



College Information Guide for the Player

This document is designed to help familiarize you with the college recruiting process. While it contains a lot of helpful information, you still have a lot of research and work to do on your own.

It is important that you choose the school that is appropriate for you, not only athletically, but also academically and environmentally. It won't be of much use to choose a school based solely on its soccer program and ability to provide scholarships, if they don't offer the major you intend to study. If you don't yet know which area of focus you wish to study, spending some time together on that topic will prove to be very helpful.

Helpful info:

- Go online to find all current and up to date information: www.ncaa.org
- You may call for a free copy of the "NCAA Guide for the College-bound Student Athletes." At 1-800-638-3731

Contact with College Coaches:

1. **Coaches like to hear directly from you, the player, so definitely email or call coaches (within the NCAA rules below)**
2. **NCAA regulations do not allow college coaches to send out any information about their programs until September 1st of your junior year. If you mail coaches something as a sophomore they can only send you a questionnaire and a soccer camp brochure in return. You may wish to inform the NCAA of any violation of these rules.**
3. **You may call or email college coaches as much as you like, but they cannot respond by mail or email until Sept. 1st of your junior year or by phone until July 1st of your senior year.**
4. **NCAA regulations do not provide college coaches any off-campus contact with you during your sophomore and junior years. When college coaches see athletes or their parents at soccer tournaments, they are only allowed a "formal greeting".**

HIGH SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Freshman Year

- Academics:
 - Keep your grade point average (GPA) as high as possible starting in your freshman year and you will benefit! Good grades are important – There are not that many soccer scholarships! Your grades and test scores can make the difference in being selected for a scholarship. Maintain grades throughout high school and show admissions officers and potential coaches that you are able to handle the academic demands of college life.
 - If you hope to go to a top academic institution, it would be helpful to take honors courses during high school if you believe you can handle the load. Admission officers generally agree that receiving a 'B' in a tough course is often more significant than an 'A' in a frivolous one. Take the PSAT and Practice ACT tests, as they are offered to insure that you are prepared for the actual tests in future years.
 - Be sure that you begin to take courses that will ultimately fulfill the requirements of the NCAA. Speak with your counselor about classes meeting the NCAA requirements. Visit the NCAA website to learn which courses are required for Division I, Division II and Division III schools. In addition, consider NAIA schools. Start to design your course work accordingly.
- Begin a resume of community service activities, achievements, awards and academic results.
- Begin to explore how you will finance your education.

Sophomore Year

You may call coaches, but coaches CANNOT call or approach you. If the coach picks up the phone, they can speak with you. If your call goes to voice-mail, don't bother leaving a message, as they CANNOT return your call.

- Continue your emphasis on receiving the best grades possible. If you are pursuing a top academic school, take honors and AP courses when manageable. Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on track to take the 14-16 core courses (based on your intended graduation date) that are consistent with NCAA requirements for Division I and Division II schools. Many universities accept the NCAA academic requirements (see NCAA guide)
- Take the PSAT and Practice ACT tests, and possibly some actual SAT II tests following the completion of certain courses (i.e. biology, language, and math). Do not wait until your senior year to take the SAT II tests on courses you attended as a sophomore. Take the tests as you complete the course.
- Realistically consider your talent and the school that you might like to attend. Be honest in your personal assessment. Research colleges to determine which schools fit your academic and athletic abilities, by asking for literature and visiting various campuses.
- Complete your Soccer Profile/Resume and introduction letter
 - Start sending emails or letters to the coaches of schools that interest you (10-15). Inform them of your games/matches/tournaments
 - The more contacts you create, the more options you will have.
 - You are getting the message across that you are interested and that they should make a strong effort to find out more about you.
 - After you send the coach a resume/soccer profile, make sure to follow up with a phone call to reinforce your interest.
- Be visible to college coaches:
 - Attend College Showcases
 - Attend college soccer summer camps of schools you are interested in.

Junior Year

Beginning in March of your Junior year, you can receive one (1) phone call from a coach. During the month of April, you can receive one (1) visit on your HS campus. Starting on July 1st after your Junior year, off-campus contact and coach-initiated calls once per week are allowable.

On September 1st of your Junior year, college coaches are allowed to send you written (or emailed) correspondence as often as they like. All other rules remain the same.

- Continue the emphasis on your GPA and take the SAT, ACT and AP tests offered throughout the year. Be prepared to take the SAT twice or more. Remember that your GPA is the foundation for your ultimate success. Maintain YOUR highest academic standards. Meet with your counselor to plan your school year.
- Understand the academic requirements of the schools that you're interested in. Determine where your soccer and academic abilities stand, and approach the schools that are consistent with your level of achievement.
- Take "unofficial" visits (unpaid by the school) to the schools of your choice. Talk to students, admissions offices, and soccer coaches. Take campus tours and begin to narrow your list of schools.
 - Watch a practice or game
 - Gather applications to your schools of choice. Send for college applications at the beginning of the summer. You may begin receiving recruiting materials on September 1st of your Junior year.
- Continue corresponding through emails or letters of introduction, with Soccer Profiles/resumes to the coaches of the schools that interest you... Try to narrow down your college choices to 4 or 5.
 - Send out update letters or emails that outline where you will be playing during the year
 - Coaches prefer to pursue soccer players that have expressed serious interest in their school. **DO NOT WAIST THEIR TIME!**
- Establish positive relationships with potential coaches by adhering to the NCAA guidelines regarding contacting coaches and visitations.
- Attend college soccer camps.

Senior Year

Coaches are allowed to telephone you on July 1st, after your junior year. Coaches are allowed one (1) call per week, per household.

Coaches are allowed to visit the home of a recruit on or after July 1st. This will count as one (1) of three (3) contacts allowable by coaches. On-campus visits don't count.

After your Senior year begins, you can begin to make your 5 "official visits" to Division I schools (where the soccer program may pay for your visit on campus for a maximum 24 hours).

The official signing date is in February. All commitments up until then are considered "oral commitments".

- In the FALL, meet with your counselor to review your transcript, and to ensure your compliance with the NCAA requirements. Apply for your Student-Athlete status with NCAA Clearinghouse. 877-262- 1492.
- Retake the SAT/ACT if necessary (MAKE SURE you do not have scheduling conflicts!)
- Official Visits: You can make up to 5 official visits where the school hosts you and pays for you to come. You will tour the campus, meet the team, see a game, and stay overnight. Get to know the school and coach, and the team's style of play. Remember, the coach may not be continuously employed at the institution during your time attending the school. It is important that you settle on a school that "fits" your academic, athletic and personal needs. The college coaching profession is often unstable and subject to change!
 - You will have to send transcripts and test scores to the schools of your choice before you can visit officially.
- Get your applications in if you haven't already done so
- Keep up your grades throughout your senior year.
 - Some colleges will withdraw their enrollment invitation, and/or scholarship, if the student's academic performance declines in their senior year. This is no time for "senioritis."
- If you are accepted, finalize your admissions paperwork and Letters of Intent (if applicable) following NCAA regulations. A letter-of-Intent is usually sent out to you in February.

Questions to think about or to ask about regarding:

The College:

- Does the college offer the area of study you wish to pursue?
- Are athletes given preference in scheduling?
- Where is the college/university located?
- What is the expected enrollment of undergraduates and graduates?
- What are the standard class sizes?
- What are the student housing options?
- What transportation is available?
- What is campus-life like?
- Is tutoring offered to student-athletes? If so, Is there a fee?

The Soccer Coach and Team:

- In what division and conference does the team play?
- What **is** the team's record?
- What are the coach's goals for the team?
- What is their style of play? Would you be comfortable with the coach's coaching style?
- How many players will be on the roster and how many will travel with the team?
- What does the pre-season entail?
- What does the regular season entail? Practice, games, etc?
- What happens during the off-season? Is there a break?
- What is the spring season like?
- How will the team's composition change with seniors leaving and red-shirt players returning?
- Which positions is the coach looking for, and how many others are already playing there or are being recruited?
- What type of medical coverage exists for athletes?
- Is there a weight-training program? How much does the coach value that?

Scholarship Concerns:

- If not offered a scholarship, is the player a candidate for admission as a Walk-On player? (*Definition of "Walk-On": Someone who may or may not have been recruited. It is someone who doesn't have a spot on the team before coming to college and "walks on" to the team by trying out and being good enough to be selected to the team.*)
- If offered a scholarship, what expenses are covered, what is its duration, and under what conditions can it be terminated?
- If a player on scholarship is injured and can't play, will the scholarship be forfeit?

What's the difference between Divisions I, II and III?

http://www.ncaa.org/about/div_criteria.html

Division I

Division I member institutions have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season has to be represented by each gender as well. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball, Div. I schools must play 100% of the minimum number of contests against Div. I opponents -- anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50% Div. I. Men's and women's basketball teams have to play all but two games against Div. I teams, for men, they must play 1/3 of all their contests in the home arena. Schools that have football are classified as Div. I-A or I-AA. I-A football schools are usually fairly elaborate programs. Div. I-A teams have to meet minimum attendance requirements (17,000 people in attendance per home game, OR 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years or, 30,000 permanent seats in their stadium and average 17,000 per home game or 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years OR, be in a member conference in which at least six conference members sponsor football or more than half of football schools meet attendance criterion. Div. I-AA teams do not need to meet minimum attendance requirements. Div. I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Div. I school cannot exceed.

Division II

Division II institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season represented by each gender. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria -- football and men's and women's basketball teams must play at least 50% of their games against Div. II or I-A or I-AA opponents. For sports other than football and basketball there are no scheduling requirements. There are not attendance requirements for football, or arena game requirements for basketball. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Div. II school must not exceed. Division II teams usually feature a number of local or in-state student-athletes. Many Division II student-athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans and employment earnings. Division II athletics programs are financed in the institution's budget like other academic departments on campus. Traditional rivalries with regional institutions dominate schedules of many Division II athletics programs.

Division III

Division III institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season represented by each gender. There are minimum contest and participant minimums for each sport. Division III athletics features student-athletes who receive no financial aid related to their athletic ability and athletic departments are staffed and funded like any other department in the university. Division III athletics departments place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators. The student-athlete's experience is of paramount concern. Division III athletics encourages participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities available to students, placing primary emphasis on regional in-season and conference competition.