



Guidelines for Hosting a College Information Session, Showcase, or Forum

- 1. Choose a date**
- 2. Target an audience**
- 3. Choose a format**
- 4. Plan your event**
- 5. Follow-up & Event Evaluation**

1. Choose a date

- The most popular times of the year for college information sessions, showcases, and forums are summer or fall—right in the middle of the college recruiting season when college coaches are generally available. Obviously you want to ensure your event doesn't conflict with National events, junior events in your section, the high school season, or ITA Summer Circuit events.
- Your audience will also affect your date selection. Generally speaking, events designed for high school seniors or rising seniors should be held in the summer or early fall as the early National Letter of Intent (NLI) signing date falls in November and the recruiting process for all Divisions is well underway by the time classes start in the fall. There is more flexibility in the calendar for events for high school juniors and younger.
- You will also want to investigate whether you would prefer to do an evening event during the week or a day event held on a weekend date. (Much of this depends on your format. Weekday evenings tend to work well for shorter information sessions; weekend dates are better for showcases and forums.)
- Avoid NCAA Dead periods for all events. Dead periods are the Monday through Thursday surrounding the initial NLI signing date in November and April and should be avoided as NCAA coaches will NOT be able to attend.

2. Target an audience

- All HS Prospective Student-Athletes (PSAs)
 - This is what we recommend for a section new to hosting these types of events. You can always separate groups out by class year during the event. This type of event ensures all junior players in the section are receiving college information.

- High School Seniors/rising seniors
 - Generally held at tournaments where college coaches recruit OR have an organized match play component added.
- High School Juniors and below
 - These are good events when a section has something for the seniors already. Events for juniors and below are usually information sessions designed to educate prospective student-athletes and their parents about the recruiting process.

3. Choose a format

- Information Session Only
 - This is an information session on college tennis and the recruiting process. It can be held at a tennis center, club, or any big space that will accommodate your audience.
 - Programming usually lasts 1-2 hours with 1 or 2 speakers or a panel for questions and answers.
 - Example agenda:
 - Opening remarks & introduction of speakers by host
 - Speakers each present specifics about college tennis and the recruiting process for respective divisions.
 - Q&A Session
 - Closing comments
- Information Session at a Tournament
 - This is an information session on college tennis and the recruiting process held at a junior tournament. Generally the best time for this event is the night before play begins as part of a mandatory player meeting. (All 16 Zone Team Championships for example, have this kind of event).
 - Programming usually lasts 1-2 hours with 1 or 2 speakers or a panel for questions and answers.
- Showcase Plus Organized Match Play
 - Similar to above, the session also includes match play and booths for college coaches.
 - This type of event is excellent in targeting some of your mid-level section players and below as well as the smaller colleges and universities in your section. ***These are the players who really need guidance in the recruiting process AND these are the schools that really WANT to recruit AMERICAN juniors from your section!***
 - Organizers need to be aware of NCAA rules in planning these events. Here are a few things to keep in mind regarding NCAA rules and Showcases:
 - Coaches cannot have contact (conversation that exceeds a greeting) with HS Juniors and younger.

- Coaches CAN have contact with HS seniors. But if PSAs are playing matches in your showcase, contacts with seniors must occur AFTER (Prospective student-athletes cannot have contact with a college coach until after being released from a competition)
 - The juniors and younger can compete—and the coaches can watch them. That is not a violation. Just remember NO contacts.
 - The juniors and younger can look at the college booths, however the college coaches CANNOT be at their booths when those PSAs are there.
 - Player Bio Books are a must for Showcases. These are books that contain bio information for all the players (or at least seniors) in the event. They can be produced in hard copy or as an e-Book. Erica Perkins (perkins@usta.com) can provide you with samples and templates.
 - Depending on match play format these events can run anywhere from a half to a whole day for seniors. The day is generally shorter for juniors and below.
- Forum at a Tournament
 - These types of events are extremely popular at bigger tournaments where college coaches recruit.
 - College coaches set up tables to meet with senior PSAs. Forums provide PSAs the chance to meet with college coaches and to learn about schools that they maybe hadn't been talking to and provides college coaches an opportunity to meet PSAs that they may not have known about.
 - It also gives the college coaches a chance to see the players whom they met with the next day at the tournament if they've never seen them play before.
 - Hosting these events means that you must not only invite prospective student-athletes but also college coaches.
 - For this type of event to work, the tournament MUST be one at which college coaches recruit.
 - Designed for rising seniors, these events are usually in the summer and MUST be after July 1, so the college coaches can actually have contact with the players. To stay within NCAA rules, the coaches' forum MUST occur BEFORE sign in/registration.
 - Player Bio Books are a must for Forums. These are books that contain bio information for all the players (or at least seniors) in the event. They can be produced in hard copy or as an e-Book. Erica Perkins (perkins@usta.com) can provide you with samples and templates.

- These events are usually 2-4 hours long and held prior to the close of sign in.

4. Planning your event

- Establish a team or committee to administer the event (Sectional Collegiate Coordinator, Section staff for Player Development, Collegiate Committee Chair, Advocacy Chair, etc.)
- Develop a Budget (Facility rental, speaker reimbursements, handout materials, refreshments, gifts for attendees, etc.). An information session can be put on for \$400 or less. Costs obviously rise as you add courts (especially indoor courts) for Showcases, rent space for a forum, or create Bio Books. For Showcases and Forums, most charge a registration fee for players and coaches to defray some expenses.
- Reserve the Facility
- Market the event: Post on your sectional web site, send email blasts to members, inform district endorsers, communicate with high school tennis coaches and the state high school tennis associations, press releases to media outlets, communicate to tennis clubs, etc.
 - Some events have used Tennislink to add it to the schedule AND to take registrations.
 - Make sure you inform Erica Perkins (perkins@usta.com), so your event gets added to the schedule on USTA.com
- Secure speakers for the Event
 - Examples: Varsity college coaches from the various divisions, NCAA compliance officers, USTA section player development Staff, former college players from the section, Tennis On Campus representative.
 - There are many “college tennis experts” who charge a fee to speak at these events. Do your homework before hiring one; there are many great speakers who will speak for free.
 - Erica Perkins (perkins@usta.com) can assist you in finding high quality speakers.
- Determine and prepare handout materials, player packets, etc.
 - Suggested player packet materials include:
 - USTA Guide to Tennis on College Campuses
 - Contact Erica Perkins (perkins@usta.com) for hard copies.
 - PDF version can be downloaded here:
<http://www.usta.com/PlayerDevelopment/~//media/USTA/Document%20Assets/PlayerDevelopment/College/2010/USTAGuideToTennisOnCollegeCampuses/2010%20USTA%20College%20Guide%207.ashx>
 - NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete
 - Hard copies are available for purchase from the NCAA:

<http://www.ncaapublications.com/ProductsDetailView.aspx?sku=CB10>

- PDF version can be downloaded here:
http://www.ncaapublications.com/Uploads/PDF/2009-10%20CBSA_Web5f0f3230-c5fb-422c-8c69-a572338d05be.pdf
 - Campbell/ITA College Tennis Rankings (Available at: www.itatennis.com or contact Jason Berney, ITA Media Manager (jberney@itatennis.com)
 - If hosting a forum or a showcase, provide a list of all attending college coaches as well as their contact information.
 - College Tennis Advocacy Information (See Appendix A for a handout. Contact Nancy Breo, ITA Administrator for the College Tennis Advocacy Network (itanbreo@aol.com), if you have questions.
- Determine and arrange for refreshments.

5. Event evaluation and follow-up

- Great opportunity to get feedback on the event through a formal or informal survey (See Appendix B for a sample survey which you can modify for your event).
- Track seniors to see their final choices
- Use mailing list to promote upcoming sectional college events: USTA/ITA Regional Championships as well as ITA National Tournaments, Campus Showdowns, Campus Kids' Days, NCAA Regional and National Championships, and ITA Summer Circuit presented by the USTA.

APPENDIX A



COLLEGE TENNIS ADVOCACY NETWORK

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) have joined forces to build an Advocacy Network for support of varsity collegiate tennis. Although this Network was established as a response to varsity tennis programs being dropped on college campuses across the country (over 350 in the past two decades), the network offers interactive communication about varsity collegiate tennis issues and events. The Network is comprised of tennis enthusiasts who want to stay abreast of current issues and events and insure tennis programs continue to thrive on college campuses.

The College Tennis Advocacy Network is committed to growing varsity college tennis opportunities for upcoming junior tennis players as well as protecting existing varsity programs. The College Tennis Advocacy Network has already made a difference. Varsity college tennis programs have been added at schools in all three NCAA divisions, the NAIA and Junior Colleges, such as: U.S. Naval Academy (Women); Thiel College (Men & Women); University of Dallas (Men & Women); Purdue University-Calumet (Men); and University of South Carolina-Lancaster (Men & Women) to name a few. Also, the college Tennis Advocacy Network has played an integral part in preventing the loss of many varsity tennis programs in the last decade. The decision to NOT drop the varsity tennis programs made by institutional administrators at Western Michigan University in the fall of 2003, the University of Minnesota-Mankato State in the spring of 2004, and Florida A&M University in the summer of 2005, Irvine Valley College in the spring of 2007, University of Hawaii-Hilo in spring of 2009 demonstrate that the focused and coordinated efforts of many tennis advocates at the national, sectional and local levels can make an enormous difference. The College Tennis Advocacy Network is committed to preserving (and expanding) varsity college tennis opportunities for upcoming junior tennis players.

The College Tennis Advocacy Network can serve as a resource for you as you and your student-athlete enter the world of college tennis. The initial objectives for our College Tennis Advocacy Network are:

1. To become familiar with college tennis in general, and collegiate tennis programs in your local area (to be defined by you as either a specific radius from your home, statewide, etc.) and to reconnect and/or keep in touch with your alma mater's varsity tennis program (even if you were not a member of the varsity team).

The internet provides a great tool for learning more about college tennis. We invite you to browse the ITA web site (<http://www.itatennis.com/>) regularly for up-to-date information about college tennis. Similarly, you can visit the individual web sites for colleges in your local area to learn more about their tennis programs. If your schedule permits, you might also attend a varsity tennis match.

2. To establish interactive communication between yourself and the College Tennis Advocacy Network. *The College Tennis Advocacy Network is being administered by the ITA, in cooperation with the USTA Collegiate Tennis Committee. We plan to begin regular communication with our advocates to keep you abreast of the latest news on the college tennis scene.*

3. To write and send (via email and/or regular mail) letters in support of varsity college tennis programs that might be in jeopardy of being dropped from an institutions athletic program. *We have documented more than 500 programs, across all collegiate divisions that have already been dropped. A list of these programs can be viewed on the ITA web site (<http://www.itatennis.com/>). On a positive note, we have made a difference recently in stopping or delaying the decision to drop a varsity tennis program when our letter campaign has been launched.*

4. To help us expand the College Tennis Advocacy Network. *We encourage each of our advocates to recommend at least one additional person (please provide email and regular mailing address and/or phone, fax) who has an interest in college tennis and might be willing to join our College Tennis Advocacy Network. Please email your recommendations to itanbreo@aol.com.*

Show your support for collegiate varsity tennis by registering today! We will keep you informed about current issues and events in varsity college tennis and notify you if and when a college tennis program is in jeopardy. Your level of involvement as a Network member is flexible, and there is absolutely no financial obligation. Additionally, if you have an interest in volunteering to support Community Outreach initiatives on college campuses in your town, please let us know so that we can put you in touch with the appropriate people who can get you involved in your local area.

Please visit the ITA website at www.itatennis.com (click onto "About the ITA," then select "Advocacy" to complete the online College Tennis Advocacy Network form. You may also contact Nancy Breo, ITA Administrator for the College Tennis Advocacy Network, at 609-638-4952 or at itanbreo@aol.com.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE SURVEY (Courtesy of USTA/Midwest)

2009 USTA/Midwest Section College Night Survey

Please circle:

- 1. Did you know about the College Night before the start of the Midwest Closed? Y N
- 2. Was the College Night (please circle) too long too short just right?
- 3. Do you feel the information presented was important to you? Y N
- 4. Do you think the information presented was important to other players? Y N
- 5. Were your questions about college tennis answered? Y N
- 6a. If no, did you ask questions? Y N
- 6. Did you know before tonight about Tennis On Campus (non-varsity tennis)? Y N

Please answer the following:

7. Is there anything that was not covered tonight that you wish would have been? (Use other side of paper if you need more space).

8. Other comments:

Student Athlete's name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

****Player's email:** _____

Player's grade entering in fall: _____

Player's age: _____

Check here if you would be interested in receiving information regarding USTA events and collegiate playing opportunities from the USTA/Midwest Section. Your name will not be given to other sources for this purpose. **Your current email address is needed above.**

Please return the survey at the end of the College Night to one of the USTA/Midwest Section staff members to be eligible for the drawing. Thank you!