

Men's Tennis

May 25, 2021

2020-21: A Season in Review



WICHITA, Kan. - Wichita State men's tennis had a year to remember, having made it to the NCAA Team Championships and sending a player to the NCAA Singles Championships for the first time since 2016.

The team entered the NCAA Team Championships ranked No. 33 and they finished the season with a 15-9 record. This was the programs first at-large bid, with all the other NCAA appearances being auto-bids. The Shockers had five ranked wins, the most in a single season in program history, and the most since three in both 2018-19 and 1982-83. Their 5-1 victory over No. 22 Memphis was the highest ranked win since beating No. 12 Oklahoma State in 1985. The victory over No. 29 Pepperdine was also impactful, as they are regularly one of the top teams in the nation.

In the NCAA Team Championships, the Shockers were tasked with beating No. 20 Arizona State, the runners-up in the Pac 12 Championships. The All-American duo of No. 40 [Murkel Dellien](#) and [Marius](#)

[Frosa](#) excelled in their last match together as Shockers, winning over Makey Rakotomalala/Tim Ruehl, 6-2, for the Shockers only court win in doubles. The senior duo also set the pace in singles, with Dellien controlling No. 1 and Frosa earning a gutsy three-set victory at No. 2 to tie the dual at three-all.

The Shockers also won at No. 6 due to the exploits of freshman [Luka Mrsic](#). The match came down to No. 4 and redshirt sophomore [Nicolas Acevedo](#), who had clinched previous matches against Memphis and SMU. Acevedo cruised in the first set, but he had to come back and force a tiebreak in the second set, which he went on to lose. The third set was a back-and-forth affair that also had to be settled in a tiebreak, but Acevedo was unable to pull it out in the end.

The 4-3 loss was the programs closest NCAA match in history, with the other closest being a 5-3 loss to Pepperdine in 1983.

Another highlight of the season was the play of senior [Murkel Dellien](#). Before entering the NCAA Singles Championships, Dellien was ranked No. 39 and riding a 13-match win streak. He had a 14-2 record with seven of his wins coming at the top spot and six of them versus ranked opponents, including No. 4 Gabriel Decamps of UCF and No. 29 Hamish Stewart of Tulane. He had just come off a victory over Arizona State's No. 84 Nathan Ponwith, 6-2, 6-2, in the first round of the NCAA Team Championships.

These efforts earned Dellien AAC Player of the Year Honors through voting by the conference's head coaches. He was also named to the all-conference singles team and the all-conference doubles team with partner [Marius Frosa](#). His win streak included a perfect 6-0 record against conference opponents, which included the conference's top players in Decamps, Stewart, and James Story of Memphis.

Dellien's opponent in the first round was Mississippi State's No. 20 Giovanni Oradini. Oradini was one of the best players in the SEC, but he had an inconsistent year. He entered the dual with 11-10 record, but most of those wins were versus ranked opponents. In the SEC Championships, he knocked off Florida's No. 3 Duarte Vail, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, and followed that performance with a loss to Miami's No. 42 Adria Soriano Barrera, 7-6(4), 7-5, in the NCAA Team Championships.

The two faced off at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla. The first set went to Oradini, but Dellien fought back in the second with an impressive 6-2 set win. Dellien had plenty of experience in three-set matches, having beaten both No. 29 Hamish Stewart and No. 4 Gabriel Decamps in that fashion. However, Oradini showed his class in the final set and beat Dellien to advance, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2.

Dellien was the first Shocker to earn a bid to the singles championships since Tin Ostojic in 2016. Dellien became the first Shocker to compete in the competition since 2015, as Ostojic was injured for the 2016 tournament, but played in the 2015 event. Dellien finished the season No. 48 in the rankings, which was the highest for a Shocker since Shocker Hall of Fame member Roberto Saad finished 19th in 1984.

One of the best seasons in men's tennis history was also full of other highlights:

- The season high ranking of No. 29 was the highest of the [Danny Bryan](#) era and highest in the modern era of the ITA poll. The team ended with a final ranking of No. 37.

- Five Shockers had ten or more singles wins on the season: [Nicolas Acevedo](#), [Murkel Dellien](#), [Marius Frosa](#), [Ray Lo](#), and [Orel Ovil](#).
- Murkel Dellein and Marous Frosa appeared a total of 16 times in the ITA ratings. Their final ranking as a Shocker duo was No. 36. The duo was named the eighth alternates in the NCAA Doubles Championships after going 9-5 with a highlight win over No. 29 Trey Hilderbrand / Bogdan Pavel of UCF. They are only the fifth Shocker duo to record 50 career wins (51-22.)
- The team was unbeaten at home in nine tries.