

**ABIGAIL TERE-APISAH - GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
2012 NCAA WOMEN'S TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS  
MAY 23-28 DAN MAGILL TENNIS COMPLEX**



# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis



## Sports Communications

125 Decatur Street, Suite 130, Atlanta, GA 30303

Women's Tennis Contact: Randy Lieberman, Graduate Assistant

Office: 404-413-4034 • Cell: 570-460-6464 • Email: rlieberman1@gsu.edu

www.GeorgiaStateSports.com

## Tere-Apifah Honors & Awards

- 2012 ITA Southeast Region Player to Watch
- 2012 ITA Women's National Singles Ranking: #37
- 2012 CAA Player of the Year
- 2012 Most Outstanding Performer at CAA Championships
- 2012 All-CAA First Team Singles
- 2012 Three-Time CAA Player of the Week (Feb. 15, Mar. 7, Apr. 10)
- 2011 CAA Rookie of the Year
- 2011 Most Outstanding Performer at CAA Championships
- 2011 CAA Player of the Week (Mar. 15, 2011)



## Tere-Apifah by the Numbers

#37	ITA Women's National Singles Ranking
17-1	2012 Singles Record
4-1	vs. Nationally-Ranked Singles Opponents
3	CAA Player of the Week Awards in 2012
31-3	Career Singles Record (5th Best in GSU History)

## Last Time Tere-Apifah...

### Won a Singles Match at Home...

3/21/12 vs. Vera Shkuninda (Kennesaw St.) 6-3, 6-3

### Won a Singles Match on the Road...

4/8/12 vs. #41 Ecaterina Vasenina (#37 USF) 3-6, 6-3, 7-5

### Won a Singles Match at Neutral Site...

4/22/12 vs. Ana Bara (#43 VCU) 6-0, 7-5

### Lost a Singles Match at Home...

Never

### Lost a Singles Match on the Road...

3/17/12 vs. #45 Anya Morgina (#35 South Carolina)

6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 2-6

### Lost a Singles Match at Neutral Site...

Never

### Defeated a Nationally-Ranked Opponent...

4/8/12 vs. #41 Ecaterina Vasenina (#37 USF) 3-6, 6-3, 7-5

### Lost to a Nationally-Ranked Opponent...

3/17/12 vs. #45 Anya Morgina (#35 South Carolina)

6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 2-6

### Earned her First Win vs. a Nationally-Ranked Opp. ...

3/13/11 vs. #88 Elizabeth Epstein (#23 Yale) 6-3, 6-3

## Tennis Tweets

Follow the GSU women's tennis team on Twitter to receive match updates, recaps, and box scores. Visit [twitter.com/GSUW-Tennis](https://twitter.com/GSUW-Tennis) and click "Follow" or scan the code on the right.



## 2012 TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS



Abigail Tere-Apifah

### TERE-APISAH'S HISTORIC 2012

Georgia State sophomore **Abigail Tere-Apifah** (Pronounced, "tear-ee, AH-pee-sah") has put together one of the finest individual seasons in Georgia State women's tennis history. She will become the first GSU women's tennis player in school history to compete in the NCAA Singles Championship. The native of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, owns a 17-1 singles record heading into the NCAA Championship and is ranked No. 37 in the latest Intercollegiate Tennis Association Women's Division I National Singles rankings. Already the sophomore has put together a 31-3 career singles record and owns victories over five nationally-

ranked opponents.

### AGAINST THE FIELD

On the year, Tere-Apifah owns four victories vs. ranked opponents. She has also defeated three players who qualified for this year's championship, including the WAC's automatic qualifier Marianne Jodoin of Fresno State. She defeated the No. 41-ranked Jodoin 6-3, 6-4, won a 7-6 (3), 3-6, 7-5 match against No. 11 Jillian O'Neill of Georgia Tech and defeated No. 44 Ecaterina Vasenina of USF by a 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 margin. O'Neill and Vasenina were both at-large singles selections. Tere-Apifah also dropped two contests to NCAA Championship participants, one in the spring and one in the fall. She fell 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 2-6 to South Carolina's Anya Morgina and dropped a narrow contest to Georgia's Chelsey Gullickson

### THE COMEBACK KID

Sophomore **Abigail Tere-Apifah** has mounted two amazing comebacks vs. ranked opponents this season on the way to victories. She first fought off two match points while down 5-2 and 5-4 in the third set to defeat No. 44-ranked Jillian O'Neal of Georgia Tech 7-6, 3-6, 7-5. She took the win while fighting through an ankle injury she suffered in the second set vs. O'Neill. Last month, the Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, native battled to a 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 win



# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis

## Tere-Apifah vs. Nationally Ranked Opponents in 2012

### Jan. 22

Win, 6-4, 2-6, 6-1

vs. No. 93 Kayla Duncan (Wake Forest)

- Second career victory over a ranked opponent
- First since she defeated Yale's 88th-ranked singles player Elizabeth Epstein 6-3, 6-3 in 2011

### Jan. 27

Win, 7-6, 3-6, 7-5

vs. No. 44 Jillian O'Neal (Georgia Tech)

- Fought off two match points while down 5-2 and 5-4 in the third set.
- Battled an ankle injury that forced her to take a time-out in the second set

### Mar. 2

Win, 6-3, 6-4

vs. No. 42 Marianne Jodoin (Fresno State)

- Second career victory over a ranked opponent in straight sets

### Mar. 21

Loss, 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 2-6

vs. No. 45 Anya Morgina (South Carolina)

- Snapped a season-high 11-match winning streak for Tere-Apifah

### Apr. 8

Win, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5

vs. No. 41 Ecaterina Vasenina (South Florida)

- Fought back from down 5-0 in the third set to win
- Won the next game 40-0 after falling down 5-0
- Tere-Apifah fell behind 40-0 in the following game and fought off three match points to win the game
- Won her match when GSU trailed 3-2 in team score

## Tere-Apifah in the Rankings

### ITA Division I Women's Singles Rankings:

#### Abigail Tere-Apifah

Date	Rank
January 3	NR
February 16	58
February 28	54
March 13	34
March 27	39
April 10	35
April 17	36
April 24	37

## Women's Tennis Staff

Head Coach.....	Miha Lisac (Georgia State, 2005)
Career Record .....	55-38
Record at Georgia State .....	55-38
Office Phone.....	(404) 413-4072
Fax .....	(404) 413-4001
E-mail.....	mllisac@gsu.edu
Volunteer Assistant Coach .....	Clarence Boyd
Speed, Strength & Conditioning .....	Devin Vernick
Athletic Trainer.....	Jessica Hemsley (Florida '10)
Sport Administrator.....	Jamie Boggs

against USF's No. 41-ranked Ecaterina Vasenina. Tere-Apifah faced a 5-0 deficit in the third set when she won a game to narrow the deficit to 5-1. The next game, Tere-Apifah trailed 40-0, but climbed all the way back to win the game and six straight games following for the victory.

## HIGH HONORS

Sophomore **Abigail Tere-Apifah** earned numerous honors in 2012. Her most recent honor was being named the ITA Southeast Region Player to Watch. She added that to her collection of awards including the 2012 CAA Player of the Year, Most Outstanding Performer at the 2012 CAA Championships and All-CAA First Team Singles. In 2011, Tere-Apifah earned the CAA Rookie of the Year and the Most Outstanding Performer at the CAA Championship honors.

## A FIRST FOR GEORGIA STATE

Tere-Apifah will become the first Georgia State women's tennis player in school history to compete in the NCAA Singles Championship on May 23. Prior to Tere-Apifah, a Georgia State player qualified for the tournament but never competed in it.

## A NARROW MISS IN GAINESVILLE

**Abigail Tere-Apifah** earned valuable experience against top-notch competition before the spring dual-match season even began. The Georgia State women's tennis team competed in the 2011 USTA/ITA Southeast Regional Championships hosted by the University of Florida on Oct. 21. Tere-Apifah cruised in her first round matchup with a 6-1, 6-1 victory against Georgia Southern's Natalie Maffett. Next up was Georgia's Chelsey Gullickson, the No. 2 overall seed in the tournament. In one of the closest matches of Tere-Apifah's season, spring included, she fell 7-6 (4), 1-6, 7-6 (4) to the No. 1 player from Georgia. Tere-Apifah led in the third set as well, but could not finish off what would have been a signature victory for the sophomore.

## TERE-APIFAH EARNS SHOOTOUT TITLE

Sophomore **Abigail Tere-Apifah** capped an undefeated week with a singles victory to finish off the Southern Shootout on Sept. 25. Tere-Apifah recorded a 6-1, 6-1, win over South Alabama's Alina Vollman in the No. 1 singles slot to earn the title in the No. 1 flight at the tournament.

## A UNIQUE AND WORLDLY JOURNEY

The journey of Tere-Apifah to the 2012 NCAA Singles Championship is a one of a kind story. The native of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea grew up playing tennis before she left home at age 11 to pursue her tennis career on the island of Fiji. While there, the academy sent her to play in tennis tournaments in eight different countries. Her path took her to the Margaret Court Tennis Academy in Australia with the goal of earning a Division I scholarship in the United States before she ended up at Georgia State. Read more about Tere-Apifah's fascinating story on pages six and seven of this guide.



# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis

## Abigail Tere-Apifah 2012 Match-by-Match Statistics

### Abigail Tere-Apifah

SINGLES	Team/School	Pos	Opponent (Rank Nat/Reg)	Singles score
	Jan 13, 2012 at Furman	1	Lauren Kline	Won 6-4, 6-2
	Jan 22, 2012 at #62 Wake Forest	1	Kayla Duncan (93/16)	Won 6-4, 2-6, 6-1
	Jan 27, 2012 at #13 Georgia Tech	1	Jillian O'Neill (45/10)	Won 7-6 (7-3), 3-6, 7-5
*	Jan 28, 2012 vs #43 William and Mary	1	Jeltje Loomans (-/14)	Won 6-3, 6-4
	Feb 09, 2012 ETSU	1	Marine Wieliczko	Won 6-3, 6-4
*	Feb 25, 2012 at UNCW	1	Olga Blank	Won 6-4, 6-1
	Feb 27, 2012 at #43 Sacramento State	1	KAPSHAI, Tatsiana (-/15)	Won 4-6, 6-2, 6-0
	Feb 29, 2012 at UC Santa Barbara	1	Natalia Lozano	Won 6-1, 2-6, 6-2
%	3/2/2012 at Fresno State	1	Marianne Jodoin (42/8)	Won 6-3, 6-4
	Mar 06, 2012 Samford	1	Kristin Lewis	Won 6-1, 6-0
	Mar 12, 2012 North Florida	1	Aline Berkenbrock	Won 6-4, 6-4
	3/17/2012 at #35 South Carolina	1	Anya Morgina (45/4)	Lost 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 2-6
	Mar 21, 2012 Kennesaw State	1	Vera Shkundina	Won 6-3, 6-3
*	Mar 30, 2012 at #50 Virginia Commonwealth	1	Ana Bara	Won 6-3, 6-0
%	Apr 08, 2012 at #37 South Florida	1	Ecaterina Vasenina (41/11)	Won 3-6, 6-3, 7-5
	Apr 20, 2012 vs James Madison	1	Kinsey Pate	Won 6-1, 6-2
	Apr 21, 2012 vs UNCW	1	Christina Lee	Won 7-5, 6-4
	Apr 22, 2012 vs #43 Virginia Commonwealth	1	Ana Bara	Won 6-0, 7-5
	May 23, 2012 vs			-

DOUBLES	Team/School	Pos	Opponent (Rank Nat/Reg)	Doubles score/partner
	Jan 13 at Furman	1	Katherine Oudin/Alex Moreno-Kaste	Won 8-4/Maryna Kozachenko
	Jan 22 at #62 Wake Forest	1	Kayla Duncan/Kathryn Talbert (20/3)	Lost 5-8/Maryna Kozachenko
	Jan 27 at #13 Georgia Tech	1	Jillian O'Neill/Alex Anghelescu	Lost 2-8/Maryna Kozachenko
	Feb 09 ETSU	1	Paula Jaime/Guila Andreazza	Won 8-2/Maryna Kozachenko
*	Feb 25 at UNCW	1	Kelly Cameron/Angie Sekely	Lost 3-8/Maryna Kozachenko
	Feb 27 at #43 Sacramento State	2	MELIUK, Maria/BACA, Clarisse (-/4)	Lost 1-8/Chaimaa Roudami
	Feb 29 at UC Santa Barbara	1	Jordan Dockendorf/Kiersten Meehan	Won 8-2/Maryna Kozachenko
%	3/2/2012 at Fresno State	1	Marianne Jodoin/Olga Kirpicheva	Lost 8-9 (3-0)/Maryna Kozachenko
	Mar 06 Samford	1	Kristin Lewis/Lindsey Mallory (-/8)	Won 8-3/Tereza Lerova
	Mar 12 North Florida	1	Aline Berkenbrock/Lorena Aviles (-/10)	Won 8-5/Tereza Lerova
	3/17/201 at #35 South Carolina	1	Jaklin Alawi/Anyia Morgina (70/-)	Lost 4-8/Tereza Lerova
	Mar 21 Kennesaw State	1	Alexandra Apostu/Virginie Stein	Won 8-4/Tereza Lerova
*	Mar 30 at #50 Virginia Commonw	1	Alex Bara/Ana Bara (-/4)	Won 8-5/Tereza Lerova
%	Apr 08 at #37 South Florida	1	Loreto Alonso/Ecaterina Vasenina (54/-)	Lost 5-8/Tereza Lerova
	Apr 20 vs James Madison	1	Kinsey Pate/Taylor Pinchoff	Lost 7-9/Tereza Lerova
	Apr 21 vs UNCW	1	Christina Lee/Alyssa Ritchie	Won 8-1/Tereza Lerova
	Apr 22 vs #43 Virginia Commonw	1	Alex Bara/Ana Bara	Won 8-2/Tereza Lerova



# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis

## Abigail Tere-Apifah 2011 Match-by-Match Statistics

### Abigail Tere-Apifah

SINGLES	Team/School	Pos	Opponent (Rank Nat/Reg)	Singles score
Feb 11, 2011	at Mississippi State	2	Mariia Ryzhova	Won 6-1, 7-5
Feb 19, 2011	ETSU	2	Paula Jaime	Won 6-2, 6-4
Feb 20, 2011	Georgia Southern	2	Ali Beavers	Won 6-2, 6-0
Feb 25, 2011	at Troy University	2	Olfa Dhaoui	Won 6-2, 6-2
Feb 26, 2011	vs Tulane	2	Emma Levy	Won 6-4, 6-3
* Mar 07, 2011	UNCW	2	Angela Sekely	Won 7-5, 6-2
Mar 13, 2011	#23 Yale	2	Elizabeth Epstein (88/-)	Won 6-3, 6-3
Mar 17, 2011	at #35 Florida State	2	Noemie Scharle (66/-)	Lost 3-6, 3-6
Mar 20, 2011	#68 Boston University	2	Petra Santini	Won 4-0, retired
* Mar 25, 2011	at Old Dominion	2	Diana Ivanova	Won 3-0, retired
* Mar 26, 2011	at #37 VCU	1	Kateryna Yergina	Won 4-6, 6-4, 1-0 (10-3)
Apr 03, 2011	at South Alabama	1	Katie Welch	Won 6-3, retired
Apr 10, 2011	at Jacksonville	1	Eve Castaing	Lost 4-6, 3-6
* Apr 22, 2011	vs Delaware	1	Megan Duran	Won 6-1, 6-1
* Apr 23, 2011	vs #35 VCU	1	Kateryna Yergina	Won 1-6, 6-3, 6-2
* Apr 24, 2011	vs #44 William & Mary	1	Hope Johnson	Won 6-2, 6-3

DOUBLES	Team/School	Pos	Opponent (Rank Nat/Reg)	Doubles score/partner
Feb 11	at Mississippi State	2	Roseline Dion/Danielle Terpko	- /Maryna Kozachenko
Feb 19	ETSU	2	Giulia Andreazza/Kelly Holtzhausen	Won 8-6/Maryna Kozachenko
Feb 20	Georgia Southern	2	Taylor Jones/Melanie Rolle	Won 8-1/Maryna Kozachenko
Feb 25	at Troy University	2	Olfa Dhaoui/Rosaura Ramirez-Vega	Lost 8-9 (5-7)/Maryna Kozachenko
Feb 26	vs Tulane	2	Emma Helisten/Lindsay Dvorak	Won 8-3/Maryna Kozachenko
* Mar 07	UNCW	2	Christina Lee/Lindsay Leblang	Won 9-8 (7-5)/Maryna Kozachenko
Mar 13	#23 Yale	2	Stephanie Kent/Annie Sullivan	Won 8-4/Maryna Kozachenko
Mar 17	at #35 Florida State	1	Francesca Segarelli/Ruth Seaborne	Lost 6-8/Maryna Kozachenko
Mar 20	#68 Boston University	1	Leonie Athanasiadis/Jessi Linero	Won 8-4/Maryna Kozachenko
* Mar 25	at Old Dominion	1	Melissa Esnal Olguin/Joanna Dobrowolska	Won 8-0/Maryna Kozachenko
* Mar 26	at #37 VCU	1	Kateryna Yergina/Alex Bara	Won 8-5/Maryna Kozachenko
Apr 03	at South Alabama	1	Katie Welch/Chane Hines	Won 8-6/Maryna Kozachenko
Apr 10	at Jacksonville	1	Eve Castaing/Gabriela Bartos	Won 8-5/Maryna Kozachenko
* Apr 22	vs Delaware	1	Megan Duran/Samantha Carnall	Won 8-3/Maryna Kozachenko
* Apr 23	vs #35 VCU	1	Kateryna Yergina/Alex Bara	- 6-6, unfinished/Maryna Kozach
* Apr 24	vs #44 William & Mary	1	Hope Johnson/Anik Cepeda	Won 8-5/Maryna Kozachenko



# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis

## The Unique Global Journey of Abigail Tere-Apisah to the NCAA's

More than 9,000 miles away on a synthetic-surfaced tennis court in the scalding Oceania sun, a young girl began a journey, leaving home at age 11 with the gracious help of her two parents that took her to eight different countries on the way to Georgia and college tennis' biggest stage.

For humble Georgia State University sophomore student-athlete Abigail Tere-Apisah, her path to the 2012 Women's NCAA Singles Championship required sacrifice, adaptability and a strong work ethic. As with all things, the modest, yet fervently driven sophomore has taken any difficulties and found ways to turn them into positives.

In an unobtrusive and underplayed way, the native of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, has put together a 2012 campaign that is already among the best individual seasons in school history. Tere-Apisah, who will become the first GSU women's tennis player to compete in the NCAA Championships, suffered just one defeat this season, to a top-50 ranked player, and won 17 of her 18 matches. All the while the sophomore soared from an unranked "player with potential" to the No. 37-ranked player in the nation.

One of a few individuals from the Pacific Island region to find success overseas in tennis, Tere-Apisah is a 19-year old described as having an effortless and explosive swing. Tennis, easily dwarfed by rugby, cricket and Australian Rules football in popularity in Papua New Guinea, has been a mainstay in her life since early childhood. Her father and mother, Kwalam Apisah and Verenagi Tere, are two of the only people in their country to own tennis coaching certifications. They have run tennis clinics for the national club in Port Moresby for more than 20 years.

"I was there every day since about three years old while all the other kids were being coached by my dad and practicing, I was usually on the side just hitting by myself," Tere-Apisah said, "When I was six or seven I decided to join the groups and train with them."

She explained, casually, that in some of the first live-match action of her life at age 7 she won an Under-8 Tournament. Her thoughts after winning: "OK, I might be able to do this." She found direction for her future path to achievement from her brother, Lawrence, who

moved away shortly after she was born to the beautiful island of Fiji about 2,100 miles southeast of Papua New Guinea. His destination was the Oceania Tennis Development Centre where he would live, attend school and practice tennis.

By age 11 an apprehensive Tere-Apisah followed in her brother's footsteps and enrolled at the same academy more than 2,000 miles away from home. Her daily schedule: 5:30-7 a.m. conditioning, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. grade school, 3-6 p.m. tennis practice, 7 p.m. dinner, 7:30-9:30 p.m. studying and homework time, 10 p.m. lights out. This included round-robin tournaments on the weekends and some well-earned yet brief free time after the matches ended. Her lone break from the day-to-day grind was the month of December when she flew home once a year to celebrate the holidays. Even during the holiday season, she still made a point to update her passport information to ensure she could travel to other countries to compete in tournaments.

Tere-Apisah would toil through this schedule for five years, maturing with new-found friends, but away from her real family. With her flawless fundamentals, to this day strikingly apparent during dominating victories, Tere-Apisah found groundbreaking success. The academy recognized her talent and focused its efforts on sending her overseas to enter into international tennis tournaments, the first time the academy focused on one player exclusively in its history. It was an uneasy feeling at first, one that Tere-Apisah expressed to her peers. They responded with encouragement as she began to play more tournaments than everyone else, so she took the headlining role in stride.

Standing at 5-foot-6, Tere-Apisah admitted to never being the most physically-imposing presence on the court. She has long admired the similarly-statured Justine Henin and her style of play. To boot, Tere-Apisah said she was a forgiving opponent and confessed she felt immense guilt if she happened to mistakenly call a ball out that was in.

"Kids did everything they could to cheat and get points and I was a shy girl so I just let it pass," Tere-Apisah said, "I still feel guilty to this day, but ever since I lived in Australia and then came here, I am trying to stand my ground more and



**ABIGAIL  
TERE-APISAH**  
Sophomore  
Port Moresby  
Papua New Guinea  
Albury High School

not let opponents try to cheat me out of

points."

At age 14, she qualified for an Under-16 International Tennis Federation team that entered her into four tournaments across six weeks in Italy and France. This team selected her as one of five girls along with six boys to represent the, "Pacific, Asia and Africa" regional team. The tournaments served as her first exposure to the intensity of high-level competition in international tennis. She gets animated when describing the first-time experience.

"There was something different about them and I was too scared to move my feet and play my game," Tere-Apisah said, "Everyone there was so aggressive, yelling, 'Come on!' and 'Let's go!' and I was so intimidated."

She struggled, advancing past the second round just once in the six tournaments. But the experience was far from a waste. It was now time to take yet another uncharted step, and she did so by hopping over to the Margaret Court Tennis Academy located in Albury in Country New South Wales, Australia. Tere-Apisah chose Albury, a small town in the countryside, as opposed to other available locations in the big cities of Sydney and Melbourne. It was something about the small-town lifestyle that attracted her.



Abigail Tere-Apisah(right) at the 2011 South Pacific Games with Father, Kwalam, and sister, Marcia(left)

# 2012 Georgia State Panthers Women's Tennis

## The Unique Global Journey of Abigail Tere-Apisah to the NCAA's

Phil Shanahan, the nephew of tennis legend Margaret Court, knew he had been given a gift as soon as he saw her. "Boy what an incredible talent," he told the Australia Network in a news feature on Tere-Apisah in 2009, "You know I honestly believe she is a potential top-30 player in the world." The legendary Ms. Court shared Shanahan's enthusiasm and donated \$1,000 to Tere-Apisah so she could attend her academy. Shanahan told Tere-Apisah she could be the role model for other island natives who wanted to play tennis at a high level. It was Tere-Apisah's dream to pursue an education, and Shanahan dedicated himself to making it happen.

(Editor's note: Margaret Court won a record 62 major titles, including 24 singles major titles. She was the first to win all four Grand Slams in the same calendar year. She was No. 1 in the world six times in the 1960's and 1970's. The ITF Hall of Famer is from Albury, in New South Wales, Australia and is now 70 years old).



Abigail Tere-Apisah(right) with mother, sister and tennis legend Margaret Court.

2009 and 2010 were life-altering years for Tere-Apisah. At this point the 16 going on 17-year old had raised her ITF ranking to No. 124 in the world. She began playing elite junior tournaments in Thailand, Philippines, Morocco and Korea in 2009.

In 2010 she competed in the qualifying round of the Junior Australian Open, advancing all the way to the round of 16 only to fall to the No. 1 seed Marianne Jodoin (who she defeated in straight sets this season at Fresno State).

A summer trip in 2009 to train at the Hobson Performance Tennis Academy in Lawrenceville, Ga., prior to two tournaments changed her tennis career forever.

It was the first time she would hear of Georgia State, courtesy of a former GSU student-athlete.

"To be honest Georgia State was not really high on my list at first because the other schools contacting me were ranked higher," Tere-Apisah said, "It was a last-minute decision because I was leaning towards Texas A&M or Ole Miss, but in the end I wanted to be in a city. I was in Albury, in the country, and I learned a lot of stuff there but I wanted to try city life."

The soft-spoken Tere-Apisah was gaining confidence with her off-court self in addition to her on-court play. Prior to enrolling at Albury High School, Tere-Apisah claimed she would break down in tears when asked to give a speech. But she gained confidence in her English classes at Albury and became like another daughter to her host family. It was the perfect setting to prepare Tere-Apisah for any challenges ahead of her. Yet again, that next challenge meant a significant change of address as she began her life in Atlanta.

Since she set foot on the GSU campus for second semester classes in January last year, Tere-Apisah has lost just three times in 34 singles matches. She posted a 14-2 mark her freshman season, including a 5-1 record in the No. 1 singles position. Her growing list of awards includes the 2012 Colonial Athletic Association Player of the Year, 2011 CAA Rookie of the Year, back-to-back All-CAA First Team Singles nominations and back-to-back Most Outstanding Performer at the CAA Championship honors. Last season, she partnered with classmate, and roommate, Maryna Kozachenko to be named an alternate in the 2011 NCAA Women's Doubles Championships.

The sophomore said she improved more this past year than in any other throughout her career. The shy girl who gave away points in Australia was replaced by a fierce competitor with a composed intensity her teammates feed off of. Twice this season, Tere-Apisah fought back from large third-set deficits to defeat ranked singles opponents. After twisting her ankle badly in the second set, she faced match points down 5-2 and 5-4 in the third set before rallying with a 7-6 (3), 3-6, 7-5 win against the current No. 11-ranked singles player in the country in Jillian O'Neill of Georgia Tech. Tere-Apisah then trailed 5-0 in the third set

before she fought off four match points and won seven straight games to defeat the No. 41-ranked Ecaterina Vasenina of USF 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Yet with all of her success, a grateful Tere-Apisah always manages to remember what brought her to Atlanta in the first place.

"I always keep in the back of my head how much my parents have done for me to get me where I am," Tere-Apisah said. "I never realized it until I came to America and I started to recognize how much they really sacrificed for me. We are not the wealthiest of families, and I have other siblings, so it makes it hard for them to provide for all of us. But they have gone out of their way to make sure we have everything that will help us be the best."

Tere-Apisah's next challenge takes her on arguably the shortest leg of her journey with the 70-mile drive to Athens, Ga. While her journey is not strenuous, the task of taking on the best 64 players in the country will be. With a quiet conviction that has taken shape this year, those who know her are confident she is well equipped for success in Athens. It is another learning experience as she will have two more college years to return to the national stage.

"You can throw anything at her and she will respond, and the thing is she makes it look so effortless," Georgia State women's tennis head coach Miha Lisac said. "Her improvement this year has just been outstanding, I've never been around a player quite like her."

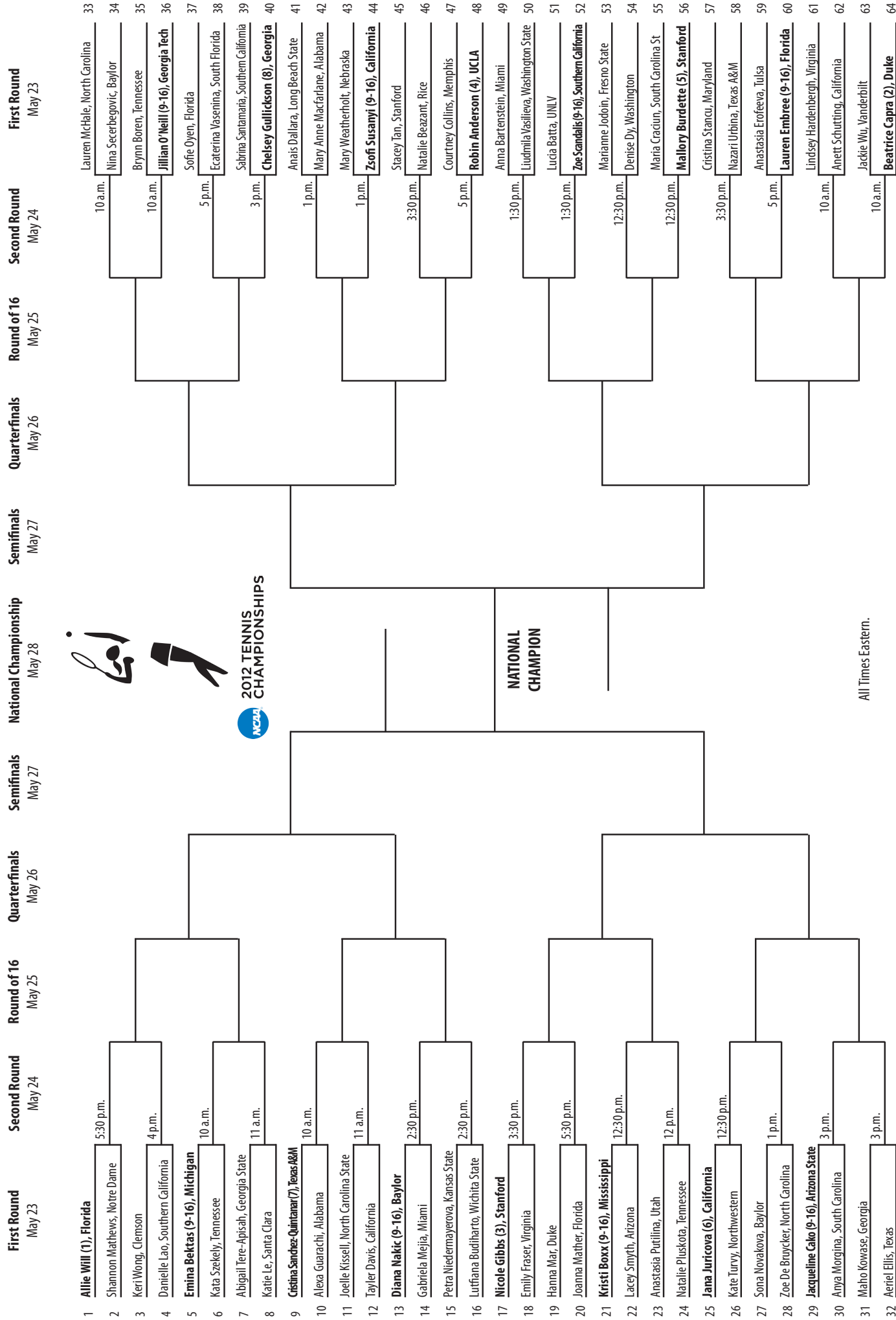
It comes as no surprise that Tere-Apisah is a fan of the laid back rhythms and yet resonating lyrics of Bob Marley. A particular favorite quote of hers comes from his song, "Zion Train" and reads, "Don't gain the world and lose your soul, wisdom is better than silver or gold." It is a mantra that reiterates her mindset in all areas of her life.

"I want to be the best that I can possibly be, with whatever I have and I want to stay humble and happy," Tere-Apisah said.

As in every step of her journey, Tere-Apisah enters the premier tournament in collegiate tennis with a balanced mind. It is one of the ways she has followed her unlikely path to greatness, all the while taking everything in stride.

# 2012 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S TENNIS SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Athens, Ga. • Dan Magill Tennis Complex • University of Georgia • May 23–28



**NATIONAL CHAMPION**

All Times Eastern.