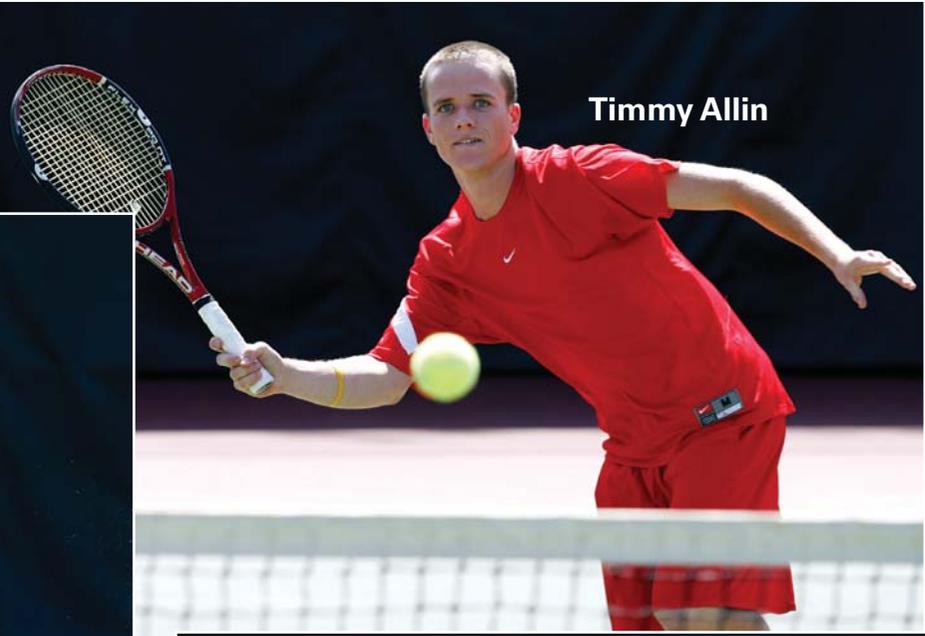
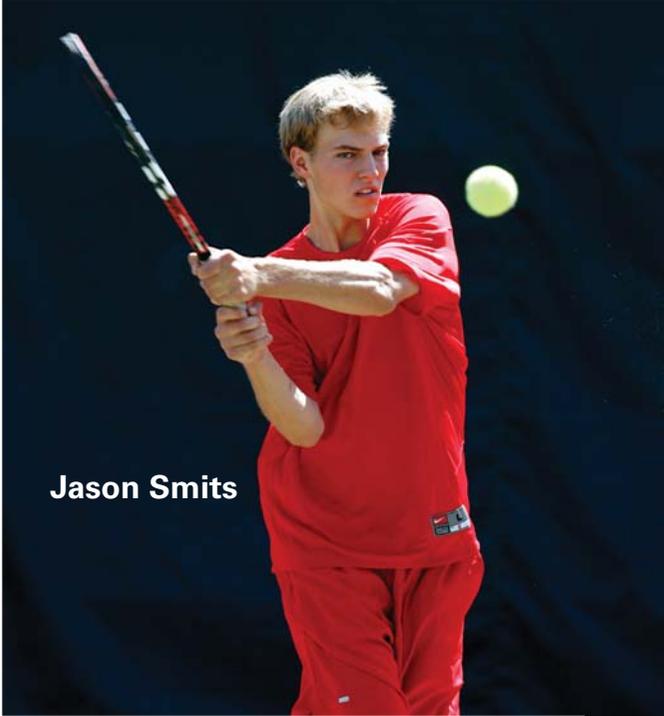


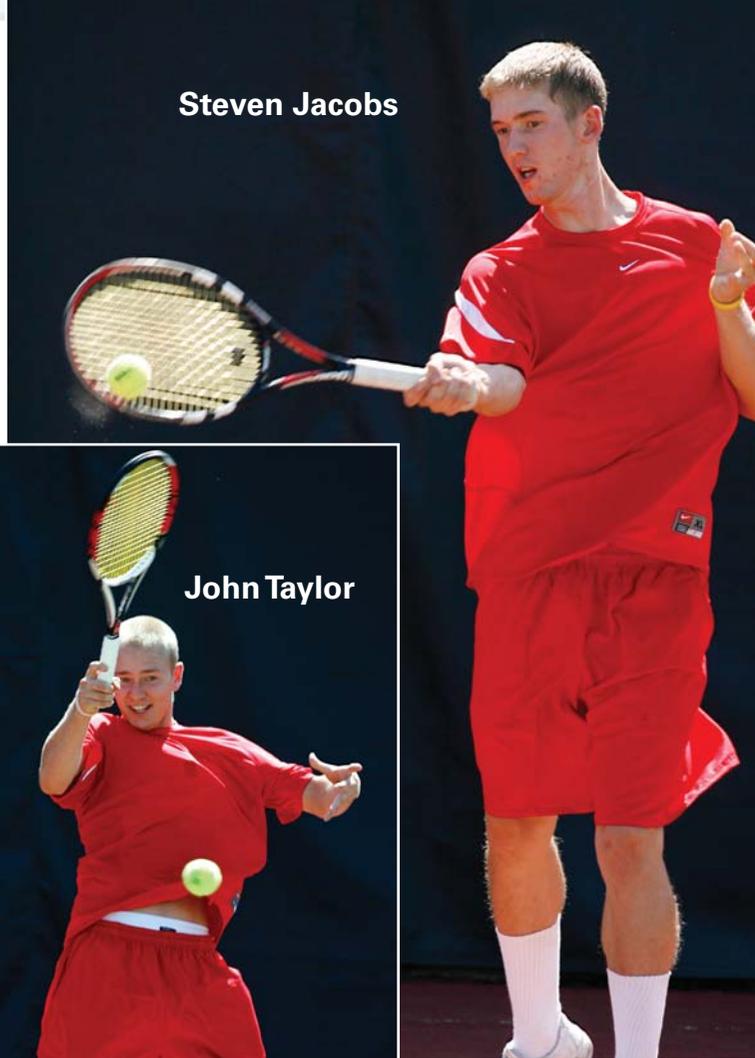
Timmy Allin



Jason Smits



Steven Jacobs



John Taylor



Zach Ganger



University of Utah photo files

The Utah Utes' **Power Tennis Program**

A Division I college team gets a BFS advantage



The days of champion tennis players such as John McEnroe dominating the court with their touch and ball placement are gone. To win today – at the professional level and the college level as well – tennis players need more than just good endurance. Case in point: world number two, Spanish champion Rafael Nadal.

Nadal, who crushed Roger Federer in the French Open in straight sets, is showing the type of power and physique that all tennis players should strive to achieve. Also subscribing to the idea that the future of tennis conditioning is not on the court but in the weight room is the University of Utah's Men's Tennis team.

"The nature of tennis has changed, and one of the biggest changes is that tennis players are stronger because they spend more time in the weight room," says Roeland Brateanu, an assistant tennis coach who was a BFS clinician before he was hired last year at Utah. "When you look at Nadal and the other top tennis players in the world, you see that they are physically much stronger and bigger than tennis champions of the past. And for this reason, the Utes are going to step up with a more aggressive strength and conditioning program."

In the college game, the Utes won the regular season in the Mountain West title, the first time in four years they've defeated BYU and the first time since 1990 they've won the conference title. Head coach F.D. Robbins said he was extremely proud of his team, especially because they had been down after losing the doubles point: "...we fought hard and earned the title."

In addition to helping with the strength and conditioning program, Brateanu will help relieve Robbins of many of his administrative responsibilities at Utah so he can focus more on his athletes. "Recruiting is tremendously hard work," says Brateanu. "You spend a lot of time on the road and you have to do your homework to be able to attract the players who will be the best fit for your program." But with Utah, it's not such a hard sell.

"What I ask recruits is "Do you want to be a small fish in a big pond or a big fish in a small pond? Utah in that sense is the small pond. Good players have a better chance of playing higher in the lineup than at big-time schools," says Brateanu. "At the major tennis powerhouses often the younger players don't get as much playing time, but here we expect everyone to contribute. If college tennis players are serious about their game and want to take it to the professional level, or just enjoy their college experience more, Utah is a great place to be."

The upcoming season will be a challenging one for Utah because they are losing two of their top players, Zach Ganger and Miron Mann. "Mann was an inspirational leader, and Ganger was the Mountain West Conference Player of the Year," says Brateanu. On a positive note, the Utes have six returning players and one of the most talented recruiting classes in a long time. In fact, *Tennisrecruiting.net*, one of the most respected tennis recruiting services, ranked the Utes ninth in Division I for mid-major conferences in the US.

This year the Utes will add to their lineup Jean-

Marc Arends, a Davis Cup player for Aruba; and Benito Suriano, a Davis Cup player for El Salvador. “Arends and Suriano have represented their country in team competitions, and they will make an immediate impact on our starting lineup,” says Brateanu. “We are also focusing on trying to add one or two local talents each year.”

Power Tennis

Next year the Utes will continue their emphasis on strength training, including in-season weight training. “When a tennis player is poorly trained, their ground strokes will suffer 69 percent of precision, while their service will lose 30 percent accuracy,” says Brateanu. “Conversely, good training produces tremendous improvement in explosiveness, speed, jumping power and flexibility.”

Greg Argust, the strength coach for Utah’s tennis team, implemented some changes to his strength and conditioning

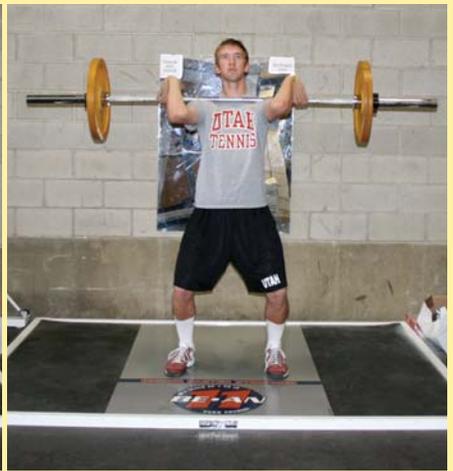
program last season that had a big impact on helping the Utes achieve a championship season, says Brateanu. “The little things we did with our strength and conditioning program resulted in big differences, but we need to improve even more – our goal is to finish in the top 25 in the near future. With our budget and geographical location that would be a great accomplishment, and I’m certain we can achieve it.”

According to Brateanu, tennis is a sport that has been behind others in realizing the value of strength training. “Look at baseball. Two decades ago many baseball players avoided weight training, thinking it would make them slower or tighter – now every serious baseball player is hitting the weight room. With tennis, the focus has been on endurance training, often at the expense of strength training. But as players such as Nadal are proving, it’s OK to be strong.”

Brateanu admits that quite a bit of teaching on proper



As shown in these photos, The Mountain West Conference has many beautiful tennis facilities along with high-tech scoreboards for fans.



Stephen Jacobs performing a power clean

technique will be necessary before he will allow some of his athletes to use heavy weights. “I’ve found that many of our players don’t know how to squat properly, often not even squatting to parallel, and have poor technique in the clean. Also, many of our players need to be taught how to spot properly and to learn how a spotter can also serve as a coach to encourage their teammates to work harder.”

In addition to heavy-duty weight training, more plyometric box jumping and medicine ball training will be incorporated into the Utes’ program, adds



The Utes are all smiles after winning their first regular season conference championship in 18 years.

Brateanu. “The faster a player can move around the court, the more often they will be in a better position to make powerful and effective returns.”

As a BFS clinician, Brateanu says he has seen firsthand the effects that a great strength and conditioning program can have at the high school level, and he says he is looking forward to being able to step up to college tennis. “I’m excited to work with the

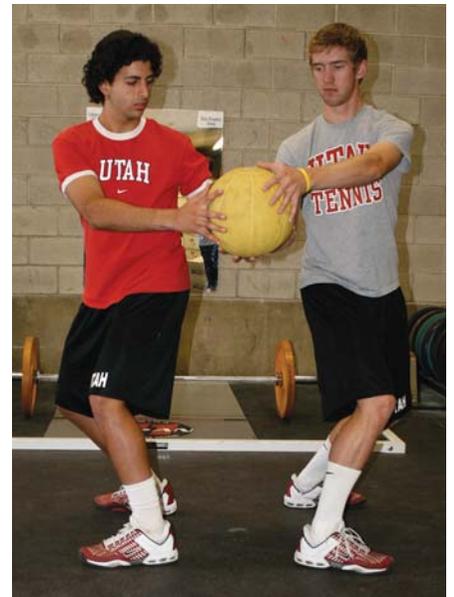
Utes, and I’m looking forward to seeing our team get even stronger, in the weight room and on the court!” BFS



Coach Roeland Brateanu spotting Othman Zerouali-Ouariti.



Othman Zerouali-Ouariti spotting Stephen Jacobs on the Glute-Ham Developer



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