

In the first match against Carleton, lost by St. John's 5-2, the Jays won their two points in doubles matches: Kunert and Wangen and Claesgens and Muenzhuber. In the Hamline meet, St. John's lost again, 8-1, with Muenzhuber winning the only Jay point through a singles victory. The Jays did no better against Gustavus in a match that ended with an 8-1 defeat for the Jays. Muenzhuber and Claesgens won the only match, a doubles, for St. John's. In a fourth match against St. Thomas, the Jays improved their schedule record somewhat when Bob Claesgens won his first MIAC singles match. He also paired with Pat Wangen for a victory in the doubles.

The MIAC meet, scheduled to be run May 17-18, was looked forward to with anticipation by the squad for it was to be played on the St. John's courts, and the Jays, especially Wangen and Kunert, had begun to play brilliant tennis. It was hoped that the team itself had caught fire and would perform up to its potentialities.

The outcome of the meet was not published in the *Record*, but according to the 1958 *Sagatan* St. John's finished in second place in the conference, though without winning any individual championships.

Members of the squad were the following: Darrell Bohlsen, Robert Claesgens, John Michael Brecount, Ronald Olson, Pat Wangen, Thomas Hobday, John Muenzhuber, Gerald Halsey, Raoul Kunert, Mark Dundon and Charles Staley.

— 1958 —

An optimistic mood prevailed in the tennis world of St. John's when Fr. Alfred Deutsch, O.S.B., "dean of the tennis courts," accepted the appointment as the 1958 tennis coach. Pat Wangen, coach and captain of the 1957 season, gladly returned to the ranks in order to concentrate on the fine art of winning, a specialty that the players had been neglecting for a few years. The change worked. Between Fr. Alfred's coaching and Pat's concentration on winning, the Jays made definite progress. After losing four straight meets of the scheduled nine, the team defeated Hamline by a score of 5-2 and made the always strong Macalester netmen hustle before winning over St. John's 5-4. This was the last meet of which we have a record.

Although prospects had looked bright from the beginning of the season, the new coach had his personnel problems. The team had lost Bob Claesgens and John Muenzhuber who had played major roles in the 1957 season. He still had veterans Tom Hobday, Ron Olson and Darrell Bohlsen, but all three lacked experience because of the monopoly of Claesgens and Muenzhuber. On the other hand, among the freshmen were two especially capable players, Michael Murphy, a high school

star from Cretin High School in St. Paul, and Serve Wilson from Stillwater. Alongside them were Jerry Pierre, Freeman Wong and Charles Steiner, all young players with definite signs of being future varsity stars. The Jays appeared to have one of their strongest but untried entries in recent years. The coach's problem was how to take advantage of their multiple talents.

A detailed report on the fortune of the young Jays follows. In the May 2, 1958, *Record* it was reported that the youthful Jays' "raquette" squad had dropped matches to Macalester 6-3, and to Gustavus 8-1, their first outings of the season. In the weeks that followed, in one match with St. Cloud T.C. the Jays were defeated again 6-3, although Pat Wangen won his singles match and, paired with Serve Wilson, had also won the doubles. Things began to look better.

Following is the list of remaining meets that were played and their outcome: 1) a loss to Gustavus by a score of 8-0; 2) a victory over Hamline, 5-2, with Wangen and Wilson winning their singles. The two doubles combinations, Murphy and Kunert, Pierre and Hobday, won their doubles matches; 3) in the last meet Macalester defeated St. John's 5-4, Wilson and Pierre taking singles, Kunert and Steiner, Hobday and Pierre winning their doubles matches.

St. Thomas won the championship, both in singles and doubles.

— 1959 —

By the time the tennis team began work in preparation for the scheduled meets, Fr. Alfred had already selected his squad for the 1959 season. It was an eight-man group made up of five lettermen: seniors Tom Hobday, Jerry Pierre and Charles Steiner (captain); two sophomores, Serve Wilson and Michael Murphy; and three freshmen: James Plotnik, Peter Herzog and Wayne Belisle. They were a talented group, all of them of almost equal ability. But there was no Lou Adderley among them and the coach was presented with the problem of determining who was the number one man, who the second, third, etc., in gradation. The problem was urgent, since it was a matter of selecting the team that would represent St. John's best in the meets.

To solve the problem, Fr. Alfred devised a system of play-offs, similar to Fr. Bernardo's "ladder" of a few years before. In the play-offs the best players would gradually occupy the top rungs. As the season progressed, the six topmost men on the ladder on the date of a tennis meet would then represent the team at the current meet. Besides solving a problem, the competition provided stimulation for making progress.

The pre-tournament matches began with an easy victory over St. Cloud State, 8-1, in which the Jays won five of the six singles and all the doubles. The second outing ended with a narrow loss to Macalester, 5-4. Though the team lost the match, individual players played good tennis, winning three singles and one doubles match (*Record*, April 24, 1959).

The May 8 *Record* reports a 6-0 victory over Augsburg. But at this point the wheel of fortune began turning in favor of the Jays' opponents. The Jays dropped a match 6-0 to St. Thomas, 6-1 to Hamline, 8-1 to Gustavus and 5-3 to Macalester.

The ladder system began to pay off eventually, however, for the May 22 *Record* reports a string of four victories without a loss: over St. Mary's 5-0 (May 9); over Hamline 7-2 (May 13); over Concordia 7-0 (May 16); and over St. Cloud State 7-2 (May 19).

By the time the MIAC tournament rolled around, the top occupants of the ladder were James Plotnik, Mike Murphy and Charles Steiner in the singles, Thomas Hobday and Jerry Pierre in the doubles.

In the conference meet St. John's came out in fourth place, a disappointment for Fr. Alfred, since he did not think that the Jays had played up to their potential. The results of the meet, from the St. John's standpoint, were as follows: Mike Murphy drew a bye in his first round, then lost to Gustavus in his second round, 8-6 and 6-1. James Plotnik defeated Frazer of St. Thomas 6-2, 3-6, 3-1, 6-3 in his first round, then won in the second round by default. But in the semi-finals he lost to Gary Lawson of Gustavus 6-0, 6-2. In the doubles Thomas Hobday and Jerry Pierre defeated Hamline in their first round, then unexpectedly lost the second to the University of Minnesota-Duluth, 6-2, 6-1.

— 1960 —

In the fall of 1959 a tennis tournament organized by Fr. Alfred monopolized the tennis courts for the months of September and October. The tournament was essentially a freshman try-out designed to reveal who among the freshmen would be available for the 1960 varsity. The tournament was immensely successful, both as recreation and as a modified try-out for future varsity players. Emerging from the flock of contestants were some excellent prospects: Paul Lorenz from Austin, a fine singles player; Tom Kramer from Fairmont, who battled Lorenz for the number one position; Ben Pulkrabek, who became a famous member of the wrestling team. Also very promising were Bob Krause and Paul Bridgeford.

When in early April it came time for the tennis team to train for the season play, it was evident how well the tournament had really

paid off. Only three lettermen had returned from the strong 1959 team, Serve Wilson and Mike Murphy, the latter being the number one man, and into this nucleus were fitted Paul Lorenz, Tom Kramer, and Ben Pulkrabek, all three freshman prospects of the 1959 fall tourney.

There was little time to train the tennis team for the MIAC tournament that was to take place May 20-21, for the early period had been devoted almost entirely to the ten meets that had been scheduled. Unfortunately, the outcome of the early meets had not been recorded, and hence little is known of the SJU successes and failures except that they had started out fast and then had slumped. Of the last four meets just preceding the conference, three were lost to MIAC schools: to St. Thomas 5-4, to Hamline 5-2, to Macalester (who overwhelmed the Jays) 8-1. The second meet with St. Cloud State was a loss, 7-3.

St. John's ended in fourth place in the conference.

— 1961 —

The 1961 *Sagatagan* expressed Fr. Alfred's confidence that this team was going to have a winning season. The only team member who had not returned was Peter Herzog. The real power was still intact in the persons of Captain Serve Wilson and Mike Murphy, supplemented by the talented sophomores Paul Lorenz and Tom Kramer. Wayne Belisle, though not one of the above group, was a burly, tough competitor who fitted perfectly into either the fourth or fifth place. Four freshmen were also available, all of whom had distinguished themselves in the fall tournament: Paul Bridgeford, John Dale, Terry McDermott and John Goulet.

Although the team was potentially strong, the players had difficulty in winning as regularly as had been expected. Fr. Alfred attributed the early losses to the irregularity of practices or to the failure to play up to par—of which two possibilities he preferred the latter. Add to this was the well-known fact that the MIAC was a healthy organization whose members fought fiercely for conference titles. Later he concluded that the Jays had been matched against the strongest teams in the early part of the season and that in the later part of the schedule they should be playing the rest of the teams on even terms. As he had predicted, the Jays did begin to hold their own and won two matches and lost two. They vented their wrath by blanking Concordia 9-0 and defeating Augsburg 5-2. The winning streak ended with a loss to St. Thomas 3-6 and to Gustavus 4-5.

The stand-out player throughout the season was Paul Lorenz who had an individual record of seven matches won to only one lost. There is no record of the final MIAC meet and the championships awarded.

## — 1962 —

The story of Tennis 1962 is brief; in other words, it was not one of St. John's great seasons. Coach Fr. Alfred Deutsch, after working hard over a two-year period to produce a strong 1962 entry, had the misfortune to lose all but two of his stars at one fell swoop of fate. Remaining from the previous year were two lettermen, Captain Tom Kramer and Paul Bridgeford, the latter still somewhat inexperienced in MIAC competition. Nothing daunted, the coach made an effort to build up his new charges through practices held every Wednesday evening in the gymnasium for the improvement of footwork and strategy at the net.

By the time of the first meet, April 4, the team had been selected: Tom Kramer, Paul Bridgeford, John Dale, John Goulet, and four freshmen: Ronald Wrucke, champion of the fall tournament in 1961, Dick Evans, Tom O'Brien and James Mullin. The first meet was a smashing victory over Concordia 8-0, followed by a loss to North Dakota State, 5-4. Powerful Hamline clobbered the Jays in the next meet 9-0; St. Cloud State overran them 6-0. The Jays then made a comeback by defeating Duluth 5-1, only to lose to Macalester 9-0. The schedule ended with a victory over Augsburg 4-3 and a defeat by St. Thomas 6-3, a record of three wins and five losses.

Highlight of the season was Paul Bridgeford's performance in a North Dakota invitational tournament in which he won the singles championship and St. John's took second place. Following that feat, Bridgeford was named number one man for the last two matches of the season.

The MIAC tournament was held May 17-18 at Macalester. The Jays tied with St. Mary's for fifth place in the conference.

MIAC standings for 1966 in terms of points won were as follows: Hamline 15, Macalester 12, St. Thomas 9, Gustavus 5, St. John's 3, St. Mary's 3, Concordia 1, Duluth 1.

## — 1963 —

Coach Fr. Alfred had a problem on his hands in 1963. Three of his five top players had not returned and left him without equal quality replacements. John Dale had scholastic difficulties and Tom Kramer had suffered a finger injury that would not permit him to play. But the situation turned out to be far from hopeless for he had among his freshmen Tom Arth, a St. Paul Cretin star who was a two-time Catholic high school champion. In addition to Arth were three other fine freshman performers, Art Grady from Saskatoon, Canada, Paul Stolp-

man, a former St. John's Prep School player, and John Neill. Others from the 1962 squad, though not lettermen, were Tom O'Brien and Dick Evans.

Records of the season performances were not published regularly in the school paper and only through sporadic remarks in the sports column was it possible to follow the team's progress. From a preview of the 1963 tennis season we learn that the team had begun the year of competition with a 9-0 win over Concordia and had then fallen to St. Thomas 6-3 and to Gustavus 5-4.

Great things had been expected of Arth and Grady, and indeed they played well, but especially in the early part of the season Paul Stolpman was a sensation. In the St. John's loss to St. Thomas, Stolpman won the singles match over the Tommie ace, then teamed with Mullin to win the doubles. Likewise in the Gustavus meet, he defeated the Gusties' number one man in singles and again won the doubles when paired with Arth.

The results of the conference meet were not published in the *Record*. Gary Hackenmueller in his "Sports Shorts" column for June 21, 1963, reported casually that the Jays had finished in third place in the conference: "Fr. Alfred's Johnnie tennis team fared well against MIAC competition. Peak performances by a couple of prize frosh prospects, Tom Arth and Art Grady, spurred the local netmen to a third place finish in the MIAC tournament.

## — 1964 —

Fr. Alfred's search for the ideal team, a squad of championship caliber tennis players, arrived finally—but he was now the faculty adviser and his star protege Tom Arth was the coach. And it was a good team! It ended the season in second place behind 1964 champion, Hamline.

Prior to 1964, a tennis championship was determined entirely on the outcome of the conference tournament in singles and doubles. According to the new ruling, however, the winners of singles and doubles were simply declared the individual champions of the conference, whereas the team championship was to be determined by the number of season victories and the state meet. There was no chance for quibbling in 1964, however, for Hamline won both the team title by an 8-0 record in the seasonal meets, and won both the singles and doubles championships in the tournament. St. John's was runnerup with a record of seven wins and only one loss (to Hamline).

As was expected, Hamline and St. John's dominated the MIAC tournament. St. John's Art Grady won two matches before losing in

the semi-finals to Hamline's Gustafson, the eventual winner in the singles finals. The doubles team of Tom Arth and James DeChaine, who had been undefeated during the entire season, lost to Hamline in the semi-finals.

The overall record of St. John's in pre-MIAC meets was 12-2.

— 1965 —

The two strongest teams in the MIAC in 1965 were Hamline and Macalester. Tom Arth, the student-player coach, considered St. John's the third team but also a well authenticated contender for the championship crown. He pointed to the seven returning lettermen from a 1964 team that had run up a record of twelve victories with only two losses. The team had experience also: three of the returnees were seniors, Jim Mullin, Dick Endres, and James DeChaine. Tom Arth, himself, the number one man and coach, was a seasoned junior veteran. Jack VandeNorth, sophomore, had advanced into the semi-finals in the 1964 conference meet against stout opposition before he was eliminated and was already playing a better game in 1965. Roger Nass was also an experienced veteran.

The team started out well with a series of four consecutive victories, then had a few disappointing triangulars, but in the last part of the season was strong enough to compete for the conference crown at Macalester. Nevertheless, Hamline won the MIAC title. In a spirited review of the season, Arth, who wrote as well as he played tennis, commented: "Even as I look back on our past season, I still cannot possibly see how Hamline won the thing. And now that the season is over, I still feel that man for man we were the best team in the conference" (*Record*, May 26, 1965).

The conference record for the season was 6-2, with a third place ranking in the MIAC.

There was little reported about the MIAC tournament, won by Hamline. Rain interrupted the finals, which had to be completed in the Macalester field house. Tom Arth, top-seeded St. John's player, lost in the finals to Shipman of Macalester. John VandeNorth won two rounds before being defeated in the semi-finals. Michael Musty, a tenacious competitor, won first place in the consolation match.

— 1966 —

Tom Arth proved to be a fiery, courageous leader. The loss of six lettermen from the 1965 squad left him undisturbed. He took hold of the coaching duties with vigor and functioned much like a catalytic agent in getting the most out of his players. He selected six men from

among the freshman candidates—Joseph Nitzke, James Blanchford, Pat Murphy, Philip Richter and George Bachman—to back up veterans John VandeNorth, James Mullin, and Mike Musty.

The team was a good combination of young and older players that came out fighting and won the first four meets easily over Bemidji State, Duluth, Augsburg and Hamline, the 1965 champion. They then dropped a meet to Macalester, the favorite for the crown, but came back with another string of victories: St. Mary's 9-0, St. Thomas 7-2, and Concordia 6-0. Following these last three victories, the Jays unexpectedly lost to Gustavus 3-6, supposedly because of the absence of John VandeNorth. The final meet held immediately before the MIAC tournament was a loss to St. Cloud State.

Despite the team's fine showing all spring long, the players played below par in the conference and finished the season in fourth place. After a fine record, the results of the tournament were naturally a disappointment. A sportswriter in the *Record* for May 27, 1966, calmly accepted the verdict of fate: "A fine 8-3 season succumbed to 'one of those days,' and a disappointed crew had to be content with a fourth place showing."

— 1967 —

The 1967 tennis team practiced indoors the whole month of March in preparation for the upcoming season. With five returnees from the 1966 team, prospects were fair for a winning season, although the loss of Tom Arth weakened the possibility of making a great improvement over 1966.

Arth's successor as coach was by common consent John VandeNorth, an experienced tennis player who had four years of high school and three years of college tennis to recommend him. Already as a freshman in high school at Fenwick High School, Chicago, he was the Catholic League tennis singles champion and in his junior and senior years was captain of the team. He frankly admitted that he had no experience as a coach, though he could correct obvious faults and hoped to have the ability to keep up the spirit of the team. When asked for a prediction for the coming tennis season, he replied with a positive assurance that St. John's would challenge the league, might possibly come close behind Macalester, or even end in third or fourth place should Hamline prove stronger than they estimated.

As a nucleus for the rebuilding of the team he had senior Roger Nass, juniors Mike Musty and James Blanchford, sophomores Joe Nitzke and George Bachman. After the early try-outs three freshmen

had been added to the team: Michael Daly, Ray Rossini and Bob Louisell.

The 1967 schedule comprised three meets with non-conference colleges (Mankato State, St. Cloud State, and North Dakota State), in addition to the other eight MIAC opponents. The *Record* reports on the season were extremely generalized, so much so that it is impossible to give a statistical account of the season. It was apparently an interesting season, however, although not in any way highlighted by dramatic situations or sensational play on the part of the Jays. About all that can be said definitely is that the Jays played winning tennis and ended the scheduled meets with an overall record of 8-3; in conference play the record was 5-2.

The final results of the May 12-13 MIAC tournament found St. John's in fourth place, with undefeated Macalester finishing first, followed by Hamline and Gustavus in second and third respectively, and St. John's in fourth. St. John's failed to capture an individual state crown. Mike Musty, playing in the number one position, first defeated St. Mary's number one but lost to Macalester in the semi-finals. Player-coach Jack VandeNorth, number two, won his first round but dropped the second to Macalester. Roger Nass, number three man, lost in the first round and was eliminated.

Players numbers three and four (Jim Blanchard and freshman Rossini) advanced to the semi-finals, with Rossini losing only in the finals to Macalester. Rossini gave a good account of himself as a tennis star in the making, possibly the match of Tom Arth in 1966. No reports were made regarding the Jays' fortunes in the doubles.

— 1968 —

The new tennis coach James DeChaine, who was also Fr. Donald LeMay's assistant in the Admissions Office, showed himself to be a skilled performer in the use of the crying towel prior to the beginning of the tennis season. The loss of three lettermen from the 1967 team did not bother him. It was the lack of indoor facilities for early practice before the tennis meets were started—the frustration of a tennis coach in central Minnesota without a field house! He complained that “Macalester has two indoor courts and has been able to practice off and on all winter” (*Record*, April 23, 1968). For this reason he scheduled matches with North Dakota State and Bethel as early in the season as possible before meeting the conference foes. The team returned two days early from Easter vacation to practice. “We have more enthusiasm than ever before,” he said. Hopes for the future he based on seniors Mike Musty and Joe Nitzke, sophomore Ray Rossini, and three

freshmen he had spotted as first-class material: Steve Pavela, John Hickner and Greg Schepers.

Coach DeChaine was far from wrong. In an eleven-meet schedule his team ran up a record of seven victories overall and a conference record of five victories and two losses for third place in the MIAC. Conference victories were as follows: over Duluth 9-0, Augsburg 5-4, Concordia 5-4, St. Thomas 5-4, St. Mary's 5-0. Conference losses were to Macalester 8-1, and to Hamline 8-1. Against non-conference teams St. John's had won two, lost two: losing to Carleton and Mankato by identical scores of 8-1 and winning over North Dakota State 9-0 and over University of Minnesota-Morris 7-2.

### The MIAC Tournament

The two stars in the state meet held at Macalester were sophomore Ray Rossini and freshman John Hickner. Encouraged by the performances of these two players, the Jays scored nine points for a fourth place tie with Concordia. Rossini captured the singles championship and Hickner placed second in the number three singles.

At the end of the tennis season Coach DeChaine expressed his satisfaction with the team, but also his disappointment with the doubles players who, just as in 1966 and 1967, had played poorly in the MIAC meet. The failure to score higher than nine points in the meet was due in large part to the doubles players' failure to win, scores being figured on the basis of one point for a victory in singles and two points for each victory in doubles.

Though DeChaine lost Mike Musty and Joe Nitzke for 1969, he remained optimistic for 1969, with Ray Rossini, John Hickner and James Volin around whom to assemble a new team. Volin had not played in the state meet for some reason, though his talents were recognized by the coach.

— 1969 —

Second-year coach Jim DeChaine carried out his promise to come up with an interesting, winning team in 1969. It was a light-hearted group, amused by the tricks of fun-loving, guitar-playing Ray Rossini and the tennis histrionics of Captain Volin and John Hickner. When Volin defeated the NIC singles champion, Rossini said he “was capable of anything.” John Hickner also beat the NIC champion and ran up a stretch of eleven matches without a loss. Mark Stolpman had a record of fifteen wins with only two losses.

With a group of twenty candidates to choose from, the coach dispensed with the elimination tournament and chose the seven best men,

as they appeared to be in practice. He then took off for a training trip into Nebraska and South Dakota as soon as Easter vacation began. First they defeated Creighton University 5-4, then moved on to Lincoln, Nebraska, for a meeting with the state university, "where," the reporter said, "they didn't fare so well." In other words, they were clobbered. On the way back they stopped at the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State, "soundly dumping both teams by identical scores of 7-2" (*Record*, April 18, 1969).

The regularly scheduled season was a heart-warming success. By May 9 (the last report for the season) St. John's, Macalester and Gustavus were running a close race for the championship. Macalester was in the lead with a 9-0 conference record, the two St. John's defeats having come at the hands of Macalester and Gustavus, 5-4 in both meets.

The Jays defeated St. Thomas 8-1, St. Mary's 7-0, Augustburg 7-2, Duluth 7-0, Concordia 9-0 and Hamline 5-4. Again the weakness of St. John's was in the doubles division of the team.

The *Record* does not report on the outcome of the MIAC meet, though from the official MIAC list of championships Gustavus is credited with having won the title outright.

— 1970 —

There was reason enough to justify the high hopes of the 1970 tennis team for a good season. The top six players on the St. John's 1969 team had returned to the school and were confident of their ability to equal their record of the past year, or even to surpass it. They realized that an element of luck would be necessary. Player-coach Ray Rossini and Captain "Jamie" Volin had no illusions regarding the strength of their opponents. Gustavus had been coming up fast and was rumored to have its strongest team in years. Macalester was traditionally a powerhouse in tennis, and Hamline was not far behind.

Backing up the two officers, Ray Rossini and James Volin, were the four other 1969 lettermen: John Hickner, Tom Farnham, Steve Pavela, and Mark Stolpman. Also in the offing were Pat Kernan, John Grobe, Mike Cahill, Greg Schepers, Larry Goede, Mike DeBevec and Dave Ebnet, all of whom could develop and displace any of the better known players who might falter.

St. John's was still afflicted with its biggest problem, the lack of early spring practice. For a change the coach scheduled Easter vacation meets with Notre Dame, Purdue, Evansville University and West Kentucky. Unfortunately, it was a wet spring and the Jays met only

West Kentucky (a strong tennis school that defeated them 9-0). Evansville University was beaten by the Jays, 5-3.

On their return the Jays won their first two meets, Augsburg 9-0 and Hamline 5-4. Records of the remaining six meets were not kept, but the Jays did well. St. John's finished the season with a record of six conference wins and three losses, but an overall record of ten wins and three losses. It was a good year.

— 1971 —

Attitudes towards the 1971 season ranged between deep pessimism and moderate optimism. The pessimists called attention to the loss of tried veteran Jamie Volin who had graduated, Mark Stolpman who had not returned, and John Grobe who was not attending school the second semester. The optimists in a lighter vein considered the four veterans, John Hickner, Tom Farnham, Steve Pavela and Pat Kernan, all of whom were eager to occupy the slots that had been vacated. Hickner especially called attention to the need of new strategy, more placement drills and game strategy—somewhat contrary to free-wheeling Rossini's theory of "hit the dang ball over the net and beat that brother."

But the basic problem was still there: the need of early practice. This year the team was taking an Easter trip down South and East to Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina "where there was less snow and they played tennis the year round. It would be tough opposition, but you never learn by beating weak teams."

The Easter trip had not worked out as well as had been expected. The May 7 issue of the *Record* lamented the "ill-fated Easter trip" after which St. John's had not been able to field its top team. Games had to be postponed—for example, attendance at the funeral of their teammate Kernan's father, weather-outs, injuries, and more time spent on studies. Team morale may have been low, for they could not hope to win over powerful Gustavus, and their only chance for a good season was success in the MIAC tournament. According to the *Record* of May 14, however, the Jays were still optimistic, with a record of 2-1 in the meets and sparked by undefeated Larry Goede. There the *Record* stopped reporting.

— 1972 —

The only descriptive information available on the 1972 season is the following article, "Fuzzball": "The SJU tennis team spent five days of Easter vacation in the Twin Cities practicing indoors at the Minnetonka Racquet Club. Seven players made the trip: player-coach

Tom Farnham, returning lettermen Mike DeBevec, Pat Kernan, Al Gauper, John Grobe, and freshmen Mike Perrizo and John Shannon. Freshman Mike Bromelkamp later joined the team. Returning from the Easter trip in good shape and high spirits, the team easily won the season opener against St. Thomas 7-2, but subsequent losses to St. Cloud State 2-7, Gustavus 0-9 and Concordia 4-5 produced frustration and disappointment. A 5-4 victory over Morris provided some encouragement, but matches with Duluth, Macalester and St. Olaf again brought defeat. The team recently split a triangular match with Hamline and Augsburg, beating the latter 7-2" (*Record*, April 14, 1972, p. 2).

The season record overall was four wins and eight losses. In the conference meets the Johnnies won two and lost seven. A highlight of these meets is the fact that the number three doubles team of John Grobe and Pat Kernan went undefeated.

In the MIAC tournament Kernan, Farnham and Perrizo advanced to the finals only to lose their matches. A detailed report on the conference tournament was not published in the *Record*. The team ended the season in fourth place.

— 1973 —

For the 1973 tennis season the coaching position was given to Captain Jerry Fitzgerald of the Military Science Department. Captain Fitzgerald, though not a professional coach, was considerably above average. He had a sound knowledge of basic tennis and, above all, the ability to handle men and work for a definite objective. He frankly stated that his objective was the MIAC tournament, not the small dual and triangular meets that had become traditional within the conference. His reason: "This season the MIAC title will be determined at a conference meet May 11-12. Previously the season won-loss record had counted half towards determining a champion, but this year only the two-day final results will count" (*Record*, April 13, 1973).

The new coach had a good team to work with. His star player was Carl Moschkau, a junior transfer from Loras College and the best thing that had happened to St. John's tennis since the days of Lou Adderley, 1952-55. Flanking him were some fine netmen such as Mike Perrizo, Richard "Spanky" Sullivan (Moschkau's partner in doubles), Tom Palmer, Paul Cashman, Thomas Wallraff and Mike Bromelkamp. At the end of Easter vacation St. John's had a 3-1 record. Carl Moschkau and Paul Cashman were undefeated in singles, and Mike Wallraff had a 3-1 mark. In doubles competition Moschkau and Sullivan were 2-0, Mike Perrizo and Mike Bromelkamp 2-1, and Tom Palmer and Tom Wallraff 2-1. The *Record* reported: "Coach Jerry Fitzgerald

thinks he has a young but solid team. He believes St. John's could threaten defending champion Gustavus for the title" (*Record*, May 3, 1973).

By May 11, the day of the MIAC tournament opening, Coach Fitzgerald had changed his mind regarding the vulnerability of Gustavus. In the meantime, he had scouted Gustavus and was amazed at their power. Sportswriter Ernie Bedor wrote that "Second place will be the objective for St. John's today and tomorrow in the tennis championships." Coach Fitzgerald and the rest of the league had all but conceded the title to Gustavus. "Fitzgerald," wrote Bedor, "says they have a 'super coach' who has recruited in Florida and taken his team on successful trips around the nation. Gustavus has beaten such schools as Oklahoma and Texas" (May 11, 1973). Despite his respect for Gustavus, Fitzgerald, nevertheless, thought that Moschkau, in singles, and Sullivan had good chances to make the finals.

The *Record* did not publish the results of the conference meet in 1973. Ernie Bedor, however, in a preview of the 1974 tennis season reported the meet results from St. John's standpoint. "St. John's finished second in the MIAC last year, but was far behind first place Gustavus . . . St. John's top player again this year is Carl Moschkau. As a junior transfer from Loras College last season, he racked up a 13-2 individual record, took second in the MIAC singles championships, and teamed with Sullivan to win the doubles crown" (*Record*, April 5, 1974, p. 8).

By virtue of their second place finish in the MIAC, the 1973 tennis team took part in the NAIA national tournament and St. John's placed 28th. Members taking part in the contests were the seven contestants in the MIAC meet: Carl Moschkau, Mike Perrizo, Richard Sullivan, Tom Palmer, Mike Wallraff, Michael Bromelkamp and Paul Cashman.

— 1974 —

Coach Jerry Fitzgerald, following his successful season of 1973 and his second place finish in the conference race, planned an eight-day trip through Iowa in preparation for the MIAC tournament. In the space of eight days they were scheduled to play matches with Loras College, Augustana College, St. Ambrose, the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and Drake University, in the expectation that by playing stiffer competition than that of the MIAC the team would be better prepared to challenge Gustavus, since 1969 the perennial champion of the conference.

Making the trip for certain were top seeded Carl Moschkau and Rick "Spanky" Sullivan, the latter the number two singles man and

Moschkau's partner in the doubles. Other players hopeful of making the trip were Tom Palmer, Mike Perrizo, Thomas Wallraff, Michael Bromelkamp, and Paul Cashman, with John "Joeko" Vertin and Kevin McNew ready to step into the charmed circle if given the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications. In fact, later in the season, after the try-outs had been completed, John Vertin and Kevin McNew were among the first six men on the squad.

Of all the members on the team, Carl Moschkau was Coach Fitzgerald's best bet for a winning season. Carl's individual record in 1973 was 13-2. In the 1973 MIAC tournament that concluded the season, he took second place in the singles championship and teamed with Sullivan to win the doubles crown. He was actually the one man responsible for the second place finish in the conference. Coach Fitzgerald generously acknowledged his admiration for his heady, driving play and considered him one of the best players in the state, second only to Peterson of Gustavus. Only Peterson could beat him, but mainly because Peterson regularly played against stiffer competition than St. John's could offer. Strange to say, Carl preferred doubles to singles, primarily because doubles was a faster game with more volleys. 1974 was his last year of play on the college team.

In the conference the St. John's record was five meets won to two lost; the overall record was twelve meets won and seven lost (*Record*, May 10, 1974, in "Sports Shorts," p. 8).

The finals of the MIAC tournament found St. John's in second place, as Coach Fitzgerald had predicted, and also second in the NAIA District 13 play-offs—in both cases behind winner Gustavus.

— 1975 —

With the dropping of military science from the St. John's curriculum in 1975, Captain Jerry Fitzgerald moved on to another military assignment, leaving behind him the memory of a fine gentleman and coach who had—to use Fr. Bernardo's expression—"put St. John's back on the map." He was the one man who with the assistance of two star tennis players, Carl Moschkau and Rick Sullivan, revived interest in tennis, a sport that within a year or so became as popular a television spectacle as golf. But the *Record* staff failed to read the writing on the television screen and neglected tennis as furnishing newsworthy items for the sports pages. During the whole of spring only one article on tennis appeared in the school paper.

Captain Fitzgerald was succeeded by John Grobe, a former tennis stand-out from 1969-72. Team morale was good, and the players played with an enthusiasm that surprised even the coach. Rick Sullivan took

over the number one position vacated by Carl Moschkau. Coach Grobe was confident that the 1975 Jays were capable of winning second place in the conference—though he was even more certain that it was futile to consider first place in view of the very evident superiority of the Gustavus power on the tennis courts.

Members of the 1975 varsity were John "Joeko" Vertin, Richard "Spanky" Sullivan, Mark Peschel, Tom Palmer, Kevin McNew and Michael Lilly. Outstanding on the junior varsity were Michael Bosanko, Robert Fischer, and Michael Dzuik.

The Johnnies completed the season in second place in the conference and second place in the District 13 NAIA play-offs, but did not attend the national in Kansas City because of budgetary problems.

— 1976 —

The opening of the 1976 tennis season found the Jays looking forward to a possible championship. Things were looking better than they had for several seasons. All the top six players of the previous season had returned and rumor had it that the Gusties had lost five of their best players. Coach John Grobe was confident that with hard work and a little luck this could be St. John's year.

Led by Captain Rick Sullivan were the veterans Tom Palmer, John Vertin, Mike Lilly, Kevin McNew, Mark Peschel and Mike Bosanko. These were all seasoned, competent players, especially in the singles. They were out-distanced in the doubles, however, by the crack freshman duo John Hendrickson and Michael LaDouceur. The team was inspired by Coach Grobe and took advantage of every opportunity to practice in the new Warner Palaestra, a facility that revolutionized spring sports at St. John's in every category. Several indoor tennis meets were held. The team first downed Bemidji and Stout by scores of 8-1 and 5-4, respectively, with Sullivan, Vertin, Palmer and Lilly doing well in the singles. Freshmen Hendrickson and LaDouceur were undefeated in the doubles.

At this point a defeat administered by their old nemesis Gustavus Adolphus shocked the Jays into the realization that the Gusties, though weakened, were by no means defunct. Canny Rick Sullivan sensed that they had lost much of their old power, however, and were vulnerable. He predicted the downfall of Gustavus from the conference throne. As for the squad, the team remained confident that after their trip into upper Iowa they would be ready for any competition.

On their return from Iowa, where they had played fine tennis and racked up four victories, losing only to Iowa tennis powers, St. Ambrose, Drake University and Iowa State, they next defeated three