

Grant Guidelines and Procedures Manual

This manual outlines the guidelines, procedures, and selection criteria for On the RISE Tennis's grant program.

1. Introduction

On the RISE Tennis is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering junior tennis players who are passionate about reaching their full potential athletically, academically, and as leaders in their communities. We believe that talent and determination should never be limited by financial barriers.

2. Mission and Vision Statements

Our RISE Mission

We support aspiring junior tennis players as they work to elevate their game and compete at the highest levels. By providing essential resources for training, travel, and development, we help athletes grow and thrive on the court, in the classroom, and beyond.

Our RISE Vision

We envision a future where every competitive junior tennis player has access to the opportunities they need to succeed. Recognizing the prohibitive cost of national competition, year-round training, and travel, we raise critical funds to ease these financial pressures ensuring talented, enthusiastic players can pursue their dreams without limitation.

3. Core Values and Purpose

Our RISE Values

- **R - Resilience:** Bounce back from setbacks, learn from losses, and maintain composure during adversity.
- **I - Intentional Growth:** Set measurable goals, develop winning habits, and build a process-focused mindset.
- **S - Self-Leadership:** Take ownership of effort, attitude, and actions - on and off the court.
- **E - Excellence:** Strive for excellence through discipline, preparation, and a consistent commitment to growth.

Our RISE Purpose

Our purpose is twofold: to lift that financial burden and to build something greater, a **TEAM RISE** culture that empowers junior players through a sense of belonging, shared motivation, and support. Through **TEAM RISE**, players experience the power of accountability, encouragement, and mutual respect, key ingredients for long-term success in sport and life.

Junior tennis is a highly individualized sport, players compete alone, train with personalized goals, and spend their development journey navigating challenges independently. While this structure can cultivate self-reliance and focus, it can also lead to feelings of isolation, burnout, or a lack of connection to the broader junior tennis community.

TEAM RISE will change that by infusing the competitive junior tennis experience with the powerful benefits of team culture. Through **TEAM RISE**, players are part of something bigger than themselves. They push one another to improve, celebrate each other's successes, and learn the value of leadership, resilience, and sportsmanship not just as individuals, but as teammates.

This approach helps attract fresh players to the sport, keeps existing players motivated and engaged, and lays the foundation for a stronger, longer-lasting connection to tennis. With the right community and the right support, young athletes can thrive both individually and together on and off the court. We create a pathway for juniors to train at the highest level, chase collegiate and professional goals, and mature into confident leaders.

4. TEAM RISE Selection Criteria

Open to junior players ages 10-18, boys and girls on a local, state, regional and/or national level. Our selection process is intensive to ensure we are maintaining the integrity and mission of the program. We are committed to supporting competitive, youth tennis players from diverse backgrounds in hopes that they feel supported physically, mentally, and financially.

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- **Aspirational Focus:** Demonstrates a clear ambition to compete at the college or professional tennis level.
- **Academic Excellence:** Maintains a minimum GPA of 3.2, reflecting a strong commitment to academics.
- **Character Reference:** Submits a letter of recommendation from a non-family member attesting to the applicant's character and work ethic.
- **Competitive Experience:** Has a desire to OR currently compete in USTA, ITF or UTR-verified singles and doubles tournaments.
- **Personal Statement:** Provides an essay outlining personal goals, dedication to excellence, and notable tennis achievements, if any.
- **Community Service Commitment:** Demonstrates involvement in at least two charitable or volunteer events per year.

5. TEAM RISE Application Process

The process for applying to join TEAM RISE is as follows:

1. **Eligibility:** Applicants must meet the selection criteria outlined in the previous section.
2. **Application Submission:** Complete the application form. Application process is year-round.
3. **Review, Selection, and Notification:** On the RISE Tennis board of directors will review applications based on the selection criteria. Applicants notified of the board's decision within 60 days of submitting the application.

6. TEAM RISE Future Considerations and Waiting List

On the RISE Tennis is currently focused on ensuring that the players already in the program receive the full support they need. As a result, On the RISE Tennis is NOT accepting new applications currently due to current funding limitations. However, tennis players who are interested in the program can be placed on a waiting list for future consideration.

Waitlist placement does not guarantee a spot on the team. Openings offered based on availability, eligibility, and programming fit. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and athletes will be contacted individually when a spot becomes available.

For any questions about waitlist status applicants can contact On the RISE Tennis at info@ontherisetennis.org

7. Program Expectations and Continuation Policy

On the RISE Tennis, it expects all participants to uphold the standards outlined in the program's selection criteria throughout their time in the program. If a player does not meet these expectations, the Board of Directors reserves the right to discontinue their participation.

The following protocol applies:

1. **Initial Warning:**
The player receives a formal warning and takes part in a consultation meeting. A personalized plan is developed to address the areas of concern.
2. **Follow-up Review:**
If no meaningful improvement occurs after six months, the player is subject to removal from the program.
3. **Voluntary Withdrawal:**
Players may choose to withdraw from the program at any time, particularly if they decide to step away from tennis or their personal goals shift.

Note: Removal from the program does not occur solely due to performance-related outcomes, such as a drop in rankings at the national, regional, or local levels.

8. Grant Funding Details

Each selected player can receive up to **\$75,000** in grant funding per year, based on their verified needs and participation and is subject to change. Funding is not based on junior tennis players' performance or rankings. Team RISE player needs reviewed on an individual basis so funds can be allocated responsibly.

Eligible Grant Coverage:

Grants used for the following verified expenses:

- **Player Coaching:** support for ongoing tennis training and coaching is essential to player development.
- **Tennis Equipment:** assistance with purchasing racquets, strings, shoes, apparel, and other necessary equipment.
- **Travel Expenses:** funding to offset the cost of travel, lodging, and meals related to tournaments and training events.
- **Sport-Related Healthcare:** coverage for physical therapy, sports medicine, injury prevention, and tennis-related medical care.
- **Personal Development:** grants for programs that foster leadership, mental skills, time management, and professional readiness.
- **Academic Tutoring:** financial support for tutoring and educational services to maintain strong academic performance alongside athletic commitments.

9. Donations Received and Fund Distribution

- **Donations Under \$10,000:**
Funds distributed directly to active Team RISE players.
- **Donations Over \$10,000:**
On the RISE Tennis Board of Directors reviews the contribution and votes on whether to allocate funds directly to players or invest them for long-term purposes (e.g., endowment fund).

To receive funding, players must submit receipts or other documentation confirming that appropriate use of the funds and the player is in good standing with the organization. Grant eligibility is based on verified need, and all expenses must comply with NCAA guidelines for permissible student-athlete support.

10. NCAA and NAIA Eligibility Compliance

At On the RISE Tennis, we are fully committed to upholding NCAA and NAIA amateurism rules to protect the eligibility of all athletes supported through our program. The following compliance policies guide the structure and distribution of grant funding:

Maintaining Amateur Status

- Players under the age of eighteen are eligible to receive grant funding for legitimate tennis-related expenses including travel, coaching, tournament fees, and equipment without compromising their amateur status. All financial support considered assistance for participation, not a reward for athletic performance, rankings, or results.

Strict No Pay-for-Play Policy

- Grant funds are not performance-based and never awarded in exchange for competitive results or ranking achievements. All funding is intended solely to offset the prohibitive costs of participation in junior tennis and support athlete development.

No Professional Contracts or Endorsements

- On the RISE Tennis does not have contracts with players. We do not facilitate or support any professional endorsements or agreements that would jeopardize an athlete's amateur status.

Verification and NCAA Rule Compliance

- All distributed funds used strictly for pre-approved, tennis-related expenses. Athletes and/or their families are required to submit receipts and documentation to verify that funds have been used in accordance with NCAA and NAIA regulations. On the RISE Tennis monitors and audits all expenditures to ensure full compliance with amateurism rules.

Oversight and Coordination with School Compliance Offices

- As needed, On the RISE Tennis will coordinate with each athlete's school compliance office to confirm that the use of funds does not conflict with eligibility requirements.