

## **College Tennis Opportunities**

**Please note: This is a general guide for prospective student-athletes. For further information please refer to "The Guide to Tennis on College Campuses" at**

**<http://www.playerdevelopment.usta.com/content/fullstory.sps?iNewsid=336403&iType=7412>**

There are three associations governing collegiate tennis: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). There are over 2,000 colleges and universities to choose from. We encourage you to research all avenues of financial aid. Check with your high school counselor, the college financial aid officer, local and state government agencies.

Athletic scholarships available (maximum)

NCAA

Division I: Men – 4.5 Women – 8

Division II: Men – 4.5 Women – 6

Division III: Men – 0 Women – 0

Note: Division I Ivy League Conference and Division III do not offer athletic scholarships

NAIA

Division I Men – 5 Women – 5

NJCAA

Division I Men - 8 Women – 8

52 men's and 64 women's programs offer scholarships

### **When do I start?**

You can start as early as your freshman or sophomore year. Meet with your guidance counselor to ensure you are taking the required core courses. The "College Preparation Calendar" will help you with this

[http://dps.usta.com/usta\\_master/usta/doc/content/doc\\_437\\_389.pdf](http://dps.usta.com/usta_master/usta/doc/content/doc_437_389.pdf)

When you are ready, we recommend downloading or requesting the following resources:

- Go online to [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org), -> Academics & Athletes -> Eligibility & Recruiting and download a free copy of the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete or contact the NCAA at 317-917-6222 and request a copy. This is an invaluable tool and a great guide. This site will also answer many of your questions regarding eligibility for DI, DII and DIII.
- The NAIA also provides a Guide for College-Bound student-Athletes and you can download a free copy from their website at [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)
- Look at the USTA Guide to Tennis on College Campuses online at <http://www.playerdevelopment.usta.com/content/fullstory.sps?iNewsid=336403&iType=7412>

### **Where do I start?**

Start with a Plan. The following is a list of important steps you will need to take in the process:

- 1. What are you looking to get out of your college experience?**
- 2. Identify schools with a tennis and academic program you want**
- 3. Establish communication with college coaches**
- 4. Visits**
- 5. Academic-Eligibility Requirements**

#### **1. What are you looking to get out of your college experience?**

Know yourself: Assess what you want out of your college experience and the relative importance of each requirement.

- Academics
- Tennis Opportunities
- Career Preparation
- Social
- Part of the country/distance from home
- Size
- Public vs. Private
- Religious Affiliation
- Scholarships and Financial Aid

Realistically evaluate what you have to offer to potential schools. When you have answered these important questions start making a list of schools. Remember to recruit your support team: parents/legal guardians, tennis coach, school guidance counselor, etc. These people can provide valuable advice along the way.

## **2. Identify potential schools with a tennis and academic program you want**

Consult college directories and websites, attend college nights in your section or at national tournaments (when available), talk to students, coaches and players, and visit potential schools (unofficial visits). Make a list of schools you would like to attend. If you have selected a particular region of the country and you would like a more extensive list of schools in the region, visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) to broaden your search in that area.

There are many ways to get an idea of the division that is right for your ability level. Research team websites directly or access these through the ITA [www.itatennis.com](http://www.itatennis.com), or [www.collegetennisonline.com](http://www.collegetennisonline.com) Look for players you have competed against, to get an idea of the level of the team. However, do not rely on this solely as each player has selected a school that meets their individual needs academically and/or athletically. You can also ask your coach, visit schools and watch practices and matches. This will give you a chance to watch the coach interact with the players.

When looking at the different divisions, remember that just because a school is Division I doesn't always mean it is the strongest when it comes to level of play. There are some Division II and NAIA schools that are stronger than some Division I programs. Division I programs usually have larger athletic budgets and more national exposure, therefore attracting more attention to their programs.

In general, if you are able to qualify for National level events then you most likely can compete at a top 60 Division I school. If you primarily play at the Sectional level you would probably play out of the top 60 in Division I or a top Division II. Division III, NAIA and NJCAA schools offer good programs so don't count them out.

## **3. Establish communication with college coaches**

Once you have identified potential schools and narrowed down your list to a manageable size, it is time to establish communication with the college coaches. You should include a cover letter, resume/player record and your tournament schedule. Coaches may be attending some of the tournaments you are playing and will know to look out for you. Videos are also a good idea, although you don't need to send one to every coach unless they request a copy. A sample letter is available in the USTA Prospective Student-Athlete Database and in "The Guide to Tennis on College Campuses".

Follow up with each coach to ensure they received your letter. If a coach does not reply to you right away it doesn't mean they are not interested. The coach may not be allowed to return your call due to NCAA .

## **4. Visits**

You may visit schools at anytime (unofficially) throughout the process. These visits may be necessary to help you narrow down your list. Some of your schools of interest may be in the same city as a tournament you are playing; this would be a great time to take a look at the school while you are there.

Tennis has two signing dates, November and April. Most conferences use the National Letter of Intent (for more information refer to the website at [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org)) however you will need to check with the coach on their procedures. If you are on scholarship, remember scholarships are year-to-year.

## **5. Academic-Eligibility Requirements**

Go to the clearinghouse website at [www.NCAAClearinghouse.net](http://www.NCAAClearinghouse.net) or via the NCAA website.

Click on "General Information" to review the new eligibility rules and general information about the website and services offered.

To view a list of approved core courses click on "List of Approved Core Courses (formerly 48H)", search by your high school code or high school name to view a list of courses that meet the NCAA criteria for core courses.

Division I: Student-athletes enrolling in a Division I college in 2005-2007 must meet the 14-core course requirement for the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Division I: Student-athletes enrolling in a Division I college in 2008 and after must meet a 16-core course requirement for the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Division II: For student-athletes enrolling in 2005 and after must meet the 14-core course requirement for the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse

For more detailed information check the website at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

**\*\*For information regarding NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA eligibility requirements/recruiting rules, home school, Amateurism, the NAIA and the NJCAA, please visit the USTA Player Development website at:**

<http://www.playerdevelopment.usta.com/content/fullstory.sps?iNewsid=335874&itype=7412>