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Stanford Wins NCAA Championship, Defeats Florida 4-3

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By **Andy Johnston**

Special to [NCAA.com](#)

ATHENS, Ga. – Stanford's Mallory Burdette glanced around and saw the blur of her sister rushing toward her.

There was no chance to react, so all she could do was absorb the full force of the perfect tackle.

Lindsay Burdette's shoulder drove into Mallory's chest, sending her to the court where she had just clinched the NCAA Division I women's national tennis championship with a 4-3 victory over Florida on Tuesday.

"It actually didn't hurt as bad as I thought it would," Mallory said. "I saw her running and I was like, 'I'm going to get hit.' I'll be excited to watch it on replay."

Teammates then dogpiled the sisters who grew up in Jackson, Ga., about 75 miles from Athens, and whose older brother and sister attend Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine, a block from the Dan Magill Tennis Complex, the site of Stanford's 16th national championship.

Mallory Burdette's 6-4, 6-7 (4) 7-5 victory over Florida's Marrit Boonstra capped a grueling team match that lasted about 4 1/2 hours. It ended when Boonstra's final hit was wide, leading to the tackle and celebration.

"It's just an epic performance by our team," Stanford coach Lele Forood said. "It's just been what they've been about all year. They've grown tremendously. It's just been a phenomenal year."

Stanford controlled women's tennis the first decade of this century, winning national titles in 2001 and '02 and then three straight from 2004-06. The last time the two teams met in the final, Florida won 4-3 in 2003 in Gainesville, Fla.

The eighth-seeded Cardinal (26-1), who lost only to UCLA this year, holds a 9-2 advantage over the Gators in the NCAA tournament. Florida has won four national titles, the most recent one in '03.

The loss ended Florida's 22-match winning streak and was its only defeat in Athens this year. The third-seeded Gators (29-3) were 7-1 in their hated rivals' hometown, defeating Georgia in a regular-season match before rolling through the Southeastern Conference tournament a month ago and the Sweet 16, Elite 8 and semifinals of the NCAA tournament.

"An inch here and there decided it, and that inch can't be the end all, be all as far as the season is concerned," Florida coach Roland Thornqvist said. "It's been a great season. Once this initial pain here, the shock of losing abates, I'm sure we'll look upon this season with great pride."

Florida took the doubles point when Anastasia Revzina and Caroline Hitimana won 8-6 at No. 3, but Stanford quickly recovered in singles, with Stacey Tan defeating Revzina 6-2, 6-2 at No. 4 and Lindsay Burdette knocking off Allie Will 6-3, 6-3 at No. 2.

Florida's Lauren Embree won 6-4, 6-3 at No. 1 singles to tie the match at 2-all, but the teams split at Nos. 5 and 6, setting up the three-set showdown between Boonstra and Mallory Burdette, a freshman.

Burdette had two championship points before Boonstra hit a shot wide, leading to Lindsay Burdette, a senior, rushing onto the court.

"All I was thinking was that I wanted to be the first one to get to her," Lindsay said. "Everybody went out of the gate

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and I jumped the fence. I got out ahead. I just remember running really fast, and all of a sudden I stopped and I hit her. I remember her crying really hard, and I was like, 'Oh my God, I broke her back. I broke her back. I broke her back.' I said, 'Are you OK,' and she said, 'Yes.'"

This title ends a three-year drought for Stanford, the second biggest of its reign as the dominant program in the sport since the NCAA Championships began in 1982. The Cardinal went from 1993-96 before winning in '97.

"I feel like this is the desert. Believe me," Forood said. "We just haven't had the right combination of factors the last couple of years. We have been really trying to find the formula. We wanted to get back on the map. That's very important for us. We are back now."

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