

Beginning the 2004 season ranked 28th by ITA, the Auburn Tigers headed into a challenging schedule that would lead them to the NCAA Tournament.

The duo of Alex Schweizer and Gabor Zoltan Pelva began a successful partnership in the first tournament of the spring by claiming the 2004 Southeastern Conference Coaches Indoor Championship, in what was only Schweizer's first tournament as a Tiger.

This winning momentum was carried over into the start of the dual match season with road victories over College of Charleston and UNC-Wilmington. The Tigers returned to Auburn for their first home match of the year against Southern Miss. Freshman Brett Hunter sealed the win over the Golden Eagles by picking up the final win of the evening on court five with his 6-0, 3-6, 6-4 victory as he started the season 2-0 for the Tigers. After two road losses to Arizona State and No. 5 Baylor, the Tigers returned home for a match with South Florida, which AU would drop, 4-3, to drop to .500 (3-3) just before the conference schedule would start.

The Tigers opened Southeastern Conference play with losses to Mississippi State and No. 2 Ole Miss before rebounding with a strong 4-1 victory over Louisiana-Lafayette and a 6-1 thrashing of UAB. SEC play continued for the Tigers as they dropped one to Florida before capturing their first conference win of the season with a 4-3 victory over South Carolina. The winning continued as Auburn won their second straight SEC match with an upset against No. 16 Kentucky. Auburn lost to No. 17 Vanderbilt, the defending national champion, LSU, and Arkansas before picking up their third conference victory in 5-2 road win over Alabama.

"With the weather, being down 2-1 and us having to go inside, which isn't our strength, all the guys stepped up and won big for us," head coach Eric Shore said of the win over the Crimson Tide, making it two years in a row that AU had knocked off their in-state



A large crowd came out to see the Tigers defeat Georgia in the final home match of the season



Nick Lane went 7-3 at the No. 4 spot for the Tigers in 2004.

rivals.

Gabor Zoltan Pelva's impressive 6-1, 6-1 victory of No. 23-ranked Simon Rea tied the score up and enabled Auburn to defeat No. 15 Tennessee, 5-2 for a 4-6 SEC record. Winning their third match in a row and capping off an 5-6 SEC record, the Tigers were victorious over No. 8 Georgia, 5-2, which was Auburn's first victory over the Bulldogs since 1994. Pelva defeated No. 15 Bo Hodge of Georgia, 4-6, 7-6, 6-4 and moved up 73 spots in the rankings to No. 22.

Auburn finished the regular season 11-12 overall and ranked 27th, with Pelva earning All-SEC honors for his steadily increasing leadership.

In Nashville, Tenn., the Tigers defeated No. 26 Arkansas in the first round of the SEC tournament with an impressive 4-0 shutout by capturing the doubles point with a revamped lineup, which put Rodrigo Minozzo and Robbert Lathouwers in the top doubles spot.

Unfortunately, Auburn fell to No. 1 seeded Ole Miss in the second round and headed home to await an at-large bid for the NCAA Tournament.

The bid came, which was the 11th berth in the past 12 years, and Auburn learned they would face Texas in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament. Also, Pelva earned a trip to the NCAA Men's Singles Championship. At the tournament, the Tigers put up a strong battle all the way down to the last match but the Longhorns had just enough to get by and Auburn fell to Texas, 4-3.

"The match came down to the last court, and it was a very close match throughout. We fell behind early but clawed our way back to 3-3. Unfortunately, we couldn't get that fourth singles win," Shore said of the loss to the Longhorns.

The Tigers then were narrowed down to Pelva who marched all the way to the Final Four. In the opening round, he quickly defeated New Mexico's Divan Coetzee, 6-4, 6-2 and moved on to defeat Doug Stewart of Virginia, 6-3, 6-2. With the win, Pelva advanced to the Sweet 16 of the Men's Tennis NCAA Singles Championship and thus achieved All-American status, becoming Auburn's 16th All-America and the 12th under Shore. In the Sweet 16, Pelva earned an impressive 6-3, 7-6 win over Stanford's Sam Warburg, who was the 2004 Pac-10 Player of the Year and the No. 8 seed in the tournament. Continuing with his winning streak, he needed only two sets to advance to the Final Four as he knocked off Chad Harris of Vanderbilt, 6-2, 6-1 for the second time this season and the third time in his career. His run at the tournament would end one match short of the finals with a 6-3, 7-5 loss to Baylor's Benjamin Becker.

"You can't take away from all that he (Pelva) has accomplished," Shore said at the time. "He has been our No. 1 guy all year and has done great things for us. He made it to the top four and that is something that no one else at Auburn has been able to do, and we have had some outstanding players pass through here. He just really had a great season."

2004 Match-by-Match Results

Date	Opponent/ITA Rank	Site	W/L	Score	Record	SEC Record
Jan. 30	UNC-Wilmington	Wilmington, N.C.	W	6-1	1-0	
Jan. 30	College of Charleston	Charleston, S.C.	W	4-1	2-0	
Feb. 9	Southern Mississippi	Auburn	W	4-3	3-0	
Feb. 15	Arizona State	Tempe, Ariz.	L	3-4	3-1	
Feb. 20	Baylor	Waco, Texas	L	2-5	3-2	
Feb. 22	South Florida	Auburn	L	3-4	3-3	
Feb. 29	Harvard	Boston, Mass.	L	1-6	3-4	
Mar. 5	Mississippi State	Starkville, Miss.	L	2-4	3-5	
Mar. 7	Ole Miss	Oxford, Miss.	L	1-6	3-6	0-1
Mar. 11	Louisiana-Lafayette	Auburn	W	4-1	4-6	0-2
Mar. 14	UAB	Auburn	W	6-1	5-6	
Mar. 19	Florida	Gainesville, Fla.	L	1-6	5-7	0-3
Mar. 21	South Carolina	Columbia, S.C.	W	4-3	6-7	1-3
Mar. 26	Kentucky	Auburn	W	4-3	7-7	2-3
Mar. 2	Vanderbilt	Auburn	L	2-5	7-8	2-4
Apr. 2	LSU	Auburn	L	3-4	7-9	2-5
Apr. 4	Arkansas	Auburn	L	2-5	7-10	2-6
Apr. 10	Alabama	Tuscaloosa, Ala.	W	5-2	8-10	3-6
Apr. 16	Tennessee	Auburn	W	5-2	9-10	4-6
Apr. 17	Georgia	Auburn	W	5-2	10-10	
Apr. 22	Arkansas	Fayetteville, Ark.	W	4-0	11-10	
Apr. 23	Ole Miss	Oxford, Miss.	L	0-4	11-11	
May 15	Texas	Athens, Ga.	L	3-4	11-12	

Singles Results

Player	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	Dual	SEC	Fall	All
Brent Goedjen	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-2	0-2	0-1	0-5	0-7
Brett Hunter	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-1	6-11	8-12	2-9	0-0	8-12
Nick Lane	0-0	0-0	0-0	7-3	6-3	0-0	13-6	7-4	8-5	21-11
Robbert Lathouwers	0-0	0-0	8-6	3-4	0-1	0-0	11-11	6-5	0-1	11-12
Rodrigo Minozzo	0-0	0-0	3-5	0-4	5-2	0-0	8-11	4-6	6-5	14-16
Alex Schweizer	0-4	9-9	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	9-13	3-8	2-1	11-14
Robbins Taylor	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-4	0-5
Gabor Zoltan Pelva	15-8	4-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	19-8	9-2	11-3	30-11
Totals	15-12	13-9	11-11	10-11	13-7	6-14	68-64	31-35	27-24	95-88

Doubles Results

Player	#1	#2	#3	Dual	SEC	Fall	All
Lathouwers/Pelva	3-0	0-0	0-0	3-0	0-0	3-0	3-0
Hunter/Schweizer	0-0	2-0	0-2	2-2	0-2	0-0	2-2
Minozzo/Taylor	0-0	0-0	0-2	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-2
Minozzo/Pelva	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-0	1-0
Schweizer/Pelva	5-11	0-0	0-0	5-11	3-7	5-0	10-11
Lathouwers/Minozzo	1-2	10-6	0-0	11-8	6-4	0-0	11-8
Hunter/Lane	0-0	0-1	5-8	5-9	3-7	0-0	5-9
Lathouwers/Taylor	0-0	0-0	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-1
Lane/Pelva	0-0	1-0	0-0	1-0	0-0	0-0	1-0
Lane/Minozzo	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-4	2-4
Lane/Schweizer	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-1
Hunter/Pelva	0-0	0-0	1-0	1-0	0-0	0-0	1-0
Totals	9-13	13-8	7-13	29-34	12-21	8-4	36-38

