

TONY MINNIS

LSU's all-time winningest women's tennis coach
2007 Southwest Regional Coach of the Year
2004 Southwest Regional Coach of the Year
1999 Southwest Regional Coach of the Year
1999 Louisiana Coach of the Year
1997 Southeastern Conference Coach of the Year
1997 Louisiana Coach of the Year
1995 Southwest Regional Coach of the Year
1995 Louisiana Coach of the Year

Tony Minnis is entering his 18th year as the head coach of the LSU women's tennis team, and the program continues to flourish under his leadership. Last season Minnis guided LSU to the NCAA Tournament for the 13th time in his 17 years as head coach of the Lady Tigers as the team reached the second round of the tournament for the seventh time in his career.

In 2007 Minnis was named the Southwest Regional Coach of the Year. It marked the fourth time in Minnis' career that he received the honor as he was named the coach of the year in 1995, 1999 and 2004.

After a season in 2005-06 in which LSU did not make the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 11 years, Minnis guided a youthful, inexperienced Lady Tiger team to the NCAA Tournament in 2006-07 as the Southeastern Conference Western Division co-champions. The 2006-07 season marked the second time LSU finished atop the SEC West standings since the conference switched to Eastern and Western divisions in 2002. More than that, Minnis led the team to the top of the SEC West standings even though three, four or sometimes five newcomers started during the season.

Minnis was instrumental in bringing in two-time singles All-American Megan Falcon, who finished her sophomore season in 2007 at 38-3 and raced all the way to the semifinals of the NCAA Individual Championships. Falcon's semifinal finish was the furthest any LSU player has reached at the NCAA Individual Championships, surpassing two other Minnis recruits – Bruna Colosio in 2000 and 2001 and Suzana Rodrigues in 1994 – who both made it to the quarterfinals. Falcon was also named the SEC Player of the Year in 2007, the second player under Minnis to receive the honor after Colosio was selected the league's top player in 2001.

Besides great play on the tennis court, Minnis has also stressed hard work in the classroom, and the results have shown as the team was named an Intercollegiate Tennis Association All-Academic Team with a cumulative grade point average of 3.385 in the 2007-08 year. Not only was the team as a whole honored for its performance off the courts, but a school-record seven Lady Tigers were named ITA Scholar-Athletes for maintaining a grade point average of at least a 3.50. In 2007 four Lady Tigers were named ITA Scholar-Athletes.

During the 2006 season, LSU captured Minnis' 200th victory of his career, a milestone that LSU's winningest coach contributes to numerous people over the length of his career. "I think that in everything that's accomplished whether it be making it to 13 NCAA Tournaments or getting 200 wins, there are a lot of kids, former players and assistant coaches who have had a lot to do with that," Minnis explained. "I'm just appreciative and feel very fortunate to be at a great school for as long as I have been, to have been at a program where we've been very consistent over the years. And I think that is the mark of consistency, to have that many wins over that period of time." As LSU opens up the 2009 season, Minnis stands 11 wins shy of 250 for his career as his record at LSU is 239-182. During his time at LSU Minnis has coached five All-Americans who have received nine All-America honors and more than 60 Academic All-Southeastern Conference players.

A Baton Rouge native, Minnis returned to his hometown in 1992 to take over the LSU women's tennis team. By earning his 80th career victory at LSU in 1997, he passed Phillip Campbell (1984-88) as the winningest women's tennis coach in Tigers history.

During the 2002 dual-match season, Minnis earned his 150th career victory with a 5-2 win over Tulsa. The achievement was just another milestone obtained by the talented young coach. "I don't really think about that much," he said. "One thing I've learned as a player and a coach is to instill in yourself and your team an attitude that when one thing is over you move on to the next. It's nice to know I've had those accomplishments in my career here, but I try to focus on each year." Minnis came to LSU knowing what it takes to excel in the sport. He was a tennis star at Southwestern Louisiana from 1984-88. He served as team captain his freshman and senior seasons and is USL's all-time winningest singles player with an impressive 94-40 career mark.

He followed his playing career with a job as an assistant tennis coach at USL as well as working as the club professional at several tennis clubs in the Lafayette, La., area. But, Minnis said, his LSU experience has taught him the most about the game. "I've learned a lot over my career, especially about how very, very important it is to communicate with your players," he said. "I know the roller coasters that come with coaching and I've learned to take them in stride. I have been so fortunate to be in this tremendous environment at LSU, because you get to learn from every single coach here. There are some great coaches and that's the beauty of having an athletic department as good as this one." With those years of experience and lessons has come a pile of awards and achievements for Minnis and his Lady Tigers.

In 2004, Minnis guided the team to a final ITA ranking of No. 20 in a season that included an NCAA Tournament berth, an SEC Western Division Championship and an appearance in the SEC Tournament semifinals. The Lady Tigers lost to the eventual SEC Champions Florida.

During the 2001 campaign, Minnis and the Lady Tigers put together a solid campaign and finished the season with a 14-10 overall record. The squad advanced to the NCAA Tournament and finished the year with a No. 27 national ranking. Bruna Colosio, who graduated after a record-breaking senior season in 2002, was one of the top five players in the nation and the 2001 SEC Player of the Year. She excelled under Minnis' constant tutelage and received All-America status in both 2000 and 2001.

During an unexpected run at the NCAA Championships in 2000, Minnis led LSU to its second Sweet 16 appearance in school history. The Lady Tigers upset sixth-ranked Pepperdine, 5-4, in the second round of the tournament. The upset is considered the most impressive victory in team history. LSU fell in the Sweet 16 to USC.

In 1999, Minnis was named the Southwest Regional Coach of the Year after reaching the NCAA Tournament for the fifth straight season. The season was supposed to be a rebuilding one, but Minnis led his squad to upset victories over both 10th-ranked Tennessee and 15th-ranked Arkansas on its way to a final ranking of No. 28 in the nation. In 1997, Minnis was named the SEC Coach of the Year when he led LSU to the regional finals. The Lady Tigers advanced to the championship match of the Southwest regional by beating Texas A&M, 5-0. Minnis was recognized as the Louisiana Coach of the Year for the third time in four years. Senior Suzana Rodrigues finished her career ranked fifth in all-time singles wins at 108-42 overall. She and teammate Laura Olave won the 1996 National Clay Court Doubles title. The tandem earned All-America honors after placing 10th in the final doubles rankings. LSU posted its highest national ranking ever under Minnis in April of 1995 when the Lady Tigers leapt from No. 30 to No. 15 after upsetting 11th-ranked Tennessee, 5-3, in the opening round of the NCAA Championships. The Lady Tigers fell to eventual NCAA runner-up Florida, 5-0, in round two. Minnis was named the Southwest Region and Louisiana Coach of the Year after guiding the Lady Tigers to their first-ever win at the NCAAs and their first postseason appearance since 1991.

As a player, Minnis competed in the 1988 NCAA Team Championships and was a semifinalist at the NIT in 1986. He had a 37-6 three-set record in his first three seasons at USL. During his four years there, the Ragin' Cajuns posted a 78-39 overall record and finished each year ranked in the Top 25. In his senior season, USL was ranked 15th in the final polls and advanced to the second round of the NCAA Championships.

Minnis comes from a family loaded with tennis experience. His father, Howard, was the head tennis coach at Southern University for several years and was a professor there before he passed away. His sister, Patricia, was a four-year letter winner at LSU from 1988-91. His brother, Patrick, was USL's No. 1 singles player after his departure.

Minnis played high school tennis at Redemptorist in Baton Rouge. He graduated from USL in 1988 with a degree in finance and earned an MBA in 1996.

Minnis' LSU COACHING RECORDS		
Year	Record	Final Ranking
1992	14-9	No. 21
1993	10-11	Unranked
1994	9-13	No. 50(t)
1995	19-8	No. 18
1996	14-11	No. 36
1997	18-9	No. 20
1998	15-10	No. 26
1999	13-11	No. 28
2000	16-11	No. 21
2001	14-10	No. 27
2002	12-13	No. 51
2003	12-13	No. 52
2004	18-9	No. 20
2005	12-12	No. 44
2006	12-12	No. 57
2007	16-10	No. 36
2008	15-10	No. 27
Total:	17 seasons	239-182 (.568)