



FAQ's for Tennis On Campus in the Midwest (TOC League/club)

- How does the club form?

The club forms from one or more people to provide a structure and marketing to get the word out. A player "interest meeting" is one way to go about this. Set up a convenient time (usually evenings) and they will come! Many clubs have been started as a result of a Facebook group as well!

IMPORTANT: The club should start with officers; President, VP, secretary, etc. Officers should be made up of Freshman-Seniors to help with continuity of the program. Most schools require their clubs to have a written constitution, bylaws, etc. The program should be *inclusive* to include those players who just want to play recreational/intramural *and* those who want to be more competitive and travel.

- Are there eligibility rules?

Yes. Your campus club sports/intramural or student org department may have their own rules to determine eligibility so consult your school's appropriate department. Nationally, and for the Midwest Tennis On Campus League, players must be at least half-time grad/undergrad students at their school. They must not be a current varsity member of a varsity tennis team. Only one (1) former varsity player is allowed to travel/play matches against other schools. If a player has played varsity or club tennis before, there is a six-year rule that applies. That is, a player has six years (including any varsity tennis played), not consecutive, in order to complete their playing eligibility in club sports. To read more about national and Midwest eligibility please go to the NIRSA NCCS website: <http://play.nirsa.net/nirsa-championship-series/player-eligibility-requirements/>

- How do we become a recognized club at the school?

Check with your Club Sports Director or student org office, but usually there is a one-two year waiting or probationary period until a club receives recognition as an organized club. At some schools your team can receive funding as well. Most of these funds come from student fees. Some schools require no waiting period at all. Read all the rules in the club sports handbook at your school. In addition, talk to other clubs at your school and see what they have done.

- How do we get the word out at our school?

One way is to work with your Student Activities, Rec Sports or Club Sports department to find out how you can reach the student body. Once you are a recognized club they will help you with email blasts and support. In addition, a Facebook page and a website can help get the word out to other students. Many schools offer a "rec sports expo" or "Sports info day" to help showcase all the organizations the school has to offer. This is a great time to set up a table and talk to interested students face-to-face. From this we can set up an interest meeting or first practice to meet with interested students to let them know what TOC is all about!

- How much does it cost?

Teams must keep in mind that when we play indoor matches there are costs involved with indoor court time and these costs range from \$10-\$18 court hour, which generally translates to \$50-\$120/team at one of these events. Gas and food are additional costs that players must remember come into the budget equation. All in all, however, a very low cost way for tennis players to have a great time!

- How do we get funding?

As stated above, go through the appropriate channels at your college to help with funding. Fundraising is another way clubs get money. All clubs should charge dues of some sort and travel expenses should not be paid completely out of the club coffers. Club members should pick up most of these costs in order for the club to remain solvent.

- I heard there is grant money opportunities from the USTA for starting a program, is that true?

Yes. Application information is available through www.tennisoncampus.com or www.nirsa.org .

You may apply for a grant from the USTA/Midwest Section also, www.midwest.usta.com/tennisoncampus. Make sure you complete the application fully. Applications are mainly denied for a couple reasons: 1) clubs do not show how they will raise their own funds or how the club will become self-sustaining, and 2) clubs do not show organization or a plan for perpetuity. There are also grants available for running/hosting 8-32 team tournaments!

- How does the Midwest Tennis On Campus League work?

Clubs complete the online application that shows their contact information and which weekends (Saturdays and/or Sundays) they are available to play. From that information, the coordinator makes a schedule among the 55+ teams. The Midwest Tennis On Campus League is broken into two conferences; East and West. *East* is Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia, and *West* is Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. Non-conference play is allowed and encouraged but the focus will be on play closer to their campus instead of longer drives. Matches are set up as 3-6 team matches (depending on home court availability) so there is a lot of play in one day. Many teams request a match at a particular school and that can be arranged as well; e.g.; Wisconsin plays Illinois on Sunday because a football game is scheduled there the day before.

- Are there standings in the league?

Yes. After each match standings are updated online on TennisLink. Remember: total number of games won is the main factor. This also helps to determine placement at the USTA Campus Championship-Midwest (usually in February at the University of Wisconsin) although not weighed the most in determining seeding.

- How do you determine who plays at Nationals?

Based on the size of our Midwest event we have up to 7 automatic bids to the National Championship. The top 5 teams from the event will automatically have a bid and possibly a stipend to attend the event. While at-large bids are not available, Midwest has up to 7 bids to distribute; the 6th bid will go to club team of the year, the 7th bid will go to the Team Sportsmanship award.

- What's my first step?

Contact Steve Wise, steve@midwest.usta.com , 262-334-3601 !