



SPORTIME / JMTA COLLEGE ADVISORY SERVICE

About the SPORTIME / JMTA College Placement Service

Trying to find the right college or university for a student-athlete, in the context of his/her academic and tennis profile, and in an environment that is more complicated and competitive than ever, can be an overwhelming process. The complexities include the different recruiting, scholarship and financial aid award guidelines established by the three divisions of the NCAA, and by other groups of colleges and universities, including those in the NAIA and NJCAA. There are rules and processes governing official and unofficial visits, likely letters, early reads, national letters of intent, early decision, early decision 2, regular decisions, gap years, the Academic Index, how and when to reach out to college coaches - the list goes on.

The good news is that there are more than 6,000 tennis scholarships available from colleges and universities in North America, and thousands more preferred admissions based on tennis recruiting. What's more, SPORTIME/JMTA is here to assist! With over 200 directors and coaches company-wide, most of whom played Division I college tennis, and some of whom have served as college coaches, SPORTIME/JMTA has unparalleled contacts within the collegiate coaching ranks. We use our contacts and our substantial experience in the college placement process to give SPORTIME/JMTA students an edge, as they determine the best colleges for them, procure scholarships and to gain admission to the schools of their choice.

SPORTIME/JMTA is very proud to have developed hundreds of players who have received full or partial scholarships or upgrades to top colleges and universities, including Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Wake Forest, University of North Carolina, UC Santa Barbara, Auburn, Tulane, Columbia, Louisiana State University, Elon, University of Connecticut, Middlebury College, and many more, a few of which scholarships have allowed JMTA students to "bank" all four years of full scholarship by attending and playing a minimum of one year. This format is designed for a student who feels ready to take a shot at the pro tour prior to completing four years of college, while assuring the opportunity and wherewithal to then go back and complete his/her education at any time in the future. Meet some of our college recruits at by visiting www.SportimeNY.com/JMTACollege.

Find out More...

JMTA provides basic assistance to SPORTIME and JMTA students approaching college age, to help them identify schools that offer programs particularly well suited to their tennis and academic needs. More comprehensive college placement services, including assistance with detailed correspondence to coaches and follow-up communications, scheduling visits, creating introductory videos and more are available for an additional fee.

The following are some answers to top frequently asked questions - the tip of the iceberg in the context of this complicated process. To find out more about the SPORTIME / JMTA College Advisory Service, please contact us at jmtacollege@sportimeny.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Do tennis players/athletes have an advantage in the college admissions process?

Prospective college tennis players, who have an appropriate track record of competitive tennis success, have a major advantage in college admissions. It is often held that athletes, as a group, have up to a 50% greater chance of being admitted than non-athletes. Many estimate that a high athletic ranking on a resume can be equal to 200-300 SAT points! But, in tennis, the key is knowing how to execute on this advantage in the very complicated recruiting process.

2) How do I get my player started on the college search and recruiting process?

We encourage families who are embarking on the college search process to contact a member of our team of Sportime/JMTA college advisors, so that we can help get the process off to the best possible start within the proper time frame. The first step in the college search process is the construction of a "college list".

3) What are the differences between NCAA Division I, II & III schools, as well as NAIA and NJCAA schools?

The different NCAA Divisions, and the other organizations listed above, broadly group colleges and universities based on their size and on how much funding they allocate for athletics, including for athletic scholarships. At the Division I level, men's tennis teams are allowed to allocate a maximum of 4.5 scholarships each year among their team members. Division I women's tennis teams may offer a maximum of 8 scholarships per year. However, not all Division I tennis programs choose to fund or offer the full allotment of scholarships allowed; specifically, many of the higher ranked and more selective Division I conferences greatly limit their scholarship awards. The Ivy League, for example, does not fund or award any athletic scholarships. This does not mean that a player won't be recruited to play for a DI or Ivy League team and then qualify for and be provided with need-based financial aid. Families need to understand that tennis can be a way to obtain a tennis scholarship, or can be a way to gain preferred admission to a highly competitive college or university, or both.

Division II programs are allowed to offer the same 4.5 scholarships per year for their men's tennis teams, with a lower maximum of 6 scholarships per year for their women's tennis teams. Division III schools are not permitted to give athletic scholarships. NAIA schools are a group of schools that do not operate under the NCAA rules, but which do follow their own scholarship guidelines, which limit NAIA schools to 5 tennis scholarships per year for both genders. The NJCAA is a group of junior colleges and community colleges that also award scholarships.

4) *How many men's and women's tennis programs are there in the U.S.?*

There are over 250 Division I men's tennis programs and almost 300 Division I women's tennis programs in the U.S. There are just over 150 Division II men's programs and over 200 Division II women's programs. There are over 300 Division III men's programs and over 300 Division III women's programs. There are just over 100 NAIA men's programs and also just over 100 NAIA women's programs. There are just under 75 NJCAA men's programs and just under 75 NJCAA women's programs. There are also about 40 men's and 40 women's CCC (California Community College) programs. All totaled, there are close to 2,000 collegiate tennis programs in the U.S. This is why, with hard work and the right support and guidance, most families will be able to find a great tennis program, at a great college or university, for their tennis playing student. The key is for the recruit's family to establish clear priorities for the process, whether a four-year tennis scholarship, admission to the highest quality academic institution, the best coaching and competition, or others.

5) *Are Division I tennis programs always stronger than those in other Divisions?*

Many misunderstand the differences between the Divisions and assume that the different Divisions identify schools by the strength of their athletic teams. In fact, there is great variety within the Divisions, and there are Division II and III programs that are stronger than many Division I programs.

6) *What is a "club team"?*

A club team is typically a "non-varsity" team at a college or university that is run by its recreation or intramural department, as opposed to by the school's athletic department. At many colleges, these club teams are highly organized, travel all over the country for matches, and compete for a Club National Championship. Club tennis can offer talented and committed players an opportunity to continue to play and compete at schools where they are unable to play on the varsity team.

7) *What is the difference between an "official visit" and an "unofficial visit"?*

An official visit is one where some or all of the recruit's travel expenses (food, travel, lodging) are paid for by the college or university. Schools are not allowed to pay for anything on behalf of a recruit in the context of an unofficial visit, although they can provide lodging with members of their teams, as long as that is a practice the school also has in place for its non-athlete recruits.

8) *When should we start working on college applications?*

We encourage our players to begin working on their college applications no later than the summer before their senior year, and to have them completed before commitments start occurring in the fall.

9) *When do college commitments take place?*

Commitments are being made earlier and earlier. Many tennis recruits are now committing to schools in their junior years, with some even committing in the fall of their junior years, a full year ahead of the months when most commitments are still made (September and October of senior year). The trend in tennis is definitely heading in this direction, and is already prevalent in sports like lacrosse and soccer.

10) *Once I've committed, is it okay to take a break in my training?*

It depends if you mean for a week, to celebrate, or for a year! While the college search process is long and arduous, and while we recognize the temptation for a recruit to 'slack off' after making a college commitment and having that stress relieved, this is actually a great and essential time to focus on your game. We HIGHLY encourage our players to continue the intensity of their training after their college acceptance. Players at the end of their junior year are in a period where a large amount of physical and tennis growth needs to occur if they are going to have success playing in college. We have seen many instances where 'taking a break' during this period has had a very negative impact on promising college tennis careers.

11) *My child is young for his/her class and would like to take a 'gap year' before attending college. Are there any rules to worry about if we do this?*

Yes, there are rules to worry about! The NCAA has made a number of recent rule changes in an attempt to create a fair and level playing field. The current rules state that a player can take a 'gap year' of sorts, but that the grace period during which they are allowed to play tournaments during their 'gap' is only six months for those aiming to play for a Division I program. So, in order to eliminate the chances of any lost eligibility, players taking a 'gap year' must not play any organized events between the January 1st after high school graduation and the start of college the following fall. This would mean that the recruit would not be able to play organized, competitive tennis for about 8 months before embarking on his/her college playing career – probably not a very good plan. This restriction does not apply for Division II, III or NAIA schools.