

Academy Cup Debuts At The Campus

Saddlebrook takes home the trophy.

Brian Ormiston | September 10, 2018

The opening of the USTA National Campus in 2017 has created unique opportunities and events for all levels of players. That included the brand new mixed-gender Academy Cup for juniors which took place Sept. 7-9.

Eight academies from across Florida made their way to Orlando to compete in the first edition of the Academy Cup, with bragging rights and an addition to their trophy case on the line. They were assigned into pods of four teams in a round-robin format. Similar to college tennis, a team match consisted of six individual singles contests with all matches factoring into the players' UTR ratings. If there was a 3-3 tie, doubles would decide the victor.

After round-robin action, Midtown (Weston, Fla.) and Saddlebrook (Wesley Chapel, Fla.) faced off in the finals at the Collegiate Complex, where Saddlebrook delivered a 4-2 win.

"It was definitely not easy," said Saddlebrook coach Stephanie Tomita. "It was amazing competition. It's like college play. The juniors got this early experience before getting to college. I'm looking forward to seeing more of the Academy Cups."

Saddlebrook entered the weekend in the middle of the pack in terms of its overall UTR average of its players, but managed to pull out the title.

"It's good for our kids because they knew the UTR ranking for the other players," said Tomita. "I just told them we're here to perform, to enjoy the time out here and learn about this college experience. They are young so I'm happy with how they handled the pressure."

As the runner-up, Midtown also enjoyed the new format.

"It was fantastic. Three days of great competition, great environment, matches were great and friendly at the end. So for us it was a win-win," said Midtown coach Luis Brest. "It was very emotional and that's part of the first experience for these kids and their future in going to college. It was amazing to see the six courts at the same time, coaching on the court and kids cheering each other on."

2018 ACADEMY CUP TEAMS

Celsius	FSU High Performance
Midtown	Montverde
Saddlebrook	Sanchez-Casal
Tough Tennis	USTA National Campus High Performance