



COLLEGE TENNIS OVERVIEW

Joao Pinho
Head Pro 10U & HP

Agenda

- Basics
 - *What are the odds of playing in College?*
 - *Myth x Reality*
 - *Why Play College Tennis?*
 - *The Different Routes*
 - *Athletic Scholarships*
 - *What to Expect?*
 - *Who's Playing?*
 - *The Ivy League*
 - *Recruiting Rules & Terminology*
- Getting Started
 - *Ratings, Rankings and Stars*
 - *Communicating with Coaches*
 - *Additional Exposure*
- Important Resources
- Summary

Basics

Don't let the ugly odds scare you away!	Men	Women
Number of US High School Tennis Players	158,151	190,768
Number of College Tennis Players	9,890	10,812
% of US High School Tennis Players competing at any College Level	4.0%	3.9%
% of US High School Tennis Players Competing at NCAA I Schools	0.8%	0.8%
Odds of a US High School Tennis Player making an NCAA or NAIA Roster	28:1	29:1
Odds of a US High School Tennis Player making an NCAA I Roster	119:1	126:1

Basics

- The myth:

- *In order to play college tennis, a player must be a stellar junior player and highly competitive at a national level in order to be recruited.*

- The reality:

- *Despite what the numbers say, there are over two thousand collegiate programs across the country. Many of them are realistic options for high school level players who have limited experience with “high-level” tennis.*

Basics

- Fall semester
 - *Mainly tournaments where players represent the school as individuals in both singles and doubles events*
- Spring semester
 - *Mainly dual matches between schools and players competing as a team*
- Time commitment for student-athletes
 - *NCAA limits sport-related activities to up to 20 hours, per week, during “in season” periods and up to 8 hours, per week, during “off season” periods*

Basics

- Dual matches format
 - *6 singles and 3 doubles*
 - *Played in order of strength*
 - *Doubles matches played first (most of the time)*
 - NCAA Division I
 - *Doubles matches count for 1 point (even if one team wins all three doubles, they only win 1 point)*
 - *Total of 7 points (6 singles points and 1 doubles point)*
 - *No let on serve on the men's side*
 - NCAA DII, DIII, NAIA, and Junior Colleges
 - *Each match counts one point*
 - *Total of 9 possible points (6 singles points and 3 doubles)*



Why Play College Tennis?

- Develop friendships that will last a lifetime
- More fun and enjoyable than junior tennis for most
- Player development - fantastic pathway to the pro tour
- High level of competition at all leagues (NCAA, NAIA, JUCO)
- Incredible opportunity for both personal and professional growth
- College tennis graduates are arguably the highest achieving student-athletes
- Three sources of funding available to support costs – athletic, academic, need based

Why Play College Tennis?

- Likely the best “hook” for admissions - in many instances coaches provide admission support to the elite schools
 - *Harvard example**:
 - “...athletes with an academic rating of 1 or 2 on Harvard’s scale of 1 to 6—with 1 being the highest and 6 the lowest—had a remarkably higher admit rate than non-athletes with the same academic scores”.
 - ...”recruited athletes with an academic rating of 4 had an acceptance rate of 70.46 percent, **nearly a thousand times greater** than the 0.076 percent admit rate for non-athletes with the same academic rating....”

Source*: The Harvard Crimson

Why Play College Tennis?

- College tennis traits
 - *Excitement*
 - *Team comradery*
 - *Academic support*
 - *Player development*
 - *Pursue individual & team excellence*
 - *World-class coaching (at top programs)*



The Different Routes

- What does it mean to be Division I, II or III?
 - *Budget size and number of athletic programs determine the school's division*
 - *Division I tends to attract higher caliber athletes followed by DII and DIII*
 - *Division I and II*
 - Most schools are public
 - Offer athletic scholarships (DIII does not)
 - *Most schools are DIII*

The Different Routes

	NCAA DI	NCAA DII	NCAA DIII
Overview	Bigger student bodies, larger athletics budgets, and more media attention on their elite teams (Ever heard of March Madness?)	Emphasize a balance between academic life and athletics. Student athletes can compete at a high level and still have a traditional college experience.	Focus on academics and for athletes to be well-integrated on campus. Tend to have shorter sports seasons with an emphasis on regional competition.
Number of Schools	346	307	439
Admissions	Prospective student athletes must be certified as NCAA Eligible to practice, compete, or receive an athletics scholarship during their first year.	Prospective student athletes must be certified as NCAA Eligible to practice, compete, or receive an athletics scholarship during their first year.	Process is exactly the same as the rest of the student body, and you'll be held to the same admissions standards.
Recruitment	Strict limits on when and how college coaches can recruit you (with some differences for football and basketball)	Limits on when and how college coaches can recruit you	Some limits on recruitment

The Different Routes

- Additional opportunities
 - 300+ NAIA Programs
 - 500+ NJCAA (Junior College) Programs
 - USTA Tennis on Campus (Recreational) – 39,000 players

Athletic Scholarships

- Maximum # of athletic (tennis) scholarships per division:
 - *DI Women = 8*
 - *DI Men = 4.5*
 - *DII Women = 6*
 - *DII Men = 4.5*
 - *NAIA Men and Women = 5*
 - *NJCAA Men and Women = 8*

- NOTE: Ivy League and DIII Colleges do not offer athletic scholarships. However, there is often quite a bit of need based financial aid available. Additionally, some colleges may offer academic based aid on top of athletic scholarships.

What to Expect

- What to expect? (at a competitive program)
 - *Training*
 - Team practices
 - Individual workouts
 - Weight lifting
 - Cardio and explosive conditioning
 - Yoga and pilates
 - *Equipment*
 - Clothing
 - Strings
 - Grips
 - Shoes
 - Rackets
 - *Travel*
 - Transportation (air travel, van, bus)
 - Hotels
 - Meals
 - Tournament entry fees
 - *Complete support*
 - Private tutors
 - Priority registration for classes
 - Access to Doctors, physical therapy, injury prevention, etc

What to Expect

- Example: The University of Toledo – Men’s Team “Goodie Bag”
 - 1 travel bag
 - 1 backpack
 - 1 pair of running shoes
 - 1 tennis hat
 - 1 winter hat
 - 1 warm-up suit
 - 2 hoodies
 - 5 pairs of socks
 - ~10 practice shirts
 - 6 playing shirts
 - 6 shorts
 - Unlimited strings (whatever string the player wanted)
 - Unlimited grips
 - Unlimited shoes (Adidas Barricade)
 - Rackets (in very specific cases)

What to Expect

Men's Roster – The Univ. of Toledo	Tennis Scholarship	Academic Scholarship
# 1 Player (USA)	60%	34%
# 2 Player (Croatia)	66%	34%
# 3 Player (Thailand)	50%	34%
# 4 Player (Serbia)	60%	-
# 5 Player (India)	55%	34%
# 6 Player (USA)	34%	-
# 7 Player (Canada)	47%	-
# 8 Player (Canada)	-	-
# 9 Player (USA)	10%	-
# 10 Player (Brazil)	34%	-
# 11 Player (USA)	2%	-
# 12 Player “Red Shirt” (Colombia)	32%	34%

Who's Playing?

- NCAA Division I
 - *Nationally ranked players*
 - *Top sectionally ranked players*
 - *Players with international (ITF) tournament experience*
 - *Tennis is, by far, the sport with the highest percentage of international players in all collegiate sports*
 - Men: 32%
 - Women: 30%
 - *NOTE: Some researches show significantly higher percentages (close to 50%)*

Who's Playing?

- NCAA Division II
 - *Nationally ranked players*
 - *Often more opportunities for sectionally ranked players*
 - *Appeals to student athletes looking for smaller setting*
 - *Eligibility requirements are NOT as strict as DI*
 - *High percentage of international players*
 - Men: 40%
 - Women: 26%

Who's Playing?

- NCAA Division III
 - *USTA Nationally and Sectionally Ranked Players*
 - *Players with limited USTA tournament experience*
 - *HS Tennis players*
 - *Players looking for smaller schools*
 - *Players seeking a specialized academic curriculum*
 - *Players desiring athletic programs that view academics as a priority*
 - *Low percentage of international players*
 - Men: 4%
 - Women: 2.3%

Who's Playing

■ NAIA

- *USTA Nationally and Sectionally Ranked players*
- *HS Players*
- *Student-athletes looking for a smaller school or specific academic majors*
- *NCAA non-qualifiers*
- *High percentage of foreign players*

■ Junior College

- *All of the above in terms of tennis experience*
- *Student-athletes who aren't ready academically or financially for a four-year college*
- *NCAA non-qualifiers*

The Ivy League

■ Men:

- *100 Total Players*
- *27 International Players*
- *14 Walk-ons (estimate)*
- *Average size of men's roster is 12.5*
- *Average Top 6 lineup player is 13.18 UTR*
- *Average No. 1 player is 13.68 UTR*
- *Average No. 6 player is 12.84 UTR*

■ Women:

- *84 total players*
- *8 international*
- *Average size of the roster is 10.5*
- *Average No. 1 is 10.70 UTR*
- *Average No. 6 is 9.63 UTR*

Recruiting Rules & Terminology

- Phone Calls/Texts/Emails – Sept. 1 of prospect’s 11th grade year in HS
- Contacts and Evaluations – July 1 prior to prospect’s 12th grade year for off campus contact, home visits
- Visits – Official and Unofficial
 - *Official visits can take place Sept. 1 of the prospect’s 11th grade year*
- 6 month grace period
- 20 year old rule

Getting Started

- Compile a list of schools that fit your criteria
 - *Better to start with a larger list*
- Realistically assess your abilities
 - *Academics*
 - *Tennis level*
- Look for fit and prioritize your criteria. What are the top 3 aspects you are looking for?
 - *School's academic prestige*
 - *Unique field of studies*
 - *Tennis*
 - *Financial aid/scholarships*
 - *Location*
 - *Other*
- Start communicating with coaches – timelines are accelerated now!

Ratings, Rankings and Stars

- All are tools that coaches use to initially assess a player's level
- College Coaches will utilize the following: USTA Section and National Rankings, ITF Rankings, Tennisrecruiting.net, Universal Tennis Ratings (UTR).
- It's important you do your homework before contacting a coach. Make sure you fit in the range of players they typically recruit!
- While they are important, don't over emphasize them or "play the system" to get a higher rating/ranking
 - *Focus should be always on getting better!*

Ratings, Rankings and Stars

- Example of UTR ranges of local colleges (#1 to #6)
 - *NYU Men (DIII): 11.37 to 9.38*
 - *NYU Women (DIII): 8.85 to 6.74*
 - *Swarthmore College Men (DIII): 11.19 to 10.36*
 - *Swarthmore College Women (DIII): 7.32 to 6.09*
 - *MIT Men (DIII): 12.24 to 10.97*
 - *MIT Women (DIII): 10.12 to 8.09*
 - *Ithaca College Men (DIII): 11 to 8.76*
 - *Ithaca College Women (DIII): 7.03 to 2.95*
 - *Vassar College Men (DIII): 10.92 to 9.94*
 - *Vassar College Women (DIII): 8 to 5.96*

Ratings, Rankings and Stars

- Example of UTR ranges of local colleges (#1 to #6)
 - *Queens College Men (DII): 11.51 to 10.78*
 - *Queens College Women (DII): 8.65 to 7.67*
 - *Adelphi Univ. Men (DII): 10.85 to 8.27*
 - *Adelphi Univ. Women (DII): 8.33 to 4.35*
 - *St. Johns Univ. Men (DI): 13.25 to 12.14*
 - *St. Johns Univ. Women (DI): 11.39 to 9.23*
 - *Hofstra Univ. Men (DI): 12.24 to 11.04*
 - *Hofstra Univ. Women (DI): 9.14 to 7.96*
 - *Colgate Univ. Men (DI): 11.59 to 10.33*
 - *Colgate Univ. Women (DI): 8.56 to 6.03*

Ratings, Rankings and Stars

Example of Top Nationally Ranked Programs

- DI Men
 - #1 Wake Forest Univ.: 14.45 to 13.31
 - #25 North Carolina State Univ.: 14.34 to 12.9
- DI Women
 - #1 Stanford Univ.: 11.75 to 11.24
 - #25 Univ. of Kentucky: 11.66 to 10.41
- DII Men
 - #1 Columbus State Univ.: 13.55 to 12.26
 - #25 Washburn Univ.: 12.62 to 10.74
- DII Women
 - #1 Barry Univ.: 10.77 to 9.1
 - #25 Georgia College: 9.31 to 7.15
- DIII Men
 - #1 Middlebury College: 12.84 to 11.35
 - #25 Kalamazoo College: 12.31 to 10.35
- DIII Women
 - #1 Claremont-Mudd-Scripts College: 9.98 to 9.5
 - #25 Linfield College: 8.85 to 6.62

Communicating with Coaches

- Keep it emails short and to the point – coaches can look up your player record and more detail
- Have a link to your tennisrecruiting.net/UTR bios to your email
- Include your graduation year
- Include your upcoming tournament schedule
- Don't be afraid to ask the coach of their interest level, scholarships or roster spots available and opportunity to visit
- Calls are acceptable and if before 11th grade is the only NCAA permissible way besides unofficial visit to get in contact
- Texts are becoming more a part of recruiting communication since texting was “legalized” by NCAA again (Sept. 2014)

Additional Exposure

- Compete in the highest level tournaments you can enter (within reason) – top college coaches focus their attention on national tournaments
- Consider playing ITA summer circuit on college campuses
- UTR Events – growing exponentially and highly valued by Coaches
- ITF events in US and abroad (if high level DI is your goal)
- USTA campus showdown – one day event on college campus
- Showcases and camps targeted for prospects
- Create a good quality recruiting video (avoid excessive editing)
- USTA Pro Circuit / ITF Futures (if high level DI is your goal)
- Seek help of recruiting services to help break through the clutter and navigate the process

Important Resources

- NCAA Student-Athlete Registration: www.eligibilitycenter.org
- NCAA: www.ncaa.org
 - Download the “Guide to College Bound Student Athletes” under the “Student Athletes” tab
- Intercollegiate Tennis Association: www.itatennis.com
 - Governing body of Collegiate Tennis
 - Creates ranking, promotes the sport, ITA Summer Circuit, more...
- Scholarship Stats: <http://www.scholarshipstats.com/tennis.htm>
- UTR (Universal Tennis Rating): www.myutr.com
 - Tournament opportunities
 - Opportunity to quickly research the level of a team on a given school
- TennisRecruiting.net: www.tennisrecruiting.net
 - Player profiles, information and recruiting services

Summary

- College tennis is not just for super stars
- Attend a college tennis match in your area
- Tennis can be the difference between getting into a selective school and not
- Due to the team aspect, college tennis is often a much better experience for players (compared to junior tennis)
- Be proactive with the process, doing your part to select appropriate schools and contacting the Coaches
 - *They can't recruit you if they don't know you are there*
- Visit the NCAA website, and other provided resources to obtain more information about eligibility requirements and the process

Summary

- College Tennis Match Day
 - <https://www.ustanationalcampus.com/en/home/news/ready-for-an-electric-atmosphere.html>
- Information on board in viewing gallery
 - *Stay up-to-date with NTC news, events, Junior Team Tennis (JTT), upcoming presentations and other important information*



QUESTIONS?

Thank you!
pinho@usta.com