

SPORTS

Garrison heads U.S. Fed Cup

1990 Wimbledon runner-up to lead U.S. tennis

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Zina Garrison will replace Billie Jean King as captain of the United States Fed Cup team next season, The Associated Press learned Monday.

Garrison, the 1990 Wimbledon runner-up, was appointed for one year by the president of the U.S. Tennis Association. Her hiring was to be announced officially Tuesday.

"I paid my dues," Garrison told the AP in a telephone interview. "I learned a lot each and every year working with Billie Jean."

Garrison becomes the country's first Black Fed Cup captain in the event's 40-year history.

King is stepping aside after leading the United States to three Fed Cup titles since 1995, but her tenure also was marked by conflicts with players. She will stay on as an assistant coach, the same position Garrison held since 1999.

"I did a sampling of players - that would be one factor entering into it. And it's my firm conviction that Zina is ready to take the next step," USTA president Alan Schwartz said. "There comes a time when transition makes sense. Billie Jean herself said this was the time."

The United States plays at

Slovenia in the first round of the 2004 Fed Cup on April 24-25.

The Americans lost to France in the 2003 final. That U.S. team was depleted by injuries and player disagreements with King, leaving it without such stars as Venus and Serena Williams, Jennifer Capriati and Lindsay Davenport.

"Losing in the final this year was disturbing," Garrison said. "I grew up on U.S. teams where we were always the favorite. I'm going to take some time to study and figure out how we can do that."

King's most publicized flap involved Capriati. She was kicked off the team on the eve of a 2002 match, when King didn't want Capriati to practice on her own with her father.

The United States lost to heavy underdog Austria.

King also said Davenport wouldn't be allowed to participate in a Fed Cup series this year because the player was going to arrive late after her mother had surgery.

"I've had a wonderful run as U.S. Fed Cup captain," King said in a statement. "Women's international team tennis competition is a passion of mine and one that requires a major commitment. It is with great pleasure

that I fully support the USTA's decision to select Zina, who I am convinced is the most capable person to lead the team to a championship."

Garrison, 40, was ranked in the top 10 from 1983-90, peaking at No. 4. She retired in 1997 with 37 titles: 14 singles, 20 doubles, three mixed doubles.

Venus Williams, for one, has credited Garrison's Fed Cup coaching with helping her improve.

"The Williams sisters, Capriati, Davenport - I will be talking to all of them. I'm looking to put together the best team," Garrison said. "The biggest thing is if their schedules fit."

Garrison played on eight Fed Cup teams from 1984-94, going 22-5 and helping win three titles. When she beat Monica Seles and Steffi Graf to reach the 1990 Wimbledon final, Garrison became the first Black woman to reach a Grand Slam championship match since Althea Gibson in 1958. Garrison lost that final to Martina Navratilova 6-4, 6-1.

Garrison also is known for being the last player to beat 18-time major champion Chris Evert, eliminating her in the 1989 U.S. Open quarterfinals.



KICKIN' IT

Freddie Kanoute has told the Mali Football Federation he will ignore pleas from Tottenham to stay at White Hart Lane and play for his adopted country in January's African Nations Cup. (AFP/File/Adrian Dennis)

USC tops contenders in graduation

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - When it comes to graduation rates, Southern California is the clear-cut winner over LSU and Oklahoma.

In a study of graduation rates of the 56 bowl teams released Monday, USC easily beat out the other two national title contenders.

The Trojans graduated 61 percent of their football players in the years studied, compared to 40 percent for LSU and 33 percent for Oklahoma.

The numbers are an average for the freshman classes that entered school from 1993-94 to 1996-97. Students are given six years to graduate, but athletes who transfer - even if they are in good academic standing - count against a school.

"If there were a Top 10 ranking for graduation rates among bowl teams, Northwestern and Boston College

would have played for the national championship," said Richard Lapchick, who authored the study for The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida.

Northwestern had an 83 percent graduation rate, followed by Boston College (79), Virginia (76), Tulsa (66) and Oregon (64).

The Trojans had the highest rate for any school in a BCS bowl game, while Oklahoma had the lowest. The rate for the Sooners are for classes that entered school before Bob Stoops became coach in 1999.

Arkansas and Fresno State were tied for the lowest rate at 26 percent. Navy is the only bowl school that does not release graduation rates.

The study also looked at minority hiring practices at bowl schools. In the leader-

ship positions of head coach, coordinators, school president, athletic director and faculty athletic representative, 94 percent of positions were held by whites. White women held 6 percent of those jobs.

UCLA's Karl Dorrell is the only minority head coach for a bowl team. There were four minority coaches among the 117 Division I-A schools this season.

There were also only eight minority coordinators, including USC offensive coordinator Norm Chow. The Trojans also had one of three Black athletic directors in Mike Garrett.

"It is astonishing that only 13 of the 56 bowl schools employ any person of color in these key decision-making positions," Lapchick said. "It is no wonder why there is only one African-American head coach in a bowl game."

Disparity

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Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida.

"It is no wonder why there is only one African-American head coach in a bowl game."

Using the most recent NCAA statistics, Lapchick also looked at graduation rates among the bowl-bound schools. He found that only eight had graduated more than 59 percent of their Black football players. Yet all five teams led by a Black, Latino or female athletics director are among the eight. Another of the schools with a Black coordinator was in the top eight.

"I do not think this is a coincidence," Lapchick said.

"This shows me that if you have a person of color in charge of the department he or she is paying attention to more than that an athlete is there to help them win. They're paying attention to making sure he's on track to get his degree."

Overall among NCAA Division I-A teams, 60 percent of white football players graduated while only 45 percent of Black football players got degrees.

At bowl schools, 14 of the 56 had graduation rates of less than 40 percent for football players. Nearly double that number, 26 schools, had graduation rates of less than 40 percent for Black players.

"Race remains a persistent academic issue, reflected in the continuing gap between graduation rates for white and African-American student athletes," Lapchick said.

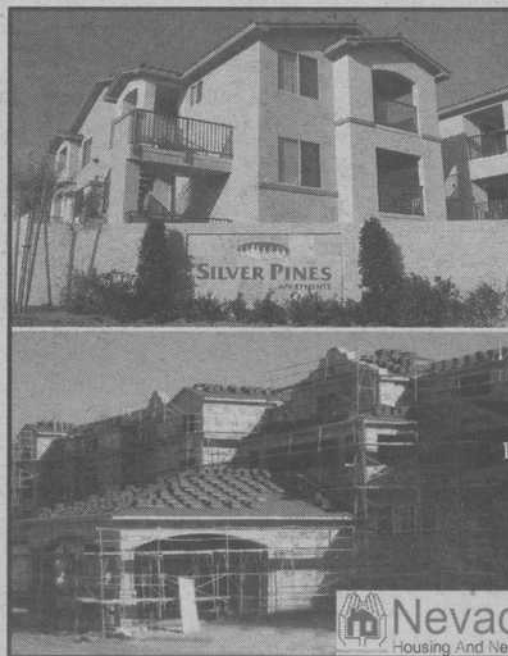
Though many bowl teams scored poorly with their graduation rates, some were notable for their high rates. Eleven schools had graduation rates for football players that were better than those for overall students, and three schools had graduation rates for football players that were better than they were for overall student-athletes.

"If there were a Top 10 ranking for graduation rates among bowl teams, Northwestern and Boston College would have played for the national championship," Lapchick said.

Those schools graduated at least 79 percent of their football players and at least 68 percent of their Black players.

Virginia, Tulsa, Oregon, UCLA, Southern Mississippi, Georgia, USC, Purdue and Texas Tech - all with football graduation rates of 58 percent or higher - also would have made the Top 10.

Lapchick noted that four of the 10 schools with the highest graduation rates for football players have either a woman (Tulsa), Black man (USC and Virginia) or Latino (UCLA) as athletics director. "You can have schools with inclusive hiring practices produce scholar athletes and win at the same time," he said. "These schools are proof."



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