

# QUEEN BEES Tennis

*Women's tennis coach Rich Blomgren inherited a program in 2004 that won the Region VII tournament and competed in the national tournament in Alabama. In his third year as women's coach, Blomgren has aimed to continue to develop the team and build on their success.*

*"I'm looking forward to working with the team," Blomgren says. "I hope to keep the program at the strong level built by former women's tennis coach Nada Diab, and work hard to expand on our success." In doing so, Blomgren has placed importance in expanding the schedule. The women's season is in the fall and the first order of business for Blomgren is scheduling more matches in the spring off-season. He knows this season will be a learning experience. "I know we've lost a lot of girls, but have some recruits coming in," he says.*

## Contact the coach

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## Athletic success

After a Region VII runner-up finish in 2003, the women's squad responded with a run to the first round of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics National Tournament in 2005. That marked the second time that SAU women have competed at nationals, the first being in 1991 when the SAU women won the NAIA Doubles National Championship.

The Queen Bees finished as runners-up in the Region VII Tournament in 2003 and won the title in 2004. However, in 2005-06, the NAIA was in the process of restructuring Region VII, which has since left the team without a post-season.

Individual success has yielded three SAU women's tennis NAIA All-Americans.

## The conference

While most St. Ambrose varsity athletics teams compete in the Midwest Collegiate Conference, the tennis program is classified as an NAIA independent. The only way SAU teams can participate in the national tournament is through a regional tournament or by invitation. The NAIA is currently restructuring these regions, which resulted in SAU not participating in any post-season tournament in 2006 or 2007.

- 2003 Overall 13-4; Region VII Runner-up
- 2004 Overall 12-14; Region VII Champs; first round of NAIA Nationals (Spring 2005)
- 2005 Overall 5-7; Did not participate in post-season play due to restructuring region
- 2006 Overall 2-10; Did not participate in post-season play due to restructuring region
- 2007 Overall 7-6; Did not participate in post-season play due to restructuring region

## 2007 Fall results

vs. St. Francis . . . . . W . . . . . 6-3	vs. Knox . . . . . W . . . . . 9-0
at Grinnell . . . . . L . . . . . 8-1	vs. Loras . . . . . W . . . . . 6-0
vs. Augustana . . . . . L . . . . . 6-3	at Quincy . . . . . W . . . . . 5-4
vs. Olivet Naz. . . . . L . . . . . 9-0	at U of Ill,-Springfield . . . L . . . . . 7-2
vs. Simpson . . . . . W . . . . . 5-4	at Clarke . . . . . W . . . . . 7-2
vs. Cornell . . . . . L . . . . . 6-3	vs. Ill. Wesleyan . . . . . W . . . . . 6-3
vs. Monmouth . . . . . L . . . . . 5-4	

## The coaches

Rich Blomgren has been teaching tennis, whether as a club pro or a coach, for over 20 years. Blomgren started coaching men's tennis at SAU in 1999 and was named women's coach this past season. He taught tennis as a head pro at country clubs in the Chicago area before heading to SAU. Blomgren played four years of varsity tennis for the Illinois State University Redbirds.

Blomgren is always striving to improve his players and his coaching style. Both the men and women will play off-season matches to stay sharp. He also focuses on developing the athlete's personality.

"I want them to leave SAU being responsible," Blomgren says. "Hopefully I can influence them in some way with how I expect them to behave on the court and how I structure my program."

## Academic success

Blomgren has fostered an academically successful men's program and inherited a women's program with the same academic success. The women have produced 18 NAIA Academic All-American Scholar Athletes.

## Community service

Blomgren plans to expand his teams' participation in community service projects this coming season. He hopes to add two to three projects to the agenda for his tennis teams. Currently, every SAU varsity program participates in community service activities such as a gift-giving program with SAU's neighborhood schools and a book collection for the "Reading for Success" program.

## Facilities

Built in 1983, Lee Lohman Arena on the St. Ambrose campus has an exercise room with free weights, weight machines and cardiovascular workout machines. Tennis athletes practice and play their home matches at the Quad City Tennis Club, an indoor facility in Moline, Ill.

## Financial aid

Partial scholarships not tied to academics and financial need are available.