



**College Preparation Manual
2014**

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Introduction

Parents and players often seek information on the college soccer and recruitment process. They are not sure where to turn for information. There are so many questions to ask. How do I begin the recruitment process? How important are SAT scores? When do I contact a college coach? What is the NCAA Clearinghouse? It is very important to know that there is no one path to take when looking to play college soccer. Each school and coach may handle the process differently for their programs.

This document has been created with the hopes that it helps you find the perfect college and soccer program for your needs and skills. All of this information has been gathered from interviews, web sites and various articles. It has been provided as a starting point for your recruiting journey. Do NOT use this document as your only source of information. Talk to your coach, visit your school counselors and research this topic yourself using the internet.

Schools and coaches look for good athletes that are also good students. The most important thing to remember is to work hard and keep your grades up. You should be a student first and an athlete second.

It is also important that you check with each prospective school and their umbrella organization to make sure of their policies, scholarship availability, rules and programs. There are differences between those umbrella organizations rules.

For example, the NCAA Division I and II, NCAA Division III and NAIA have different rules for what coaches may do during the recruitment process. Do your homework and remember to ask questions. Crossfire Oregon hopes that the information provided in this manual will help you answer some of your questions and point you to the right sources for additional information. There are some guidelines that will help you as you prepare for this exciting, yet sometimes intimidating, process.

Getting Started A Suggested/Timeline for High School Students

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

Freshman Year - (Focus on training and academics)

- Work on securing a high GPA (2.4 minimum but shoot for a 3.5)
- Work hard during your HS soccer season, talk with your coach & find out what you need to work on to play better
- Participate on a top level club soccer team with top level training
- Participate in top quality tournaments with your club team

Sophomore Year - (Focus on training& academics --- start researching potential colleges)

(Coaches cannot call or write you yet, only send general information and camp information, so don't be disappointed if you write a coach and they do not write you back

- Keep your grades up!
- Begin compiling a list of possible colleges or universities that meet your interests and research their academic and athletic programs. Be realistic with yourself about your athletic and academic abilities. If you can narrow the field down to 5 to 10 by the end of your sophomore year, you're in good shape.
- Take the PSATs. While not the same as the SAT or ACT tests, the PSAT will give you an idea of what to expect when you do take them.
- Review NCAA Clearinghouse eligibility requirements. The summer before your junior year, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Select junior year courses to fulfill these requirements.
- Play at the highest level possible. Keep a record of athletic achievements.
- STUDY, STUDY, STUDY and continue working on improving your GPA.
- Continue with a top-level soccer club and attending quality soccer tournaments.
- Meet with your High School and club soccer coach to discuss your soccer development & college opportunities.
- Attend all "College Night" sessions & gather information on potential colleges.
- Obtain information about potential colleges via the internet, college guides, school counselor, etc.
- You may send initial emails to "Potential College" coaches stating your interest in their program.
- When you go to a tournament, any tournament, make sure you e-mail the coaches of the schools in which you're interested.
- Double your emphasis on school work. DO NOT let anything slide.

Junior Year - (Begin the recruiting process)

(As of September 1, coaches can return correspondence and write letters, but cannot call until on or after July 1 before your senior year).

- Keep your grades up!
- Send college coaches an updated resume and player profile, send dates of tournaments and league games.
- Organize a filing system on colleges that respond to your inquiry and indicate interest. You will need names and phone numbers of coaches and also when they indicated interest.
- Make a list of all the colleges/universities you have been in contact with and rank them in order starting with your favorite school (based on what you know at this point) down to your least favorite school.
- Most likely, if you are calling a coach, you will get his or her voicemail. Practice leaving a message beforehand. You can even call yourself and leave a practice voicemail on your cell phone. If you do get in touch with a coach, make sure you take notes on the conversation. Also, keep a list of your top five questions to ask and make sure that these questions cannot be answered by looking on the Web site.
- Play in College Showcase and summer tournaments.
- Attend any recruitment seminars at these tournaments. Also attend College Fairs and register your sport with each college.
- Consider attending the summer camp of a school of interest, or one which has a lot of college coaches on staff.
- Narrow your search to 5 or so schools and engage in regular correspondence with the coach.
- Make unofficial visits (at your expense) to selected schools. Meet with the coach and see the team play, if possible.
- Take the SAT or ACT tests. Make sure scores are sent to your schools of interest.
- Check your status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Select senior year courses to complete Clearinghouse requirements.
- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.
- Obtain financial form (FAFSA).
- Check with local school counselor for SAT & ACT registration deadlines & take SAT/ACT tests.
- Continue researching your "Preferred Colleges" & their Soccer Programs.
- Be proactive! Send emails to "Preferred College" coaches stating your interest in their program.

- Send “Preferred College” coaches your tournaments and league schedules.
- Obtain “Letters of Recommendations” & develop a “Reference” list.
- Follow up with “Preferred College” coaches by completing any questionnaires, resumes, etc.
- Continue with a top-level soccer club and attending quality soccer.
- Create a “college profile” that documents who you are, the teams you’ve played for, the tournaments you’ve played in, what your academic interests are, and what your academic record is. Keep this profile up to date with additions to your academic and soccer record.
- If you will be considering a DI or DII school, you should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at the beginning of your junior year. Go to the Eligibility Center’s website at <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/> for specific information on registering and the documents you will need to supply for the Center to determine your eligibility. See also the NCAA FAQ on determining eligibility and the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete on the NCAA’s eligibility page at: <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Eligibility/>.
DO NOT LET THIS SLIDE. You cannot make an “official” visit to a campus unless you have been cleared by the EligibilityCenter.
- Two weeks and then again a week prior to every tournament, e-mail the coach about the tournament: your team’s name, shirt color, your shirt #, match schedule, field locations.

Senior Year - (College coaches and players make their decisions)

(As of September 1, coaches can return correspondence and write letters, but cannot call until on or after July 1 before your senior year).

- Keep your grades up!
- Send coaches updated resume and player profile, send dates of tournaments and games.
- Organize a filing system on colleges that respond to your inquiry and indicate interest. You will need names and phones numbers of coaches and also when they indicated interest.
- Make a list of all the colleges/universities you have been in contact with and rank them in order starting with your favorite school (based on what you know at this point) down to your least favorite school.
- Play in College Showcase tournaments and summer tournaments.
- Attend any recruitment seminars at these tournaments. Also attend College Fairs and register your sport with each college.
- Consider attending the summer camp of a school of interest, or one which has a lot of college coaches on staff.
- Narrow your search to 10 or so schools and engage in regular correspondence with the coach.
- Make unofficial visits (at your expense) to selected schools. Meet with the coach and see the team play, if possible.

- You can take the SATs/ACTs as many times as you want. Most students take them once late in their junior year and again late in the Fall of their senior year. If the results you're getting do not meet with what you need for the schools on your list, seriously consider an SAT prep course, especially if you're "on the bubble" of good results for a particular school regarding academic financial aid. (Many schools have a "threshold" SAT/ACT score that qualifies a student for academic financial aid. Sometimes the threshold is combined with your GPA and/or your class rank. If your SAT/ACT scores are close but not quite there, a prep course could get you over the hump.) If you are considering a DI or DII school, make sure that you are also sending your test results to the NCAA Eligibility Center www.eligibilitycenter.org
- Check your status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Select senior year courses to complete Clearinghouse requirements.
- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.
- Obtain financial form (FAFSA).
- College coaches can make contact with you after July 1 between your junior and senior year.
- Narrow your "Preferred College List" to about 3-5 schools & continue talking to those coaches.
- Arrange for Official visit & interviews.
- Apply to at least three schools for possible admissions & inform your school counselor.
- Review acceptances & soccer offers--- then choose the school of your choice.
- Notify the college you have chosen & notify other colleges coaches of your decision.
- Sign "National Letter of Intent" --- signing begins in February.
- Note – File Financial Aid Forms by January 1st.
- Suggestion: Take time to thank all the coaches, mentors, & others that may have helped you along the process
- Begin completing and sending the applications to the schools on your list as early as you can. Pay close attention to the application calendars of these schools. Make sure that you have the application and whatever other documentation the school requires submitted on time. Some programs at some schools may have additional requirements (e.g., interview, auditions, tests, portfolios, etc.) beyond those of the general application itself. Make sure you know what they are if any of them apply to you. If you are looking for an early admissions decision, you will have to pay very close attention to the requirements for it.
- Wait for the good news! Some schools having rolling admissions so you might hear about your acceptance soon after you apply. More selective schools generally don't send out their acceptances until mid-April.
- Continue to maintain contact with the coaches. E-mail them to let them know that you have submitted your application. They can help you track down the status of your application.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

One of the most important decisions a young person will make while in high school is the choice of a college to attend. If the student is fortunate to be both academically and athletically qualified, then opportunities exist to secure a college scholarship. A number of factors need to be taken into account when selecting a college such as:

- Local vs away-from-home
- Commuting vs residential campus
- Large vs small school
- Area of academic interest
- The cost of education

College Planning Tips

It is up to you to figure out which school is right for you. Here are a few things to consider when you choose to apply to a college.

I. Location

There are colleges in every living environment you can imagine, from tiny towns in Iowa to the middle of New York City. If you have always lived in the suburbs, choosing an urban campus can be an adventure. See how you feel after a week of urban life, the variety of people, and the fast paced life and see if you miss a calmer campus and open space. On the other side, if you are used to the suburbs and mall life and choose a college in a rural area, you just might run to the Student Center some night looking for noise, lights, and people. Think about where you grew up and how much of a change you want from that when you go to college. We suggest you take “un-official” campus visits, talk to the students, tour the campus and city and spend more than a couple of days. Either way, make sure if you choose a school in the north, you like snow or in the south where typically it is sunshine most everyday.

II. Size

Colleges come in all sizes, from a school in New York like Hartwick College that enrolls 2,500 students to schools like Pennsylvania State, which can enroll 30,000 or more. Which one is better? Well, that depends on you and what you want. If you grew up in a small town and went to a small high school or in a large city and attended a high school with a senior class of 3,000 only you can choose which best fits your goals. Whether you grew up in a city or a rural area you will need to consider factors like student-teacher ratio and if you want to be a person or a number. Ask yourself, if you like being places where everybody knows you, or do you like the anonymity of a crowd? Once you evaluate your goals, then making a clear and concise choice will be easy.

III. Type

Not all colleges are the same. Some have large graduate programs and devote much of their time and resources to research while others are small Liberal Arts schools with various programs of study offered. Some schools have a specialty in one specific area, like Colorado School of Mines who specialize in math and engineering, Southern Methodist University who offer Business and Law programs or Florida International University a university that offers business with hospitality being a specialty. Others schools might be best known for giving their students a broad education. Other factors include whether a school is single sex or coed, if they have a religious affiliation, and whether they are public or private. There are also historically black colleges, schools with co-op programs where you earn money while going to school, and schools with large evening and part-time programs. The options are almost limitless.

IV. Distance

While location and distance are similar issues, how far from home you want to be just might be as important. For some going to college is a chance to explore a different part of the country. For other students and their parents having dinner with their family once a week may also be important.

While lots of kids will say ... I can't wait to go away to school and in many cases the parents are ready for them to go ... the bottom line is how likely you are to get homesick, and how much money you can afford to spend in travel. The farther you are from home, the less often you'll be able to visit. On the other hand, with email and cell phones, you can still feel close to home even if you're in California and your family is in Texas. Reaching out and communicating is easy if you are mature and ready to take on the challenge.

V. Tuition/Scholarships & Financial Aid

The cost of a college education is approximately \$125,000 and in the next 15 years the cost is expected to exceed \$200,000. While this seems expensive and almost out of reach to some families, cost should not be the only reason you and your family pass on a certain college or university. While cost is a top consideration when the topic of paying for college comes up, remember not all colleges cost the same. There are different types of financial aid programs at different schools and with so many scholarships available, paying for college can be easier than you might think. Your grades are worth money, your community service is worth money, your athletic ability may be worth money. In addition, where your parents work just might have scholarship dollars to give. Half the battle is asking and applying.

For example, if you lived in Texas and applied to the University of Texas, because it is a Public University the tuition is lower for in-state residents. The same is true for all public college and university programs where you live. Fees for out-of-state residents are usually pretty similar to private schools so consider all the factors when choosing a college or university. For a Private institution it does not matter if you live 2 blocks away or 2,000 miles away the price is still the same and because it is private, it is very selective in the admissions process. While both offer scholarships both academically and athletically narrowing your choices to the school that will give you the best advantage after graduation is important. Of the private schools the only ones that don't offer scholarships athletically are the Ivy League schools, they are need based and if you show need, they will show you money. Again, with so many privately-funded scholarships available that go un-claimed each year you can help cover part of the cost of your education if you are serious. Do some research to identify scholarships and then apply.

VI. Admissions/Degrees Conferred

If you know what field you want to go into after college, it's important to make sure you go to college somewhere that will prepare you for your chosen profession. If you are un-sure, consider Liberal Arts – either way you will need to declare your major by the end of your second year. If you want to be a doctor, you will want to pursue programs with a strong pre-med offering. Like many students entering their freshman year of college, you might not know what you want to do, so having options is important. Here is a tip, if you are not good in math, don't pursue a degree in Engineering or Architecture since these are heavy in math.

Some schools require students to take classes in a wide variety of subjects during their Freshman and Sophomore years. These schools are great for students who either want a well-rounded education or are trying to figure out what area to focus on. Other schools let students just dive in to their chosen majors without a lot of other requirements. These schools are great for focused students who know what they want to do and don't want to spend their time in classes that won't help them in their major.

VII. Athletics and Events

If you are an athlete and are being recruited, this may also improve your chances of getting admitted to your choice of schools. Are you a sports fan? The sound of a marching band and the sight of a football uniform just might make the difference. At some schools, sports are the order of the day, the main social activity on most students' calendars. Maybe you're really into going to live concerts, or you love nothing better than to go hiking in the woods. If you like to spend your free time going to shows at clubs, you probably won't be happy at a small school in the countryside where few acts stop on tour.

VIII. The Campus Visit

Your first stop on a campus visit is the visitor center or admissions office, where you will meet with a counselor or academic advisor. Take advantage of your visit and become familiar with the college by arriving 30 minutes or more before your appointment to tour and walk around the campus and talk to staff members and to browse through student newspapers that are available. This will give you a "glimpse" into college life and what it might be like for you.

For Parents:

Most organized campus visits include such campus facilities as dormitories, dining halls, libraries, student activity and recreation centers, and the health and student services centers. Some may only be pointed out, while you will walk through others. Bulletin boards in dormitories and student centers contain a wealth of information about campus activities, student concerns, and campus groups. Read the posters, notices, and messages to learn what really interests students. Unlike ads in the school newspaper, posters put up by students advertise both on- and off-campus events, so they will give you an idea of what is also available in the surrounding community.

As you walk through various buildings, examine their condition carefully. Here are some things to look for:

- Are the buildings safe?
- Are the exteriors and interiors of the building clean?
- Is the equipment in the classrooms up-to-date or outdated?
- Pay particular attention to the dorms and campus, especially safety. Ask about security measures. Are the dorms noisy or quiet?
- Are the dorms crowded?
- How good is the lighting?
- Where are the dorms located?
- Do all athletes stay in one area or are they part of the general campus living?
- Are the dorms in one main area?
- Who has access to the dormitories in addition to students?
- What security measures are available for students entering and leaving the dorms?
- Can students request escorts to their residences late at night?
- Do campus shuttle buses run at frequent intervals all night?
- Are "blue-light" telephones liberally placed throughout the campus for students to use to call for help?
- Do the campus police patrol the campus regularly?

Make a List of Colleges

Draft a tentative list of colleges that interest you. Your list may include schools in your area, schools that have a particular major of interest to you, or schools you know very little about. Your list may be long but in the early stages you don't want to eliminate any school you are curious about. It is very important that you look at the school for its academic programs as well as its athletic programs.

Your academic experience in college is what will provide an important foundation for your chosen career path after college. Not many players plan to be professional athletes. In addition, it's not uncommon for an injury to happen that could end your college soccer career. You want to end up at a place that you will enjoy attending even if you never play athletics there.

Here are some questions that may aid you in your college selection.

- Would I choose this college even if I am not playing on the team?
- Would I be happy sitting on the bench and not playing much?
- Would I still select this college if there is a different coach?
- Was I comfortable there both academically and athletically?
- Did the staff and team seem to get along and care about each other?
- How does the coach motivate the team?
- Were the team and staff friendly? Enthusiastic? Honest? Supportive? Sincere? Caring?

Educate yourself about the Colleges on your List

After you have created your list of schools, research the schools. Read everything you can find on the school. Look at their Web page, read their press releases on their Web page, check college resource books, talk to your school counselor, read the teams homepage as well.

Guides you may want to look at include: Peterson's Four-Year Colleges, The Big Book of Colleges, Fiske Guide to Colleges, The Best 366 Colleges, The College Board College Handbook, Official Athletic Guide to Soccer, or the Women's Soccer Guide: The Official Athletic College Guide, Over 1,100 Women's Scholarship Programs Listed (Official Athletic College Guide Soccer Women). Make sure and talk to your Club and High School Coaches about various college programs.

The University of Florida also maintains a Web page that lists links to US colleges and universities that offer bachelors and master's degrees.

That link is: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/au/>

NCAA Guidelines

Students that plan to compete in athletics at the college level must meet certain eligibility requirements set forth by the NCAA. Students who have not met the NCAA eligibility requirements will not be allowed to participate in college athletics. The following link to may assist you in this process.

For information go to:

<https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/>

NCAA Initial-eligibility Clearinghouse

Students who plan to compete in athletics at the Division I or Division II college level must complete the NCAA Clearinghouse form in order to be eligible. Division III does not use the eligibility Center. There is a \$30 registration fee. To pay online you will need to use a credit card. The steps for registering on line are as follows:

1. Go to the NCAA Clearinghouse web site at <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>
2. Once there, click on PROSPECTIVE STUDENT-ATHLETE
3. Once on the Welcome to student information page, click on DOMESTIC STUDENT RELEASE FORM
4. Once on the Student release form (U.S.) page, complete this page accurately
5. Print an extra copy of your student release form for your counselor.
6. You will still need to notify your counselor that you registered on line so that your transcript will be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

What are the Divisions of the NCAA?

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, Division I schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents -- anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50 percent Division I.

Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed.

For a list of member schools/sports link: <http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=1>

Division II

Division II institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, (or four for men and six 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. 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 Division 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. For a list of member schools/sports link:

<http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=2>

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.

For a list of member schools/sports link: <http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=3>

What is the NAIA?

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has different eligibility requirements for student-athletes. To be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics as an incoming freshman, two of the following three requirements must be met:

1. Have a 2.0 (C) or higher cumulative final grade point average in high school.
2. Have a composite score of 18 or higher on the ACT Assessment or an 860 total score or higher on the SAT I on a single test administered on a national test date.
3. Have a top-half final class rank in his or her high school graduating class.

Student-athletes must also have on file at the college an official ACT Assessment or SAT I score report from the appropriate national testing center. Results reported on the student's high school transcript are not acceptable. Students must request that their test scores be forwarded to the college's admission office. If you have additional questions about NAIA eligibility, contact them at: NAIA, 23500 W. 105 Street, P.O. Box 1325, Olathe, Kansas 66051-1325 or by phone at 413-971-0044 or on-line at: <http://www.naia.org>.

For a list of member schools: <http://www.naia.org/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=205322922>

For rules on financial aid, campus visits, etc. refer to Article II:
<http://www.naia.org/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=205322931>

What is the NJCAA?

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is the governing body of intercollegiate athletics for two-year colleges. As such, its programs are designed to meet the unique needs of a diverse group of student-athletes who come from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds and whose purpose in selecting a junior college may be as varied as their experiences before attending college. For information on schools and eligibility requirements go

to: <http://www.njcaa.org/>

For a list of member schools by gender and sport: <http://www.njcaa.org/colleges.cfm>

What is the NCCAA?

The National Christian College Athletic Association was incorporated to provide a Christian-based organization that functions uniquely as a national and international agency for the promotion of outreach and ministry, and for the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of intercollegiate athletic competition with a Christian perspective. For information on schools and eligibility requirements go to: <http://www.thenccaa.org/>

For a list of member schools by region: <http://www.thenccaa.org/>

What if you are Home-Schooled?

Home schooled students who want to play DI or II college sports must register with the clearinghouse and meet the same requirements as all other students. After registering, the home-schooled student must send the following information to the eligibility center:

- Standardized test scores must be on an official transcript from a traditional high school or be sent directly from the testing agency.
- Transcript listing credits earned and grades.
- Proof of high school graduation.
- Evidence that home schooling was conducted in accordance with state law.
- List of texts used throughout home schooling (including text titles, publisher and in which courses it was used).

For more information refer to the NCAA website at www.ncaa.org. It is important for you to check with the colleges you are interested in to verify your courses and any other requirements.

Academic Standards

Here are some basic things all high school athletes should know if they hope to play college soccer.

The NCAA Eligibility Center verifies the academic and amateur status of all student-athletes who wish to compete in Division I or II athletics.

College-bound student-athletes who want to practice, compete and receive athletically related financial aid during their first year at a Division I or II school need to meet the following requirements:

- Graduate from high school.
- Complete a minimum of 16 core courses for Division I or II.
- Earn a minimum required grade-point average in core courses.
- Earn a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT.
- Request final amateurism certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center.

For Division I student-athletes who will enroll in August 1, 2016 and later, the requirements to compete in the first year will change. In addition to the above standards, students must:

- Earn at least a 2.3 grade-point average in core courses.
- Meet an increased sliding-scale standard (for example, an SAT score of 820 requires a 2.5 high school core course GPA)
- Successfully complete 10 of the 16 total required core courses before the start of their seventh semester in high school. Seven of the 10 courses must be successfully completed in English, math and science.

Students that earn at least a 2.0 GPA but not a 2.3 GPA and meet the current sliding scale standard (for example, an SAT score of 1,010 requires a 2.025 high school core course GPA) will be eligible for practice in the first term and athletically related financial aid the entire year, but not competition. Freshmen who are academically successful in the first term will earn the ability to continue to practice for the remainder of the year.

Division III colleges and universities set their own admission standards. The NCAA does not set initial eligibility requirements in Division III.

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/ncaa/home/index.html>

NCAA RULES

National Collegiate Athletic Association

700 W. Washington Street

P.O. Box 6222

Indianapolis, IN 46206

<http://www.ncaa.org>

NAIA RULES

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Headquarters

23500 W. 105th St.

P.O. Box 1325

Olathe, KS 66051

Phone (913) 791-0044

<http://www.naia.org/>

NJCAA RULES

National Junior College Athletic Association

1755 Telstar Drive, Suite 103

Colorado Spring, Colorado 80920

Phone: 719-590-9788

Fax: 719-590-7324

<http://www.njcaa.org>

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

NCAA Clearinghouse

2255 North Dubuque Rd.

P.O. Box 4044

Iowa City, IA 52243-4044

Customer Service Line: 877/262-1492 (8 am -5 pm CST) or 24-hr voice response: 877/861-3003

<http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>

What is the FAFSA?

The first step for obtaining financial aid is to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.org.

The biggest mistake a lot of families make is not filling the FAFSA out because they think their family income is too high. This could not be further from the truth. Every family, regardless of income, has an EFC (estimated family contribution) number and the LOWER your EFC, the more aid you will receive. Even if you may not receive a significant amount of financial aid, you should still complete the FAFSA because it can act as an insurance policy for your son/daughter's education. If there is a change or loss of income or an emergency in your family; you will not be eligible for college funds if you do not complete the FAFSA on an annual basis. The first date you may submit the FAFSA is January 1 of senior year. Submit the FAFSAS on this date or as soon after as possible! University financial aid budgets are limited and are awarded on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you submit your FAFSA, the better your chances of receiving aid. Each college/university has a specific deadline and at a certain point, the money does run out.

National Letter of Intent

The National Letter of Intent is a voluntary program administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center. When you sign NLI, your child agrees to attend the institution for one academic year. In exchange, that institution must provide athletics financial aid for one academic year. If you have questions about the NLI call 317-223-0706 or visit the NLI Web site at www.national-letter.org

When Can a College Coach Talk to a High School Prospect?

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

There can be a lot of confusion about contacting college coaches, especially if you are new to the recruiting game. This is the time of year when athletes start thinking a lot about getting calls from a college coach and there are usually a lot of questions surrounding the topic.

Is it okay for an athlete to call a coach? When can a coach call an athlete? Are there any rules to be aware of when you are hoping to be recruited by a college coach? To help simplify this, here are a few simple tips to guide your future interaction with college coaches:

- A college coach can only call or visit you after July of your junior year in high school. That means a coach cannot place an outbound call to you, nor can he initiate a visit to your home or school specifically to talk to you about playing a sport at his or her college, until the summer before your senior year. Remember, this deals only with outbound communication from a coach.
- You can call or meet with a coach at any point in your high school career. That's right; you can call a coach whenever you want. The key here is that you are the one initiating contact with the coach and not the other way around. If you want to call a coach or visit a campus and set up a meeting with the coach, you may do so as often as you wish.

- You can take as many campus visits as you would like when considering a sports scholarship offer. Again, the key here is that you are the one initiating the visit. What about those five “official” visits that you often hear about big-time athletes making to schools when they are seniors? Those are visits that the school pays for. A prospective student-athlete can only take five official visits that are paid for by schools during his or her high school career.
- Be proactive about the process! Take control! What does it mean if a College Coach sends a questionnaire? Colleges may ask you to complete an on-line questionnaire or mail you one to complete. It is a way for them to get initial information on you. Why is responding to all College Coaches is Important? Most prospective student-athletes will receive some contact from colleges, in the form of general admissions information, questionnaires, and/or emails from college coaches. Many student-athletes make the mistake of disregarding correspondence from colleges and coaches they are not initially interested in. No college contact should be neglected! The following is a list of reasons why you should respond to EVERYONE:
 - If you are receiving general admissions information, especially if you are an underclassman – respond anyway! A lot of coaches put underclassmen’s names on admissions lists to see if they will respond.
 - If you do not respond to a coach, or return their questionnaire, they will stop recruiting you.
 - Your opinion may change. Once you research a college and talk to a coach, you are bound to learn something new. You never know which college or program might be a good fit for you.
 - The more coaches you communicate with, the more familiar you’ll become with the types of questions college coaches ask. This practice will prepare you for email exchanges and conversation with coaches at your favorite colleges/universities.
 - By investigating many different types of colleges, you will have a better idea of your likes and dislikes in a college/university.
 - College coaches change jobs! You might ignore a coach because you are not interested their program, only to have them get hired at one of your top choices.
 - College coaches are friends with one another, and they don’t appreciate it when a student-athlete ignores a contact. You never want to give anyone something bad to say about you!
 - It is just common courtesy. If a coach takes the time to send you some information, you owe them a response.
 - Responding to a college coach will demonstrate that you are mature and responsible. For example, most of the information asked on the questionnaire is to test your responsibility and ability to follow directions, and to see if you are interested in the college/university. Remember, it will only take a little bit of your time, and will definitely be worth it if you are keeping in touch with every college/university that you hear from. Who knows – it may even be the one you decide upon!

How to Contact a Coach

Initial Interest Letter/Cover Letters

The letter you compose should be short and direct. The letter is a way to request information and introduce you to the coach as a prospective student-athlete. Here are some things to include:

- Your name, high school, current grade level.
- Your home address, email address, phone number. (It is suggested that you give them a home number instead of or in addition to your cell, since it may not always be convenient for you to talk to them on your cell phone).
- High school soccer experience, years of varsity experience, team accomplishments, and personal awards.
- Current club team, recent team accomplishments
- Academic interests

How to plan a Campus Recruiting Visit

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

The best way to learn about a college or university is to visit. While on campus you can get a feel for the school. Try to visit while school is in session. If you visit over the summer, keep in mind many colleges do offer summer programs, therefore the students you see on campus may not be full-time students. At many D-III schools no summer classes are offered.

While on campus, schedule time to visit with the soccer coach. Meeting with a coach is a great opportunity to ask questions about the school and the soccer program. It may also help you decide if you like the coach. It is also a great time to market yourself to the coach.

You should plan to take a photocopy of your transcript so the coach can see what kind of student you are. Also bring your athletic resume if the coach does not have it on file. Bring a parent—they may ask questions you won't. Most importantly, try to establish an open dialogue with the coach. It is also important for college coaches to be honest with you.

What is An Official Visit?

Although you are always welcome to visit college campuses at your own expense, you are limited to five official visits in which the college pays for part of all of your expenses.

Completion of the SAT and ACT and a high school transcript are prerequisites to an official visit, and you may only go on an official visit after the first day of your senior classes in high school. Usually an official visit consists of an overnight stay where you will have a member of the soccer team as your host. You will meet the coach and the team, learn more about the program, attend a class and possibly attend a sporting event. You may also meet other recruited athletes there for a visit. While there, talk to people and learn as much as you can. Here are some things you should do in advance of a visit:

- Decide where to meet the coach.
- Get their number to avoid a mix-up.
- Get the time schedule for your visit.
- Ask for the names of your contacts on campus.
- Find out who is paying for any tickets or meals.
- Ask what to bring.
- Ask to meet with department chair in your area of interest.
- Ask to meet with admissions to understand procedure and ask questions.
- Try to see the campus on a regular school day while class is in session.
- Visit with players. Talk with the freshmen and sophomores to get their perspective on first-year experiences.
- Take notes regarding your visit.
- Always write a thank-you letter to the coach after your visit.

Things to Do When You Visit a School and Talk to the Coach

- Do your homework about the school. Know something about the programs it offers and the academic environment. Make sure the school offers the programs in which you're interested. Do your homework about the soccer program. Go to the team's website and read the bios of the coaches, descriptions of the program, schedule/past results, and team roster. You can get an idea of how widely a coach recruits by looking at the hometowns of the players. You can also get an idea of the quality of players recruited by looking at the player bios. Not all schools have this kind of data about their athletes on their website but many do.

When you talk to the coach, make sure the conversation is not a one way street from the coach to you. Be prepared with some questions. Remember, as much as he is interviewing you, you are interviewing him. Coaches appreciate candidates who are trying to get as much information as possible to make the best decisions about their futures. Coaches want players who come into a situation fully informed and with their eyes wide open. They want to make sure that a player is coming to their school for the right reasons. Recruiting you costs the coach precious money from his budget; he does not want to make a mistake about recruiting you into his program.

Some things you might want to ask:

- Will the coach waive the college's application fee for you? Some coaches will do this. If you're applying to a lot of colleges, this can save your parents a fair piece of change. It doesn't hurt to ask.
- When does pre-season start? (Generally the date is set by the NCAA but you might have to show up anywhere from one to 3 or 4 days early for inprocessing.)
- Describe the summer conditioning program.
- What is the team's style of play?
- How many players does he/she generally carry on the roster? How many players does he/she usually try to bring into a freshman class? How many does he/she project might be in your class should you elect to go there?

- When is practice? What happens if there's an unavoidable academic conflict between practice and classes? Between a weekday game and classes? You need to get a real good idea about how strict a coach is going to be about missed practices. In almost all instances, you will be required to make up the missed event in some way. Many programs will require a player to engage in extra fitness activities either before or after the next practice she attends. In some instances when there are both men's and women's teams, especially if the coach for both is the same, if you miss a practice with your team, you can make that up by practicing with the men's team.
- What kind of activities does the team engage in off-season? Most teams, especially DI schools, will at least have required off-season conditioning activities. They might also have required indoor play that's run by team captains, not coaches.
- Describe the team's spring practice/play activities.
- Do all team members live in a specific dorm on campus?
- Do athletes get preferential course scheduling? This happens at nearly all DI and DII schools and many DIII schools. The preferential scheduling will help you schedule your classes around practices but probably not games. Assume that you WILL miss some classes for away games.
- Do team members have a required nightly "study hall"? Most DI/DII programs and some DIII programs have this kind of academic support for their athletes, particularly for freshmen. It will seem like a pain to you to always have to go to the study hall every night but it's worth it. NCAA statistics that compare colleges with such programs with those that don't show a much higher success rate for their athletes, especially freshmen.
- Do team members have access to mentoring/tutoring support for specific classes/disciplines?
- Does the coach track players' academic performance during the semester? How often do they get reports?
- How many FTE athletic scholarships does the soccer program have? NCAA DI schools are authorized 14 FTE scholarships for women and 9.9 for men IF they are fully funded. Not all are. And some DI school offer no athletic scholarships at all (e.g., Ivy League schools don't). The coach is free to split up these scholarships any way he/she pleases. Thus, some players might be getting a full ride tho they will be in the minority and there might not be any at all. Most players will have a fractional scholarship, e.g., 1/4 ride. As a freshman, unless you're a real "blue chipper", do not expect a full ride or even close to one. As you mature in a program and prove your worth, you would likely see an increase in your athletic scholarship. That's why it's important to do well academically in high school and to get as high a score on the SATs as possible.
- If you are considering a DI or DII school, freshmen are typically at the end of the line for athletic financial aid and get the smallest piece of the pie if they get any at all. Ask the coach how you go about "earning" more scholarship money. Is getting additional athletic financial aid based on whether or not you start, the number of minutes you play, something else? What are the criteria?

- If you are considering a DI or DII school, ask what types of aid, other than athletic financial aid, might affect the amount of athletic aid you get? Some types of aid will affect the amount and some won't. If the coach does not have the answer (he should but might not), either ask him to get the answer from the school's Financial Aid Office or you get the answer from that office.

Be prepared to answer some questions from the coach about yourself:

- Why are you interested in this school?
- What do you think you want to major in?
- How are you doing academically?
- Why do you think you want to play soccer in college? Why here?
- Positions you've played/like to play.
- Level of play of your club and high school teams.
- Systems of play you've experienced (e.g., 4-4-2 flatback 4; 3-5-2, etc.)
- Strengths/weaknesses.
- What other schools are you considering?

Marketing Yourself

The essence of the process to become a college soccer player is a successful marketing campaign. You **MUST** get yourself on the radar of the coaches at the schools in which you are interested or they will not know you exist. Even if you attend a dozen college showcase tournaments in a year, if you have not told the college coaches who are at the tournaments that you are interested in their schools, they will not know who you are and will not know to watch you play.

Be Brutally Honest About Your Skills but Don't Sell Yourself Short

There is a tendency on the part of many athletes to sell themselves short where the subtext is "I can't do this or that well and therefore I can't really expect to play at a Division I [or II or III] level." Simply because you can't do X or Y as good as some other player does not mean there isn't a place for you on an intercollegiate soccer team.

The point of this is that you do not have to be an ODP player to play college soccer. Coaches are looking for players with solid skills and, if yours are (they are or you wouldn't be on the teams you're on), you can play college soccer.

Getting on the Radar

Getting yourself on a coach's radar is fairly easy but keeping yourself there requires some persistence on your part. You can't be content with one or two e-mails. You have to keep it up over time. It used to be that college coaches did not begin recruiting prospects more than two years in advance of their actual attendance at the coaches' schools; you could start the "on the radar" process in your junior year. More and more now coaches begin identifying potential recruits up to three years (or more) out from their actual attendance dates. Thus you need to begin thinking seriously about the recruiting process in your sophomore year in high school.

The first thing you need to do is to spend some time deciding on the colleges you might want to attend. Your high school guidance counselor has excellent resources to help you sort out the decisions you will have to make. The bottom line, though, is that you will need to narrow down the range of eventual possible choices to no more than 5 or 6 by your senior year. If you can narrow the field down to that number or fewer prior to your senior year, so much the better.

In making the final selection of the college you want to attend, the one where you will accept the offer of admission and play soccer, consider the following: Is this a school where you'd want to spend four years if, on the first day of pre-season soccer practice, you sustained a serious injury that would prevent you from ever playing soccer again?

Once you have an idea of the colleges you think you might want to attend, go to the websites of each college's soccer program to find out the coach's e-mail address. Send each coach an e-mail telling him/her who you are, what high school you attend, the club team you play for, and that you're interested in attending his/her college and playing soccer there when you graduate from high school. It is important that this e-mail be from you to the coach, NOT from your parents to the coach. Many colleges now also have an online interest form that you can fill out that is automatically forwarded to the coach of the sport in which you are interested. If both methods of contacting the coach are available, use both.

Prior to July 1 in the summer before your senior year, the number of times and the means by which a college coach can contact you directly are strictly limited by NCAA rules. There are limits during your senior year too but these are quite a bit more open than for previous years in high school. Generally, prior to your senior year, they can contact you directly ONLY after you have contacted them. For example, they can reply to an e-mail you send but the number of unsolicited contacts they make, i.e., without you first having contacted them, is limited. Prior to your senior year, a college coach CANNOT respond to a phone call from you and cannot contact you directly by phone.

The NCAA website lays out the rules of contact very specifically. Note that the rules differ by division (i.e., I, II, or III) and sport. Check out the NCAA page on recruiting at <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Eligibility/Becoming+Eligible/Recruiting>. These lay out the specifics of the rules of contact by division and by sport. It is important that you are familiar with them. While most coaches are very straight forward and honest about adhering to the rules, violations of them, even if you did not know a coach was violating them, can have long term implications for your eligibility to play and to receive athletic financial aid.

How to Get a Coach to Watch YOU at a Tournament

1. Your first step is the one outlined above, namely select the colleges in which you are interested. Contact the coaches and express your interest in their programs. Begin doing this your sophomore year. Continue doing it until you've been accepted at the college(s) of your choice and know that you will be playing soccer there.

2. Once you know your club team's tournament schedule, e-mail the schedule to the coaches. If you know this when you're making your first contact with them, include your tournament schedule in the initial e-mail.

3. Two weeks before each tournament, e-mail the coach to remind him/her that you are playing in Tournament X at Location Y on Dates Z. Tell him your club team's name, the division in which you will be playing, your team's colors, and your shirt number. If you know the specifics of your schedule, i.e., dates, times, locations, field numbers, and opponents, include that as well.

4. As soon as you know the specifics of your schedule - the match dates, times, locations, field numbers, and opponents (typically the week prior to the tournament), e-mail that information to the coach along with your club team's name, colors, and your shirt #.

5. Do not expect that you will be swamped by coaches after a tournament or a tournament match. Indeed, prior to your senior year, they cannot contact you at all in that situation. College coaches, if they have questions, might contact me, as your coach, directly, sometimes right after a match or, more typically, in the days and weeks following a tournament. This has happened many times and I am always more than pleased to talk to any college coach about my players.

6. After a tournament, send a follow-up e-mail to the coach thanking him/her for coming to watch you at Tournament X.

7. This whole process is rather like the lather-rinse-repeat of washing your hair. You need to do it for every tournament you attend, even if the tournament is not specifically billed as a college showcase.

A Note about Tournaments, College Showcase or Otherwise

Showcase tournaments, as well as tournaments that do not bill themselves as such yet attract college coaches, will often put a list on their websites of the various college coaches and schools who register for their tournaments. For some tournaments, this could be 150 to 200 or more coaches and colleges. It is worthwhile to note that typically, somewhere between 20% and 30% of the college coaches who attend showcase tournament do not register. Thus, even though a college and coach in which you are interested does not appear on the list of those who have registered for it does not mean that he or she will not attend.

How to Play at a Tournament When You Know a Coach is Watching YOU

There is a tendency in any tryout situation (which is what a showcase tournament is, writ large) to be very nervous, to try to be everywhere on the field all the time, and to try to do everything with super high intensity. The problem is that this approach almost always leads to making quite a few more mistakes than you'd make in the course of a regular match. There's nothing you can do about being nervous. Accept the fact that you WILL be nervous but learn to deal with it. Positive self-talk and visualization are ways to do that. Don't get down on yourself for what you can't do as well as some other player or players. Keep a positive image in your mind of the things you know you do well. Visualize scenarios in your mind's eye that emphasize the things you know you do well. Even if you make mistakes in a match, and you will – every player does – do not give up on yourself. Once it's done, it's done and you can't go back. Accept the frustration but let it go. The next time the situation presents itself, resolve to do it better.

Here is a laundry list of important things to think about, do, or not do in a showcase situation:

- You will be nervous. Calm your nerves by positive self-talk and visualization. If you need a quiet moment by yourself in warmup to get your head together, tell your coach.
- * Play your game. Do not try to be everywhere at once on the field. You will make mistakes that you would not ordinarily make and you will wear yourself out for other matches later in the day.
- Stay positive with your teammates all the time. This does not mean that you shouldn't be talking to your teammates about where they should be or who they should be marking; that's part of the game too and college coaches will notice players who communicate more than one who never opens her mouth. The one thing you DO NOT want to do is to get into on the field arguments with your teammates.
- DO NOT jaw with the referees. Keep your wits about you regardless of the call. How you react to adversity, like a bad officiating call, is also something which will attract college coaches attention.

- If your team is down, if you've just been scored on or you're losing, DO NOT get down on yourself or your teammates. Stay positive and be encouraging. More important in a college coach's eyes than your reaction to the adversity created by bad officiating will be your reaction to the adversity created by a game that's not going your way.

The Use of Videos in Recruiting

A video can be useful in getting a coach's attention. In particular, if this is the only way a coach will be able to see you, it might be something to consider if you're serious about the school. For example, you live on the east coast, the school in which you're interested is on the west coast, and the coach of the school can't get to any of the showcase tournaments your team is attending.

I've talked to a number of college coaches about videos; some like them and will use them in their recruiting. Others seem to just file them in the circular file. If you are considering having a video done, you need to find out if the coach to whom you are sending it will even look at it.

Some considerations for any video:

- Make sure the player is clearly identified at the start of the video with shirt color and number. This might be the only instance in which a close-up of the player is warranted (see below) so that the coach will know at whom he is looking on the video.
- No close-ups. From a coaching standpoint, for example, a close-up of Susie Soccerplayer executing a perfect Cruyff turn so that I can see the ear to ear smile after having pulled it off, tells me very little about the player. A coach needs to be able to see the context in which an event occurred to understand why a player did what she did. The video should show as much of the field and the players on it as possible so that the coach can get a good feel for what's actually happening in the match.
- No highlight films. As much as you might want to show off the best things your daughter does, a coach will not make a recruiting decision based on a video that only shows a player in her best light. A coach must be able to evaluate a player, warts and all. Since highlight videos by definition contain no warts, a coach will find it useless in making his decision.
- Make sure the video is taken from enough height to be able to show as much of the field and the players on it as possible. Videos taken from the touchline at field level are worse than useless.
- There are services that exist to create player videos. These can be quite costly so make sure the situation warrants it before making the decision to go ahead. Also make sure that the service guarantees that it will abide by the bulleted items noted above.

Myths

Below is a list of common myths regarding the college soccer recruitment process with sources to refute each myth. Sometimes these statements are made to recruit players to a travel soccer club or make money by encouraging unrealistic expectations. Please note that grades are the most important factor in the recruitment process regardless of ability.

This player has a 4 YEAR athletic scholarship

This is not a true statement. The NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete explicitly states that athletic scholarships exist for one year and are renewed at the coach's discretion.

This player has a FULL athletic scholarship.

It is rare for a player to receive a full soccer scholarship. When you hear about this, it's usually a combination of academic scholarships, grants, and athletic money. Per the NCAA, there are a maximum of 9.9 soccer scholarships available at the NCAA Division 1 and Division 2 schools. Some schools choose to fund less than the maximum. There are no scholarships available at the NCAA Division 3 level.

Look at the roster of any college program and notice there are at least 20-30 players. A player that receives an athletic scholarship will almost certainly receive a partial scholarship. If you are not convinced, think about the odds. With limited scholarships and huge rosters, why would an incoming freshman unproven at the college level receive a full scholarship over a player firmly established at the college level?

I have a high chance of receiving an athletic scholarship.

The NCAA states that only 2 percent of all high school age athletes receive athletic scholarships. A 2008 New York Times article lists the number of athletes receiving soccer scholarships. There are millions that play youth soccer and only a small percentage play in college. An even smaller percentage receive any soccer scholarship money.

Schools are recruiting a player that is not a high school junior or senior.

In soccer, NCAA Division 1 and 2 schools can not send you recruiting material, call you, or meet with you prior to September 1 of your child's junior year. Yes, you may receive info on camps or questionnaires. Yes, you can even call a coach. However, the coaches can not call you, schedule an official visit, or meet with you in person. Hence, they can not recruit you. This is explicitly stated in the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete. NCAA Division 3 schools can recruit prior to September 1 of your child's junior year.

Recruitment happens during high school soccer.

Recruitment rarely happens at high school soccer events for a number of reasons. The competition in travel soccer is much higher than high school. College coaches can easily view hundreds of players at travel soccer tournaments.

Playing on a certain team or club is my best chance to play college soccer.....

Playing on a certain team does not guarantee anything. Players create their own opportunities through their talent and strong passion for the game. Much of the responsibility is on the player to follow up on opportunities and contact college coaches. Our club assists players but there is no replacement for the player taking a leadership role in the recruitment process. If the player expresses no interest, the college coach will focus their energy on other prospective players since they are literally looking at hundreds of other players.

This player has a good chance to play college soccer because of their ability.....

If you have the ability but struggle academically, your chances are eliminated. Many The grades issue is either the first or second topic of conversation between club and college coaches. There is no getting around it. Grades will make or break your opportunity to play in college.

Signing up for every possible camp, summer league, winter league, is my best chance to get a SCHOLARSHIP.....

A recent Wall Street Journal article points out that there are 9 times the number of academic scholarships compared to athletic scholarships. This number does not include academic scholarships from private sector sources so the number is obviously much higher. Your best chance of getting a scholarship is to focus on your grades.

Signing up for every possible camp, winter league, summer league, and clinic for the sole purpose of landing an athletic scholarship is really a waste of money. If you saved all the money spent on these items from 10 years old to high school graduation, you would have accumulated enough money to fund your own scholarship for college.

For the best chance to play college soccer, I am going to sign up for college recruiting services, have my child videotaped, etc

College recruiting services exist to make money. They don't hurt but quite frankly, they don't help. They function as an unnecessary middleman. It has been our experience that college coaches would rather scout a player in person than watch a video. There are many subtle parts of the game that you can not see watching video. Furthermore, it's been our experience that it's best for players to communicate directly with the college coach.

Some DO's and DON'Ts

Do: Narrow down your list (When to start thinking)

- Sophomore year: Start thinking about colleges
- Junior year: Have your list to 5-6 colleges and do research and visits on schools (meet players, coaches, attend camps)
- Senior year: Have your list down to 3-4 school, and you might even be contacted by a team outside of that list because of your play

Don't: Get your heart set on one school before you do any research

- Make sure you take into account all the factors (Academic, social, athletics, etc.)
- It's a huge mistake to choose a school because of someone else's recommendation. What do you want (academics, social environment and athletic environment)?

You need to investigate:

- Does the coach want you?
- Will you make the team
- The roster (If you're a goalie— do they already have that position filled?)

Do: Know the rules

- NCAA doesn't give you any leniency for ignorance. You really need to do your homework and the best place to start is to learn the NCAA rules. If you are uncertain of something you can always contact the NCAA for more information.

Don't: Be obnoxious or over-attentive

- Coaching is a full-time job. There is a difference between contacting, showing interest, and the other side, which is being a little obnoxious and overbearing.
- NCAA has a rule that coaches can only contact you once a week
- Once you're a freshman in high school you can be recruited. Everything you do from then on has an effect on you being eligible. What you're doing at freshman year and what you're doing at senior year has an effect.
- If you contact a coach more than once a week you're starting to overbear.
- Easiest way to contact a coach is through e-mail (you don't want coaches to start avoiding your calls)

Don't: Be under attentive

- Every 10 days, maybe twice a month contacting. If you really want to have a relationship with the coach, then have a relationship with the coach. Make personal contact (don't make mom or dad call). Follow up on the season; ask about experiences with the team. Doing this shows real interest.

Do: Introduce yourself

- An introduction letter is very important and not a reproduced one. Make this letter something personal.

Don't: Send a fill-in-the-blank mass e-mail

- Make sure you introduce yourself even if it is through a letter. Seeing a face makes you easier to identify and is more personal. You have to remember the coaches will identify the players they want.

Do: Let them know why you want to be there

- Let them know why you want to attend the school (e.g. coaching style, academics... this is why I think I would be a good fit for the team...)
- Talk about why you personally would be a great addition and what you would bring to the team

Do: Get out your video camera

- One of the best ways to see a player play is video. When you send your video, make sure you are identified clearly and that your high lights are short and show your best play. Don't send full games unless a coach requests them. You can let a coach know that you can send a full game video if they would like to have a full game. Respect the coach's time by making your video full of action and not long pauses.

Don't: Let your mom send your 6th grade championship videos

- Go to your coaches and ask them to send most recent games to a school and to put in a Recommendation letter. High school coaches want to help you the best they can and reach your dream.
- With YouTube, you can put it in an easier format for a coach. It's easier for the coach to handle an e-mail link over receiving a huge collection of videos.

Do: Have three positive references

- Get the right people to write your recommendation letters. Think about what these people are going to say about you.

Do: Keep your grades up

- Players forget this. A lot of people think that just because they're athletes someone will bend the rules or give them a break. The NCAA is very concerned about student-athletes, academics and graduation rates. Today there is more pressure on coaches to make sure their student athletes graduate from colleges. Why would a coach recruit a player that has bad grades when it could affect the coaches' number of scholarships or job stability?
- Coaches are looking for students who have a sincere concern about their academics and they want people who are doing well on their testing (ACT and SAT).
- Soccer will get you to the door but you won't get in if you don't have academics

DO: Make sure your choice is the school for you.

- Would you come to this university if you didn't make the soccer team? If the answer is no, don't go to that university. If you would go to the university even if you didn't make the team, this could be the right university for you. Enjoy this time, investigate and prepare yourself to make the right decision. It will be one of the biggest decisions of your life.

• **Sample Resume**

You should put together a resume that includes your basic personal information, athletic accomplishments and provides information about your past teams, camps, tournaments and other soccer experiences. Don't forget to include athletic accomplishments in other sports as well. Coaches like to see athletic versatility and talent. Then list your scholastic accomplishments, include standardized test scores if available, and any extracurricular activities, such as school clubs or volunteer activities. Let the Coach know of any showcase tournaments you will be attending with your club team. That is a great way to be seen by a prospective coach.

There is a sample resume on the next two pages. There are logos, templates and letterhead on the Crossfire Oregon web site for your use.



(Your Name) SOCCER RESUME (as of [Date])
height: [Height]; weight: [Weight]; Date of Birth]

POSITION: Primary, Defense; Secondary, Attack

STATUS: Junior, [High School Name, City], OR (About 30 miles South of Portland, Oregon)
Uncommitted; no letters of intent

CONTACT:

[Home Address]

[City, State, Zip]

[Home Phone]

[Fax; Other Phone number, if any]

EMAIL: [Email]

GOAL: To play high level soccer in college, assist ing on the field in any way that I can.

SKILLS, TRAINING, AND PLAYING CHARACTERISTICS

Exposed to and trained in all positions of competitive play; currently specializing in defensive responsibilities, (i.e., defender and sweeper) requiring delaying, channelization, acting as 1st and 2nd defender, tackling, counterattacking, and support of ranging goalkeeper. Skilled in defensive techniques, including delaying, heading, slide tackling, and shielding. Skilled with both right and left feet. High intensity, high concentration. Excellent timing and anticipation, positioning, reading the game. Knowledgeable in rules of the game, team and individual strategy. High pain threshold. Very strong leadership skills on and off the field. Take charge mentality. Loud game voice.

PLAYING HISTORY: HIGH SCHOOL

[High School Name; City] IL; Starting varsity, sweeper, [Years]

Willamette United - 6 years U8 - U14

Crossfire Oregon U15, U16 Green 1

INTERNATIONAL PLAYING EXPERIENCE

List any international experiences/visits

CURRENT/RECENT SOCCER COACHES

[Club Coach Name; Years]

[Club Coach Phone Numbers]

[High School Coach Name; Years]

[High School Coach Phone Numbers]

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

President, Girls Varsity Soccer Club, [Years]

Captain, high school soccer team, [Years]

Team captain and group leader, 3 - week European soccer tour

Captain of club soccer team, [Years] (elected by team members)

SOCCKER CAMPS ATTENDED

[Names; Dates]

PERSONAL AWARDS, HONORS, ACHIEVEMENTS

Top Defender Team Award, [Date; School]

Co-Top Defender Team Award, [Date; School]

All-League, First Team (elected by opponent coaches in high school league) [Dates]

Most Improved Freshman Award, [Date; School]

TEAM/GROUP AWARDS

High school league champions, [Dates]

High school league, second place, [Dates]

District Cup Champions, [Dates]

State Cup State Champions [Dates; Ages]

Oregon Premier League State Champions [Dates]

Club teams with numerous tournament wins

ACADEMICS AND SCHOOL AWARDS

This Year GPA: [GPA]

Cumulative GPA: [GPA]

Ranked #10 out of [Enrollment] juniors in high school class

SAT score: [Score]

State Exams Honors Awards

Honors Geometry

Honors Biology

High Honors Algebra, [Dates] member, [Dates] Award of

Award of Excellence, General Science, [Dates]

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Soccer Camp Lead Counselor, [Years]

VOLUNTEER/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

High School clubs: Ecology Club, Interact Club, Girls Varsity Soccer Club, American Lung Association

House building in Mexico, [Years] (1 week each, church-sponsored)

[Church groups; Years]

Member Feed the Homeless [Years]

Organizer, neighborhood food drive, [Years]

Volunteer Math/Biology tutor, [Years]

High School Newspaper Advertising Staff member, [Member]

Soup Kitchen staff member, [Math]

Vacation Bible School, teacher, [Years]

OTHER SPORTS

Basketball (recreational)

Tennis (club)

Jogging (recreational)

HEALTH

Excellent; no limiting injuries or conditions

- **Sample Cover Letter**

Date

Coach's Name

University Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Coach _____,

My name is (your name) and I am currently a senior at (Insert your high school name) High School in (city), Oregon.

During the last few weeks, I have spent time with my counselor doing research on which colleges may be a good fit for me both academically and athletically. I am very interested in your college and would appreciate receiving information about your school, and the soccer program.

I play for the Crossfire (Insert age and team name) Team. Our team has won the Oregon State Championship three times. I also play forward on my club team but have some experience in the mid-field as well. We will be playing at the Surf Cup in August and my club number is 3. My coach, (coach name), would be happy to talk with you upon request.

I have played varsity soccer for (Your School) High School since the 9th grade. I have been the starting left forward for the past three years and have played in every game. I was the second leading scorer my freshman year and the leading scorer the past two years. Over the past three years I have scored 42 goals. My high school plays a very strong schedule and has contended for the Oregon state championship the past three years. My coach, (coach name), would be happy to talk with you or provide you with a game film.

Academically, I am a strong student with an A average and have no trouble balancing school and athletics.

I have attached a soccer resume and school transcript for your review. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

phone

email

College Soccer & Scholarship Opportunities

1,613 schools sponsored varsity level Soccer teams during 2012:

Division	Schools	Athletic Scholarships				Average team size	
		Participants		Limit per school		Men's	Women's
		Men	Women	Men	Women		
NCAA I	324	5,592	8,651	9.9	14	28	27
NCAA II	243	5,612	6,181	9	9.9	29	26
NCAA III	413	11,327	9,697	-	-	29	24
NAIA	211	5,471	4,665	12	12	27	23
NJCAA	238	4,939	3,348	18	18	23	18
Other Divisions	184	3,800	2,948	n/a	n/a	24	20
Totals	1,613	36,741	35,490			27	24

Maximum number of college athletic scholarships available for College Soccer:

Division	Number of teams	Athletic Scholarships				Maximum Available Scholarships ***	
		limit per school **		Scholarships ***		Men	Women
		Men's	Women's	Men	Women		
NCAA I	202	321	9.9	14	2,000	4,494	
NCAA II	192	242	9	9.9	1,728	2,396	
NCAA III	394	404	-	-	-0-	-0-	
NAIA	202	198	12	12	2,424	2,376	
NJCAA I & II	134	98	18	18	2,412	1,764	
NJCAA III	83	85	-	-	-0-	-0-	
Other Divisions	157	145	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Totals	1,364	1,493			8,564	11,030	

Soccer is an equivalency sport for NCAA scholarship purposes, so partial scholarships can be awarded to meet the NCAA limit per school. For example, an NCAA Division I school can award 21 female soccer players each a 2/3 equivalent scholarship and still meet the limit of 14. All NAIA sports are equivalency sports for scholarship limits whereas all NJCAA sports are head-count sports for scholarship limits.

NCAA & NJCAA Division III schools do not award athletic scholarships, but provide other financial assistance that student athletes may qualify for. These numbers are maximums - schools can elect to fully fund athletic scholarships to the limit, award none, or fund somewhere in between. Additionally, these are annual limits for the entire school team; so for a 4 year school only about 25% of the limit per school will typically be available for incoming students. See our page on scholarship limits for more information.

Chances of a high school athlete competing in College Soccer *	Men	Women
Number of High School Soccer Players	412,351	371,393
Number of College Soccer Players	36,741	35,490
% of high school players competing in college	8.9%	9.6%