I started my professional career in Europe where I competed in two tournaments in Austria and two in Romania. I wanted to start my career in Europe because it is known as one of the toughest places to play so I could see where my game stood with everyone else. As much fun as I had in Austria, I really enjoyed my stay in Romania. I was fortunate to stay with one of my good friends and teammate from my senior year, Andrei Vitiuc. We had a good training regiment while we were there, but still had enough time to visit places like Dracula’s castle and other cool places in Bucharest. Once my seven weeks were concluded I returned to the states and trained with Craig Schwartz for two weeks before going through my next stretch of tournaments. It was awesome working with Craig Schwartz again because he played a huge role in my development in college and was able to help me out and mentor me with my next step in tennis. My next few tournaments I played were in Canada where I stayed and traveled with Washi Gervais. Washi and I played each other every year in college and now we are traveling together full time. It’s cool to see how college tennis can develop friendships that continue outside of your four years in school. With my first seven tournaments in the books i still haven’t

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and I know the players are getting their work done in the classroom.

Being the new guy at Bucknell University, I have certainly appreciated all of the support I have received from the alumni, parents and friends of the program so far this year. My wife played college tennis at Lehigh University so I was aware of how special the Patriot League is. Aside from the financial support the program has and continue to receives it is almost as important to me as the coach of a group of wonderful student-athletes for them to learn, connect and lean on the experiences of our alumni and friends of the program. I very much look forward to putting together opportunities to having you connect with my players on a more personal basis. We are very much looking forward to the Spring season (opening with #4 ranked University of North Carolina) and will be certain to keep you updated as to our results and progress on the court, in the classroom and in the community.

Have a great Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

Bruce Myers  
Head Men's Tennis Coach  
Bruce.myers@bucknell.edu

## A NOTE FROM OUR CAPTAIN - BRYAN ADAMS '17



The last three years I've watched, listened, and politely nodded along as I've watched three generations of seniors ahead of me lament with increasing desperation as their glory years slowly come to an end. I guess I'm finally ready to take their word for it—the ride is almost over.

Tennis teams are small by nature, and my freshman year I walked into a team that was made up of nearly half seniors. With captains Aidan Lynch '14 and Kyle Rosen '14 at the helm, I was immediately in awe of these five guys.

Between them, they had just about every personality trait on the spectrum covered (the good ones, of course), and their spirit was contagious as the rest of the team gladly fell into stride alongside them. While we didn't have our most successful season to date, it hardly mattered to me—after a shoulder surgery senior year, I was just happy to be out on the court next to a bunch of guys who I idolized to no end.

The following three years have seen the team dynamic drastically change as age was replaced by beauty, and our senior-dominated team has given

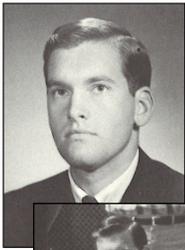
way to three consecutive years with only one senior at the helm, and an often terrifying army of youngbloods. This change has not been a detriment, however. On the contrary, these consecutive classes of incoming freshman were forced to mature quicker, and step into leadership positions on the team far earlier in their tenure here. Captains Octavio Canibe '15 and Nick Bybel '16 quickly fed into this system in their time as leaders, and brought us to two straight Patriot League Semifinal appearances. Unfortunately we lost both in heartbreaking fashion to Army, but I have found that tough losses such as these are just as conducive to team growth as hard fought wins are, and from top to bottom I've seen the hunger and confidence in every man's eye intensify as a result. This process has left me the thankful recipient of our current junior class: four players who are already fully fledged leaders on our squad, each and every one of them having already put everything on the line for their team, and looking more than ready to do so again.

Having seen all this transpire, it's still a bit surreal it times to be on the other side of things. Every now and then someone in the locker room will pipe up and ask something like "so 11:45 warm-up for lift later?", and oftentimes I still find myself gazing around the room waiting for a response, only to remember far too late that this question is now meant for me! It's been an absolute honor being behind the wheel this year, especially this past fall as we arrived to school still slightly out of sorts what with our coaching situation still up in the air. The team turned to me in these days of uncertainty, and I'm glad to say that we made it through cleanly and all the more tight-knit, and now with Coach Myers at the helm.

As we train up and prepare for my last hoorah as a member of the Bucknell Men's Tennis Team, every now and then some wise guy cracks a smile in the huddle and says "C'mon guys, let's do it for Boom". And while I'd like to say I've never been one to toot my own horn, I certainly haven't gone above and beyond to dim the chatter. I've got a whole lot to be proud of and even more to be thankful for in my years on this team, and I look forward to stepping on the court every single match this spring with my brothers beside me. I can only hope that I've given every one of them the same positive experience that was given to me, and that the tradition continues. Go Bison!

*BYBEL, continued from page 1*

been able to acquire any ATP points. To get an ATP point you have to make it through three sometimes four rounds of matches in the qualifying rounds, then you have to win your first round in the main draw. I returned south to train for a month before Washi and I set off for our next set of tournaments in South Africa. As my trip here comes to an end my tennis has reached a point where I can compete with just about anyone. I made it through qualies in all three tournaments and was able to win my first round in two out of the three tournaments. It's a great feeling leaving South Africa knowing that all the hard work I put in since graduating has paid off and I am walking out of here with two ATP points. College tennis has prepared me well for my professional career because it teaches you that even when you aren't feeling your best you have to know how to go out and compete that day no matter who is across the net. I am very grateful for my college tennis experience because it teaches you that you are no longer competing for yourself, and no matter the results of your match or the overall team match you learn from it and move on. Competing on the tour is just that. There is a steep learning curve when you start playing because you now have to schedule all your own practice times, when you eat, and most importantly managing your schedule. In college that is all done for you and now I have to make sure I keep to a certain schedule to be able to maintain my level of play. All in all I wouldn't be able to do what I am doing now without the support of my family, friends, and the foundations that college has created for me.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: WILLIAM JAY PEKAR '67

### 1. *Bring us up to date - current job, family, etc.*

I am retired having been a CPA in public practice and in industry. I reside with my wife Sandra in Stuart, FL having moved to FL in the late 1980's. We have one daughter, Amanda, who is completing an MBA at American University in Washington, DC. We inherited two cats, Rusty and Nemo, while living briefly in New Orleans. They seem to like their Florida lifestyle. Pri-

or to that we had two English Whippets, Chips and Salsa.

### 2. *How has your Bucknell men's tennis experience benefited you personally and professionally?*

Bucknell Men's Tennis was fun and competitive. We had several coaches after Hank Peter's passed. Trevor Lewis came up from Sunbury and Tommy Thompson coached us the following year. The team had some good years and in my final year was runner-up for the Middle Atlantic Conference Championship that was won by Swarthmore. Our teams were very cohesive and had plenty of depth. We did especially well in the doubles matches that followed the singles competition. Tennis has always been a big part of my life and has served me well both on and off the court whether in my personal life or in a business environment.

### 3. *What was your most memorable moment as a student-athlete at Bucknell University?*

Playing challenge matches early in the season and earning the chance to play number 1 singles after being whipped by two other team members before regaining the top position.

### 4. *Do you remain in contact with any of your teammates?*

I do stay in touch with David Gordon, class of 1968 who became Captain of the team in his Senior Year.

### 5. *Are you still involved with tennis?*

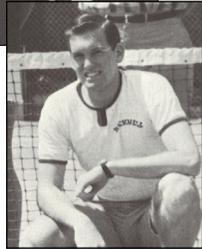
I have not been playing recently after radiation treatment for prostate cancer. Will have to lose some weight before venturing back onto the courts. I had played some Senior League Doubles last year before my diagnosis.

### 6. *What advice would you give to current Bison tennis players?*

The game has changed over the years with much more emphasis on conditioning and racquet technology. I suggest that players work on their games and strokes in off season as much as during the season. The best way to improve is by playing good competition.

This advice applies to both the Men's and Women's Teams. I imagine that there are some Mixed Doubles being played in practice these days. There wasn't a Woman's Team in my day but that certainly has changed for the better.

My daughter played high school doubles but did not participate in tennis at the University of Miami where even the Club level of play is very competitive.



## 2017 MEN'S TENNIS SCHEDULE

1/14	at North Carolina	TBA
1/15	vs. Campbell (at UNC)	TBA
1/16	vs. UNC-Greensboro (at UNC)	TBA
2/3	vs. Cleveland State	12:00 p.m.
2/4	vs. LaSalle (at Hershey)	6:00 p.m.
2/11	vs. James Madison (at Penn State)	5:00 p.m.
2/12	at Penn State	TBA
2/18	at NJIT	9:30 a.m.
2/18	at Hofstra	2:00 p.m.
2/25	at Duquesne	TBA
3/11	at Cypress College	TBA
3/11	at San Diego Mesa College	9:00 a.m.
3/12	at UC San Diego	TBA
3/13	at Point Loma University	3:00 p.m.
3/15	vs. Western New Mexico (at UC San Diego)	TBA
3/22	vs. Mount St. Mary's	3:00 p.m.
3/25	vs. Lafayette* (at West Point)	TBA
3/25	at Army-West Point*	TBA
3/26	vs. Holy Cross* (at West Point)	TBA
3/31	vs. Morgan State (at Loyola)	TBA
4/1	at Loyola-Md.*	12:00 p.m.
4/1	vs. Coppin State (at Loyola)	4:00 p.m.
4/4	vs. Lehigh*	3:30 p.m.
4/7	vs. St. Francis-Pa.	3:00 p.m.
4/8	vs. Navy*	TBA
4/15	at Colgate*	12:00 p.m.
4/17	at Bloomsburg	4:00 p.m.
4/20-23	at Patriot League Tournament	TBA

## MEET THE FRESHMEN



### *Max Palmer*

Greenwich, Connecticut  
Memorial High School (Houston, Texas)  
Tennis coach: Shuon Madden

**Why Bucknell?:** I chose Bucknell because of the great academics and atmosphere surrounding the athletics program.

**Interests outside of tennis:** Movies, music.

**Career Goals and Aspirations:** None



### *Colin Sacco*

Brightwaters, New York  
Chaminade High School  
Home Club: Sportime

**Why Bucknell?:** I chose Bucknell because of the mix of great academics and a tennis program that I thought fit me well.

**Interests outside of tennis:** Politics, Basketball, and hanging out with family and friends.

**Career Goals and Aspirations:** To contribute positively to this tennis program and graduate with a high GPA.



Bucknell University  
Men's Tennis Office  
Lewisburg, PA 17837

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## BUCKNELL MEN'S TENNIS NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE



Energy, passion, and togetherness have been the hallmarks of the Bucknell Men's Tennis Program for many years. This has been true not only for the student-athletes on the court, but for the group of supporters who have helped our program each year. As most of you know, the University budget covers only a fraction of the operating expenses to run a competitive Division I men's tennis program. Thanks to your assistance, last year we finished with \$25,000 in much needed support of the program. This year, we have been given a fundraising goal of \$34,000 to meet our program's budgetary needs. This money is spent in the three main areas of student-athlete recruitment, purchasing equipment to help train our team members, and covering the travel, lodging, and food costs for our team's travel. As you know, student-athlete recruitment is a year-round and highly competitive and intensive process that is of essential importance in fielding successful teams. In addition, we feel it is important to be able to travel safely, stay in quality hotels, and feed our student-athletes appropriately when we travel.

Our program needs your financial support to continue in our quest for excellence. Your earmarked contribution for men's tennis to the Bison Club will help make this a reality. We hope we can count on 100% participation from everyone on our support team. Thanks in advance for your assistance! -- Coach Bruce Myers

### **Methods of Giving**

**Check or Cash:** This is the most common way to give. When writing a check, make it out to Bucknell University and in the memo section note "Men's Tennis."

**By Credit Card:** The university accepts most major credit cards. Monthly payment plans can be arranged.

**Gifts of Stock/Securities:** To arrange a stock transfer, call the Office of Development & Alumni Relations at 570-577-3200.

**Pledges:** You can set up a payment schedule when you make a pledge, and payment reminders will be sent to you.

**Corporate matching gifts:** Many corporations match their employees' charitable donations to nonprofit institutions. Check with your benefits department for matching gift information and to see if they will match gifts to athletics.

**You can give on-line:** [www.BucknellBison.com](http://www.BucknellBison.com).