

2008 FALL REVIEW & 2009 SPRING PREVIEW

Accomplishments in the 2008 season set the stage for 2009, as the Auburn women's tennis team fine tuned throughout the fall season before embarking upon spring play. Head coach Tim Gray retained seven players from the 2008 campaign and added freshman Daniella Vukadinovic.

With the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's release of the preseason rankings in early September, Auburn had a pair of singles players and doubles teams appear among the nation's best. Singles players Fani Chifchieva and Alex Haney were listed ninth and 51st, respectively. Haney and doubles partner Melissa Koning were tabbed fourth, while Chifchieva and partner Whitney Chappell were 50th.

Auburn's eight women's tennis players combined for a 44-22 fall singles record and five doubles teams combined for a 20-9 mark.

"I feel like this fall was our most successful since arriving in Auburn," Gray explained. "From top to bottom, our results were very solid and most importantly, consistent. I'm happy with the progress each player has made."

Fall play began in Long Island, N.Y., at the Stony Brook Classic. The Tigers went 20-6 in singles play and dropped only one doubles match during the tournament. Haney led the way for Auburn, posting a perfect mark in singles play and combined with Koning to win four doubles matches.

Haney and Koning, along with Chifchieva, were selected to play in the fall's elite tournament, the ITA All-American Championships. Playing in the 16-team main draw, Haney and Koning went 1-1, falling in the quarterfinals to the No. 15 duo of Laura Vallverdu and Michaela Kissell of Miami.



Fani Chifchieva defeated four top-20 opponents and placed second at the prestigious ITA All-American Championships.

In singles action, Chifchieva won four matches, including three over top-20 opponents, to advance to the championship. Along the way, she upended Clemson's second-ranked Ani Mijacika in a third-set tiebreaker in the quarterfinals and followed up with semifinal win over No. 7 Marina Cossou of California.



The Tigers opened the fall season at the Stony Brook Classic in Long Island, N.Y.

Chifchieva was upset by No. 20 Kelcy McKenna of Arizona State in the championship. Up next for the the Tigers was the the four-day ITA Southern Regional. Highlighting the tournament was Koning in the singles tournament, advancing to the semifinals of Flight A. Paired up with Haney in doubles action, the duo advanced to the quarterfinals of Flight A. Five singles players competed and won six of 11 matches.

The fall season wrapped up with the team playing at the SEC Fall Coaches Classic in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Chifchieva in Charlottesville, Va., taking part in her second fall elite tournament, the ITA National Indoor Championships.

At the SEC Fall Coaches Classic, Chappell, Haney, Koning and Vukadinovic each won two of three matches. On the doubles side, Haney and Koning posted a 3-0 record.

Chifchieva, seeded sixth at the ITA National Indoor Championships, picked up a pair of wins to get into the quarterfinals, but was topped by Northwestern's fourth-seeded Maria Mosolova in straight sets.

Spring action gets underway with the three-day Auburn Winter Invitational. The Tigers will have seven other matches, three on the road and four in Auburn, and also participate in the ITA National Team Indoor Championship before breaking into its Southeastern Conference Schedule.

Postseason action begins at the 2009 SEC Tournament will be held in Fayetteville, Ark., April 22-26.

"Our ultimate goal is an SEC Championship," Gray said. "We've positioned ourselves better each of the last two years in an attempt to achieve that goal."

Gray's squad will look to qualify for its third-straight NCAA Championship appearance, along with the trio of Chifchieva, Koning and Haney vying for their third-straight trip to the national tournament. The NCAA Championships will be held in College Station, Texas, May 15-26.