

Sieczka Stands On Her Own

by Michelle Johnson

staff writer

Kindness counts on the court with Anita Sieczka.

"I am definitely an aggressive player and enjoy coming up to the net and smashing the balls at the other opponents," said Sieczka, a junior. "Especially if they are rude."

Sieczka started playing tennis when she was seven years old.

"My father taught my sister and I, which was pretty interesting because he had no clue about the sport," said Sieczka. "He learned the shots and specific techniques on TV."

This will be Sieczka's first year without her sister, Anna, on the team. Anna graduated last year, taking with her MVP honors and the NAIA Senior Player of the Year award.

Having Anna on the team was a positive experience for Sieczka. As doubles partners, the two won 18 matches.

"When she graduated I didn't know what I was going to do," said Sieczka. "Anna would always have a positive input on

my game and she would be willing to help me with any problems off the court as well."

Sieczka and her sister have been practicing and playing together since they were young.

"My sister and I would be in every tournament supporting each other," said Sieczka. "When we weren't there because of being sick of any other life situation, it was strange and difficult to play."

Some people would feel pressure to live up to their sister's reputation.

"The only challenge she faces is if she feels she needs to live up to her sister," said Head Coach

Some teammates don't even see a difference in the siblings' game.

"She plays just like her sister," said junior Andrea Montoya, who described Sieczka as a sweetheart who is a lot of fun to hang out with.

While Sieczka may not feel up to par with her sister's abilities, her strengths shine through.

"She hits the ball harder than anyone on the team," said Hills.

This season however, Sieczka may face some challenges with her shoulder injury that started to bother her during the Rolex Tournament last semester. But Sieczka still has goals in mind for the upcoming season.

"I would like to beat my records from years before," said Sieczka. "I really would like to try and focus on each day and each match rather than think about the future and try to over think what I am going to do next."

Sieczka loves being on the team and encourages students to come cheer on the squad.

"The personalities of the coaches, the girls

and the boys on the team, everyone is loving and supporting," said Sieczka. "I couldn't ask for more. I feel very blessed to be here on this team."

The team recognizes Sieczka's talent.

"Although she's somewhat smaller, it's not what you see, it's what's inside," said Hills. "She's just a tough competitor."

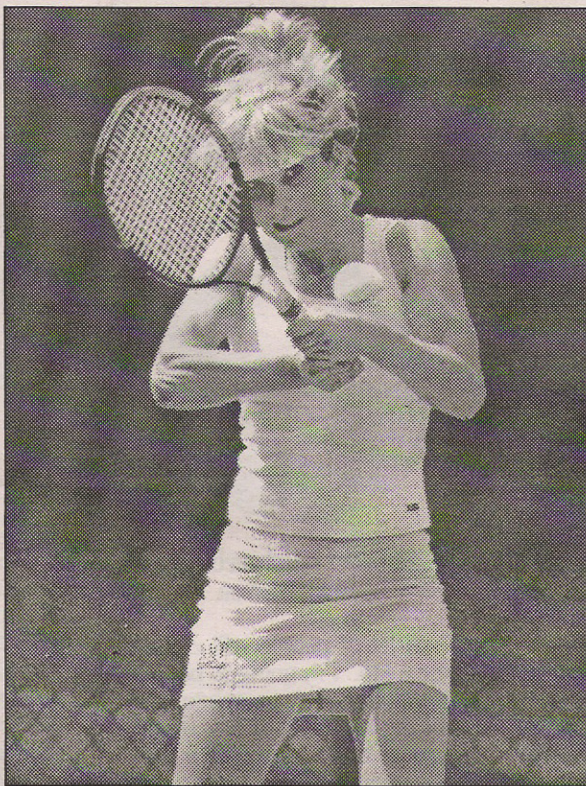


photo by Jorge de la Torre

Anita Sieczka will play in her first season without her sister Anna.

Rich Hills. "I think I would if I were her."

Sieczka admires her sister's tennis abilities, but doesn't feel that pressure.

"I don't feel that I have to live up to her, because it would just be impossible," said Sieczka. "We are like night and day, but I know I want to do the best I can and just have fun."