

# SPORTS

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CONTACT: John Greenhoe (616) 337-7303  
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## **MEN'S TENNIS COACH ACKER TO RETIRE FOLLOWING '93 SEASON**

George Acker, who has guided the Kalamazoo College men's tennis team to 34 consecutive league titles and six national championships, has announced that he will retire from the College following the conclusion of the 1993 tennis season.

Acker, 64, is the winningest coach in the history of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association as well as Kalamazoo College, with his 34 MIAA titles leading the MIAA Coaches of Distinction List.

Acker, a professor of physical education at Kalamazoo, joined the College faculty in 1959 as head coach of the Hornet tennis and wrestling teams as well as assistant football coach. The graduate of Northern Illinois University (Acker has bachelor's and master's degrees from NIU) inherited a tennis squad which had won 20 consecutive MIAA titles, and he kept the string intact.

The only blemish on Acker's MIAA record came in 1962, when the Hornets suffered a 4-3 dual-meet loss to Hope College. Kalamazoo rallied to salvage a tie for the MIAA championship, however, by taking a first place at the league tournament later that season.

Kalamazoo's current string of 54 consecutive league championships is a feat unmatched by any professional, collegiate or high school team in America.

Under Acker, Kalamazoo has participated in every NCAA Division III championship tournament since the first one was held in 1976, and the Hornets have finished lower than fifth

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just once. In 1992, Acker directed Kalamazoo to its second straight national championship and his top player, Lewis Miller, won his second straight singles championship. Kalamazoo's six team championships under Acker is more than any other Division III school.

The individual accomplishments of Acker's players are just as impressive as the team's achievements. Thirty-five of Acker's players have earned All-American honors and nineteen have been named the MIAA's most valuable player, with four of those players being named MVP twice.

Acker's teams are almost as well known for their sportsmanship as they are for their winning ways. That is evidenced by the fact that thirteen of Acker's players have won the MIAA Stowe Sportsmanship Award, named for the late Dr. Allen B. Stowe, former Hornet tennis coach who led Kalamazoo to the first 18 MIAA championships in Kalamazoo's current streak of 54.

Acker has twice been named NCAA Division III Coach of the Year (1982 and 1991) by his peers, and in 1990 he was voted the Division III Coach of the Decade for the 1980s. He is only the second men's tennis coach in Division III history to accumulate more than 500 dual-meet victories with a career mark of 514 wins, 228 losses and two ties. Acker's career dual-meet record in MIAA competition is 203 wins against just one defeat.

During his career at Kalamazoo, Acker has worn many different coaching hats in addition to his tennis duties. He served as head wrestling coach from 1959-75 and was an assistant football coach from 1959-68. Acker was also coach of the Hornet men's cross country team from 1986-88.

A native of Dixon, Illinois, Acker was captain of Northern Illinois University's undefeated football team in 1951 and also captained the Huskies' 1951 and 1952 tennis teams, Acker was inducted into the Northern Illinois Athletic Hall of Fame in 1986, and that same year he received one of Kalamazoo College's highest faculty honors, being awarded the

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Florence J. Lucasse Lectureship for outstanding teaching.

According to Bob Kent, Kalamazoo director of men's athletics, Acker's presence as a strong role model in the College's athletic department will be missed.

"When I first arrived at Kalamazoo College, George Acker quickly impressed me as a role model not only for students but also for a lot of the people he worked with in athletics," Kent said. "One thing that I have noticed about George's teams is they are very close knit, and the players sort of become a part of the Acker family. While they are a part of that inner circle, the players learn a lot about the values of family and loyalty, and I think they take those values with them when they graduate."

Acker, his wife Nancy and their four daughters were selected as the Western Tennis Association Family of the Year in 1973 and in 1974 the Ackers were named the United States Lawn Tennis Association Family of the Year.

Acker's final season coaching the Hornets will begin on Feb. 13, when Kalamazoo plays at Michigan State University. Acker's Hornet career will conclude at the NCAA Division III Men's Tennis Championships, which will be held at Kalamazoo's Stowe Stadium May 17-24.

Acker plans to continue his involvement with the USTA Boys 16 & 18 Junior Nationals, which are held at Stowe Stadium each August. He has assisted with the tournament since arriving in Kalamazoo.

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## George Acker's Kalamazoo College Men's Tennis Coaching Record

Year	Overall Record	MIAA Record	MIAA Place	NCAA Div. III Place*	Captain (s)
1959	11-12	7-0	1st	--	Bob Brice
1960	10-8	5-0	1st	--	Bill Japinga
1961	15-6	6-0	1st	--	Loren Campbell
1962	11-2-1	5-1	1st (tie)	--	Loren Campbell
1963	16-2	6-0	1st	--	Loren Campbell
1964	12-2	6-0	1st	--	Dick Johnson
1965	12-2	6-0	1st	--	Dick Johnson
1966	19-2	6-0	1st	--	George Smillie
1967	8-6	6-0	1st	--	John Koch
1968	11-4	6-0	1st	--	John Trump
1969	15-2-1	6-0	1st	--	Dave Tidwell, Don Swarthout
1970	11-6	6-0	1st	--	Bill Struck
1971	12-9	6-0	1st	--	John Brummet
1972	13-6	6-0	1st	--	Gary Gudelsky
1973	11-9	6-0	1st	--	Gary Gudelsky, Tom Thomson, Willard Washburn
1974	12-8	6-0	1st	--	Dave Emig, Ron Cook
1975	15-10	6-0	1st	--	Alex Dalrymple, Rick Moore, Dave Emig
1976	18-6	6-0	1st	1ST*	Alex Dalrymple, Rick Moore, Mike Thomson
1977	12-11	6-0	1st	4th	Chris Bussert, Harlan Smith
1978	15-10	6-0	1st	1ST	Chris Bussert, Mike Chilicki
1979	12-9	6-0	1st	9th	Eric Rodgers, Mike Hemdabler, Hubbard Capes
1980	15-12	6-0	1st	3rd	Barry Bedford, Bill Vanderhoef, Dana Cafmeyer
1981	17-9	6-0	1st	3rd	Chris Burns, Bill Vanderhoef, Peter Ballantine
1982	16-10	6-0	1st	2nd	Chris Burns, Mark Riley, Dave Higdon
1983	15-10	6-0	1st	3rd	Ven Johnson, Dave Higdon, Chris Yates
1984	12-12	6-0	1st	4th	Tim Corwin, Adam Bottorff, Joe Hosner
1985	18-6	6-0	1st	2nd	Tim Corwin, Adam Bottorff, Phil Harrington
1986	24-2	6-0	1st	1ST	Tim Corwin, Butch Gebhardt, Alex Palladino, Chris Stokes
1987	15-6	6-0	1st	1ST	Alex Palladino, Jim Burda, Rich Verheul
1988	16-9	6-0	1st	5th	Jack Hosner, Tim Hufner
1989	18-8	6-0	1st	3rd	Dave Borski, Jeff Fieldhack, Tom Kelly
1990	23-8	6-0	1st	3rd	Jeff Fieldhack, Doug Keen
1991	28-2	6-0	1st	1ST	Doug Keen, Jeff Fieldhack, Greg Wood, John Ray-Keil
1992	26-3	6-0	1st	1ST	Nathan Eddy, Lewis Miller, James Osowski, John Ray-Keil
1993	--	--	--	--	Lewis Miller, Randy Blau, David Helfer, Seth Denawetz

**Career overall record: 514 wins, 228 losses, 2 ties**

**Career MIAA record: 203-1**

*\*First NCAA Division III tournament held in 1976*

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**George Acker's Kalamazoo College  
Men's Tennis All-Americans Year-by-Year**

- 1959 - Robert Brice
- 1960 - Bill Japinga
- 1964 - Dick Johnson, George Smillie
- 1968 - John Trump
- 1970 - Burt Bothell
- 1971 - John Brummet
- 1973 - Willard Washburn, Tom Thomson
- 1975 - Dave Emig
- 1976 - Chris Bussert, Alex Dalrymple, Mike Thomson, Rick Moore
- 1978 - Chris Bussert\*, Jim Hosner, Dan Thomson
- 1979 - Hubbard Capes, Mike Herndobler
- 1980 - Chris Burns\*, Brian Monfils
- 1981 - Bill Vanderhoef
- 1982 - Chris Burns, Mark Riley, Paul Showers
- 1983 - Ven Johnson, Tim Corwin
- 1984 - Tim Corwin, Alex Palladino
- 1985 - Tim Corwin, Alex Palladino
- 1986 - Tim Corwin\*, Alex Palladino\*\*, Jim Burda\*\*, Jack Hosner, Butch Gebhardt
- 1987 - Alex Palladino\*\*, Jim Burda\*\*
- 1988 - Dave Borski
- 1989 - Dave Borski, Jeff Fieldhack, Doug Keen
- 1990 - Lewis Miller, Doug Keen, Jeff Fieldhack
- 1991 - Lewis Miller\*, Doug Keen, John Ray-Keil, Jeff Fieldhack
- 1992 - Lewis Miller\*, John Ray-Keil

\*NCAA Division III Singles Champion

\*\*NCAA Division III Doubles Champion