

USM's \$2 Million Bruline

In January of 2005, NBC aired the 97th episode of the hit sit-com *Seinfeld*. That episode was entitled "The Switch," and it became one of the most famous episodes in the long-running comedy show. A small part of that episode followed Elaine's efforts to get a tennis racquet re-strung for her boss, Mr. Pitt. The relevant portions of the dialogue involving this task are inserted below, courtesy of seinfeldscripts.com:

The Switch

Pro shop at Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club

JERRY: Come on. Lets go

ELAINE: No wait, I gotta go in here and pick up Mr. Pitt's tennis racquet.

JERRY: What's it doin here?

ELAINE: He wanted to have it restrung. (to clerk) Here I need to pick that up

...

JERRY: So when do you have to get the racquet back to Mr. Pitt?

ELAINE: augh, he's got a big match tomorrow with Ethel Kennedy

JERRY: He needs a three hundred-dollar Bruline to beat Ethel Kennedy?

ELAINE: He'll only play with his racquet

As the dialogue above indicates, Jerry pokes fun at Mr. Pitts' need to have a \$300 tennis racquet in order to defeat Ethel Kennedy, who was about 70 years old at the time, in an upcoming tennis match.

All of the news surrounding USM's leasing of a \$2 million Beechcraft King Air 200 airplane, largely for athletics recruiting in order to maintain its competitive position, reminds one of this now famous episode of *Seinfeld*. Table 1 below (top of next page) contains the 2008-09 wins/losses data for three major sports at USM – football, men's basketball and women's basketball. The national ranking, according to the *Sagarin Ratings* (1-Dec-08), is also shown there in each case. These are 80th, 102nd and 156th, respectively. They average 113th.

Table 1
USM Major Sports, 2008-09

<i>Football</i>		<i>Men's Basketball</i>		<i>Women's Basketball</i>	
Wins	Losses	Wins	Losses	Wins	Losses
LA-Lafayette	Auburn	Loyola (N.O.)	Miami	Sam Houston State	South Alabama
Arkansas State	Marshall	Alabama State		Tennessee State	LA-Monroe
UAB	UTEP	LaSalle		Alcorn State	Michigan
Central Florida	Boise State	Iona			
East Carolina	Rice				
SMU	Memphis				
National Rankings (Sagarin)					
80		102		156	

Examination of Table 1 above also reveals that USM has won only 50% of its contests against Alcorn State, Arkansas State, LA-Monroe, Rice, Sam Houston State and South Alabama. Does it *really* take a \$2 million Beechcraft King Air 200 (Bruline) to do that?