

COLLEGE SWIMMING

This section is for all information dealing with collegiate athletics. No single piece of information given here should be a student's sole guide. All articles should be read and a plan developed. Coach Holleman will help develop plans if requested.

The College-Bound Student-Athlete

This Guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the advice of your counselor, coach, trainer and the guidelines published by the NCAA, NJCAA and the NAIA.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Get Ready!

With the help of your high school counselor and parents design a college prep program to fit your needs. Picking the right core classes is important. (See current guidelines for your graduating class in the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Athlete) Call to receive your own copy, get a new copy every year to keep updated or download from their website. The Guide lists core courses that must be taken to be able to participate in NCAA Sports. Check out on-line for requirements for the NAIA or the NJCAA.

IMPORTANT!!! Put academics high on your priority list. You may be a great athlete but you will never be looked at or even considered if you do not have a good G.P.A. in High School.

Make the best use of your off-season time: Go for exposure, experience, skill improvement, weight training, camps, tournaments, etc. One recommendation is to attend the sport camp sponsored by the top colleges on your list. In this way you gain exposure and familiarity with the coaches, in addition to skill enhancement.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Get Set!!

If you are interested in sports in college you are now a 'prospective student-athlete' or PSA.

Begin to think about and evaluate the colleges of your choice. Visit the College Resource Center for a list of colleges that suit your needs. Obtain the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the coaches you will be contacting. Remember, these change often.

Choose your sport: If you are participating in several sports, now may be the time to focus in on one or two sports. If you are the all-around athlete, and want to play Division I or II, you may want to consider a less popular sport such as rowing. Some sports are based on walk-on athletes, someone having no prior experience in the sport.

Keep newspaper articles that are written about you in a file for future use.

Ask your Coach/Trainer for help in these areas: Get an objective skills evaluation, get several opinions. Check with your coach and/or trainer and/or trainer about the colleges that interest you. Ask your coach and/or trainer if these are realistic choices based upon your academic and athletic record. (Or ask your coach and/or trainer about possible colleges you would be a good athletic match with and then research these colleges to see if you are interested!)

Ask your coach and/or trainer to write you a letter of recommendation explaining your potential, accomplishments, work ethic, etc.

Ask your coach and/or trainer for suggestions on any information to include in your athletic resume. Begin developing an athletic video. Digital is easier to edit and cheaper in the long term. This video should highlight your skills including close-ups of you hitting, throwing, running, etc. Include your uniform number or identifying characteristics. If you are on a team, include some footage showing how you work with teammates. This video should be no longer

than 5 minutes. Ask your coach and/or trainer for suggestions on what else to include in this video.

A Good Summer project is to build your athletic resume packet: create or gather the following items.

Letter of Introduction from you, from your coach (consider asking your coach to contact a coach of a school you are serious about)

Athletic Resume/ Profile.

Athletic Accomplishments and Honors Academic and Extra-Curricular Profile

Current high school or club game schedule

Letters of reference from coaches.

Press Clippings

JUNIOR YEAR

The MOST important year in preparing for college sports!!!

Start early!!!

Academics: Take PSAT in the Fall. Take the ACT/SAT during your junior year. (You can retake the test the fall of your senior year, if you want to improve your scores). Check to see if some of your college choices require SATII exams. Keep up with your studies and once again review the NCAA requirements to make sure they have not changed. Continue investigating colleges and send out additional resumes if needed, especially if you are contacted by a school.

Send out athletic resumes (profile) in your junior year before your season begins. You need to be the initiator. Choose which colleges you would like to attend, academically and athletically. DiSalvo says: "Play offense. You find the schools. You contact the school. Then you sell your talents in the places you want to be." DiSalvo, pg. 40.

Send letter of introduction to each coach, with Athletic Resume, and game schedule if you have one. Personalize the letter of introduction to the coach, show that you have interest in their program, that you know something about the team and the school. If your coach is willing, have them write a letter of introduction for you and include that as well. Keep it simple, more details about you can be sent after they express some interest.

After two weeks, e-mail the coaches, ask if they received your Athletic Resume, mention something about their schools and your interests in every correspondence. Ask any questions you have about their program. It is important to make it seem personal. Send your game schedule if you haven't already done so.

Complete and return any request from a coach immediately. If a coach is asking for more information then you are probably being considered. So carefully prepare all replies. If necessary, have someone help you.

Send thank you notes for every reply you receive, even if the reply is that they can't use you. You never know when things might change, and they go back to that nice athlete who bothered to write a thank-you note.

Once they respond with a reply, it is important to maintain contact with the coaches. Continue correspondence with coaches with updates on your accomplishments, press clippings, perhaps a video.

Keep college coaches informed of: Playing schedules, tournaments, and any summer tournament schedules.

Any questions you may have about the school.

Updates as your season closes - Include your new stats and any special recognition's you may have earned.

Some Universities have Sport Recruiting Questionnaires online that you can fill out and submit to the athletic department. File these in addition to sending a letter and profile (if you fill out their profile, you might mention it in the letter).

Having your resume ready will facilitate filling this out. It is well worth your time to investigate every college on your list, check out their website for prospective athletes.

Prepare video tape to be sent when requested.

Narrow down your college list.

Plan some campus visitations to the schools you plan to apply. Limit to about 10 schools with at least 2 back-up safety schools you know you can get into. They will quickly narrow down further, and others will probably be added on later.

You can make as many unofficial visits as you want.

Plan to meet with a student in your sport and ask lots of questions.

Do the campus tours.

Do your research about the school via the web.

Make a file for each school to keep all your materials in.

Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the end of your Junior Year. Student-athletes must be certified by the NCAA Clearinghouse before receiving an athletics scholarship, practicing and competing at a Division I or II institution. You can register online www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Follow instructions online, and print up a copy of the form to order an official transcript. (NOTE: this is in addition to transcripts sent to colleges for admission and coaches for official visits).

Submit ACT or SAT scores to the Clearinghouse. (When you register to take the ACT or the SAT, you can mark code 9999 so that the clearinghouse will be one of the institutions receiving your scores; or alternatively, you can submit a request (and fee) for an "Additional Score Report" to the appropriate testing agency by indicating code 9999 on your request form)

Get a copy of your year-end unofficial transcript (ask for test scores page too). You'll need it to send to coaches for official visits. Check it for accuracy. NCAA rules state the school must have a transcript and SAT/ACT/PSAT or equivalent scores before inviting you for an expense paid official visit.

Try to watch some local college games in your sport, especially if one of the schools you are interested in is playing close by.

In July, after completion on your Junior year, phone contact with college coaches is permissible. Check the regulations. Begin heavy contact with the schools you are interested in, even making a few phone calls (but remember that coaches cannot call you back until July 1 after you complete your junior year). Update your academic information with the Clearinghouse. If your top choices of colleges have not panned out send info to your second and third choices. Send out your club schedule ASAP. Make more unofficial visits to schools that interest you.

Good Summer project:

Send for college applications, or download from websites. There will be forms you need for teacher recommendations, school reports, etc.

Set up a file for each school to which you are applying. Keep copies of everything in this file. For the schools you are serious about it will need to be a large file with several pockets.

Write up some generic essays, so you are practiced, making the actual process easier.

Make an academic resume. This will organize all your achievements, etc. making it easier to fill out college applications. It's easy then to cut and paste. A resume impresses college officials and scholarship sponsors.

SENIOR YEAR

GO!!!!

Remember to have fun!!!!

Obtain an unofficial copy of your transcript, check it over to make sure everything is correct, and make copies for yourself, coaches, and some scholarship applications.

Get a new copy at mid-year and do the same thing.

Know the recruiting rules in the NCAA Guidelines. You become a “recruited prospective student-athlete” at a particular college if any coach or representative of the college’s athletics interests (booster or representative) approaches you (or any member of your family) about enrolling and participating in athletics at that college.

1ST SEMESTER:

Send in applications for admission to all colleges remaining on your list. Be open to invitations to other schools, but do your research, be sure it meets your academic needs, first and foremost.

Apply for your PIN for FAFSA, if you will be applying for financial aid. Check for university deadlines for academic scholarships. Many have December 1 deadlines.

Contact the coaches as soon as you send in your applications, telling them you have applied to their school, and inquiring about what sources of financial aid may be available to athletes. This will put you on their short list, since you are serious about their school, and show that you are interested in some sort of aid.

2ND SEMESTER:

File the FAFSA.

Contact and establish a relationship with the financial aid officers at schools that you have been accepted.

Check the School or Department of your intended major, they may have some scholarships. (for example the School of Business or Department of Fine Arts).

Continue to update coaches on your progress.

Weigh your offers carefully before signing. Any commitment you make now is not binding until you sign a national letter of intent (NLI), and an offer of financial aid. If you sign and then change your mind you will lose at least 1 year of eligibility. The college is also not bound by anything they have said or offered you until after you have signed.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

There are basically three kinds of financial help a coach may offer. Inquire early because when the money is gone, it's gone.

Athletic scholarships: NCAA and NAIA permit a limited number of athletic scholarships for each sport, in each division, for men and women. They can be full, or partial, depending on how the coach wants to split them up. Division I has more scholarships than Division II. Renewal of these scholarships may depend on your value to the team. Find out what happens to the scholarship if you become ill or injured.

Merit Award scholarships: Based on your academic skills. Awarded by the University or individual sponsors. Renewal of these scholarships may depend on maintaining a certain GPA., find out what the requirements are.

Financial Need-Based scholarships. Based on your ability to pay for college, may require a report from FAFSA. Renewal may be based on continuing need, other scholarships you earn may change this need.

More Internet Links for the College-bound Student-Athlete as listed by the NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

(Note: NCAA rules prohibit scouting services from receiving payment based on the amount of your college scholarship. The NCAA does not sanction or endorse any scouting service.)

American Sport Education Program <http://www.asep.com>

Athletic Information <http://www3.dist214.k12.il.us/guidance/athleteinfo.htm>

Campus Champs <http://www.campuschamps.com>

For College Athletes <http://www.ForCollegeAthletes.com>

National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics <http://nacda.fansonly.com>

National Recruiting Network <http://www.nationalrecruits.com>

National Scouting Report <http://www.nsr-inc.com>

Varsity Edge <http://www.varsityedge.com>