



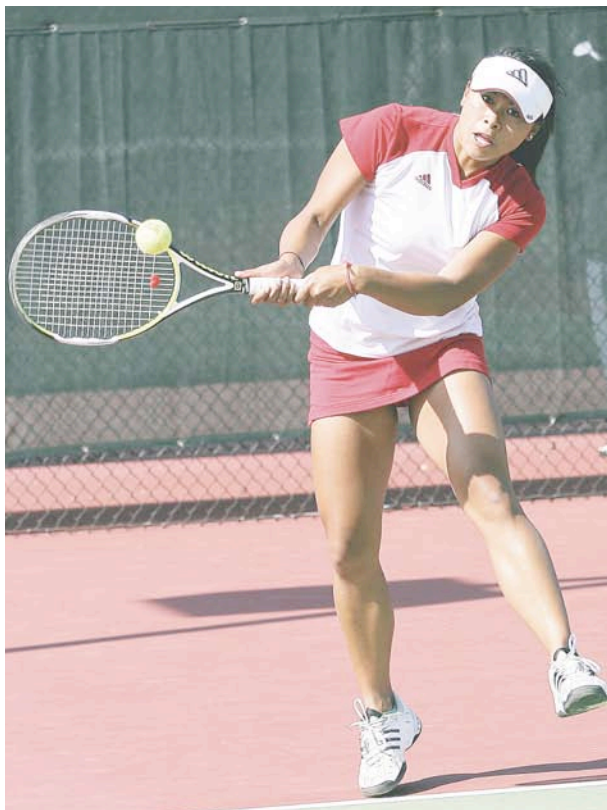
## Women's Tennis Places Second In WCC Championships

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The Gaels had a chance to do something that no other women's tennis team has ever accomplished at Saint Mary's: win the West Coast Conference tournament. The Gaels earned the right to play the Pepperdine Waves in Moraga for the championship on Sunday, April 20.

The best out of seven format crowns the first team to record four points. The Gaels fell behind the Waves by a point after Saint Mary's lost the deciding doubles match in a tiebreaker. The Gaels enjoyed a nice contingent of students, parents, and alumni to help cheer on the home team. However, the Gaels couldn't take advantage of the multitude of comeback tiebreakers, and eventually lost the championship to the 18th ranked Waves, 4-0.

The doubles matches were not only the most popular with the home fans Sunday but crucial as well. Whichever team earns the point for winning two out of the three doubles matches will then only have to win three out of the six singles matches to claim the championship. This

gives the winner of the doubles matches a significant edge in the quest for a WCC title.

Another rule of the championship format is that once a team has secured a majority of the overall wins, they stop the play of any other games that are still going on. On Sunday there was a chance the top doubles match could have been stopped early if Saint Mary's dropped the other two doubles matches. Fortunately for the Gaels, the other two doubles matches split, allowing the ongoing top seeded doubles match to continue play for the point.

Each match in the doubles format is decided on one set. The top seeded doubles match featured a duo from Pepperdine that ranks eighth in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Pepperdine seniors Sylvia Kosakowski and Bianca Dulgheru were matched up against senior Jessica Hoath (Coomera, Australia) and sophomore Nienke Strijbis (Maasdyk, Holland) of Saint Mary's. Saint Mary's had their best opportunity to win the match and take the point after they broke Pepperdine's serve, and took an

8-7 advantage.

Unfortunately for the Gaels they were unable to close out the win, which allowed Pepperdine to tie up the score at 8-8. This sent the deciding doubles match into a tiebreaker. As good as the chemistry was between Hoath and Strijbis, they still could not find an answer for Pepperdine's one-two punch. In the end, Kosakowski's groundstrokes, and Dulgheru's net play proved too much for the Gaels. Saint Mary's lost the tiebreaker 7-0, giving Pepperdine the point going into the singles matches.

Saint Mary's started off slowly in the singles matchups, but made a number of comebacks. Despite the inspiring and gutsy play of the Gaels, they eventually fell to the Waves, unable to win their tiebreaker sets. The Gaels are still in line for a possible at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.