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SMC Player Reaches NCAA Singles Championship

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Alex Poorta Photo Tod Fierner

that her most memorable accomplishment of the past four years was beating the top nationally ranked tennis player in a match. "Last year, we won Conference. It was the first time," says Poorta, who is proud of her team.

The team's first round of NCAA Conference Tournaments on May 14 ranked them third in the conference; yet Poorta's excited for her debut at the Singles Championship. She has continued training since the NCAA Tournaments for the singles match on May 25. "It's good the match is later; she'll have finals out of the way and can focus on her tennis," said Alipaz.

"She really deserves all the credit," said Alipaz. "She's so self-driven and has worked so hard to better her game. Not every college player gets better, but every year she has focused on some aspect of her game and improved it and has added new dimensions to her sport. I applaud her for always trying to improve-- and always getting better."

Will Poorta continue to play following graduation? Her coach hopes so; but Poorta isn't sure. She plans to remain in the Lamorinda area and when asked if she'll stop playing, she said: "Maybe-- but I might miss it too much."

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Alex Poorta is no ordinary collegiate tennis player; today she becomes Saint Mary's College's first female tennis athlete to participate in the NCAA Singles Championship in Palo Alto, adding yet another notable accomplishment to her extraordinary career.

Poorta, whose parents are both tennis players, began playing at the age of nine in her hometown of Amsterdam. "I played tennis and field hockey at the time and I decided to stick to tennis," she said. By the time she was 13, she practiced daily. By 16, she was playing internationally and was recruited to play under scholarship for the Gaels.

SMC tennis coach Lisa Alipaz said Poorta's presence has brought many noticeable changes. "She incited a level of professionalism that wasn't in the program before. Her work ethic, training intensity and the hours she puts in to be in peak competition shape--both on and off the court--has made everyone else better."

Poorta's absolute dedication to her sport has led to a list of accomplishments few athletes can boast of. She was the first Gael to compete in the All-American Championships and the 2011 WCC Athlete of the Year. But Poorta's smile spreads wide when she says