



GENERAL COLLEGE SOCCER INFO

SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE COLLEGE adapted from (www.soccerspecific.com)

For many players the chance to play college soccer in the United States is an opportunity that they would like to pursue. How do I get there? What do I do? Who do I contact? The questions are endless and the amount of information is sometimes overwhelming for players and their families. The following article is offered as a guideline to those players and their families seeking an opportunity to attend university and play college soccer.

Choices...

- **NCAA Division I** - Larger schools, Scholarships, Clearing House
- **Division II** - Smaller Schools, Scholarships, Clearing House
- **Division III** - Competitive Sports, No Scholarships, Grants
- **NAIA** - Competitive Sports, Scholarships, No Clearing House
- **Junior College** - Competitive Sports, Scholarships
- **Top Division II, III, NAIA are often as good/better than many Division I schools.** Divisions are set by size of school, funding, etc... Not by the level of sporting competition.

Facts...

- There are 8,182 High School Programs with an average of 51,066 players graduating each year.
- There are 721 College programs with an average of 6 player openings per year. This equates to 4,416 total player openings. On average, 8% of players find a scholarship.
- Soccer is an equivalency sport. Teams on the men's side have 9.9 scholarships and 12 on the women's (up to 14 IF they are fully funded). This can be divided any way the coach sees fit between 25-30 squad players.

Building a Resume (See Sample Resume for example)

- Name/Address/Phone/E-mail
- High School / Secondary School Advisor's Name/Number
- GPA/Class Rank/Honors Courses taken
- High School / Secondary school soccer achievements
- Club Soccer achievements
- Representative honors (regional team, national team etc.)

Things to Consider... ASK YOURSELF "If I had a career ending injury, is this a place I would like to stay with no soccer?" Academics must come first in your decision.

Location

- Close to home or far away
- Particular climate
- Rural or City
- Campus Setting

Environment

- Religious Background
- Conservative or Liberal
- Private or Public

Size

- Large or small classes
- Size of the school
- Personal attention
- Quality of teaching (Graduate Assistant)
- Small fish in a big pond or big fish in a small pond

Academic Life

- What is your desired field of study?
- If interested in graduate program what is their placement rate?
- What are their entrance requirements?

What are the NCAA Clearing House Requirements?

- 14 Core Courses
- 2008 16 Core Courses
- Have at least a 2.0 core GPA
- Meet SAT/ACT score formula
- NCAA Requirements are different than the university requirements
- Work with your high school / secondary school counselor

What are the 14 core courses?

- 4 years English.
- 2 years Math.
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Sciences.
- 1 year of lab, if offered.
- 1 year of additional English, Math, Science.
- 2 years of Social Science.
- 3 years of additional courses from above or religion, foreign language, comp science

Questions to Ask

- What is the graduation rate of that sport?
- Are tutors available?
- Where does the coach see me fitting in?
- What is the academic advising situation like?
- Do you need a video of me playing? (
- What positions are you looking to fill?
- Search for schools at NCAA.ORG (college bound student athlete).

Take the Initiative

- Make contact with coach at each of the schools you are considering by phone or email
- Visit the school, meet the coach, players, watch a practice or game, and tour facilities
- Visit with the academic advisor within your potential major
- Visit with the academic consultant within the athletic department. How does the school offer academic assistance?
- Make a video of yourself

"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail" – Attending college can be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences of your life. It can be made even more enjoyable by making the right choice. Plan ahead, do your research and choose carefully



WHY STUDENT-ATHLETES FAIL IN COLLEGE

From www.varsityedge.com

The NCAA graduation rate for scholarship student-athletes (any amount of money received) that graduate from the college they enroll in full time as freshman is roughly 60% within 6 years of enrollment. This means that 40% of all college athletes receiving scholarship money, transfer, leave their school, or do not graduate within 6 years. Here are some of the reasons why.....

Student-athletes choose the wrong school socially for them. Some schools are too big, other are too small. Some schools are too far away from home others are too close. Some schools have a diverse student-body; others have students that are all the same. Some schools are in big cities, others are in the middle of nowhere. Some schools don't have enough activities outside of school to do.

Student-athletes choose the wrong school academically. Perhaps the school was too difficult with many required courses that were simply too hard or demanded too much time. While athletics can compound this problem, there are many majors that simply are not for "everybody," whether you are an athlete or a regular student. Many engineering, chemistry or physics programs require long hours in the classroom as well as labs that student-athletes simply cannot miss.

Student-athletes choose the wrong coach. Many student-athletes land on a team with a college coach they just don't mesh with personally and small conflicts of interest turn into bigger problems regarding playing time or attitude.

Student-athletes choose the wrong playing style. Many football and basketball players complain that the team and coach does not run the type of offense they are used to or the type of offense they can excel in and use their athletic talents better.

Student-athletes lose interest. Playing college athletics sounds great, but waking up at 6AM and running every day, going to class for 4 hours, going back to practice, and then lifting weights later at night is a serious commitment in time and effort and is not for everybody. You must be extremely passionate about your sport to play in college at any level.

Student-athletes lose their financial aid. Financial Aid is reviewed each year and can often fluctuate without notice or warning from year to year. One year you could be getting \$10,000, the next year you may only qualify for only \$4,000. Athletic scholarship money is also evaluated year-to-year. At the coach's discretion, he/she can remove your aid, reduce your aid, or increase your aid from year-to-year.

Student-athletes get injured. Many careers have been cut short by serious injuries. When athletes get injured and cannot play, many become depressed. Instead of focusing on their studies with the additional free time they have, they do very little of anything.

Student-athletes don't take their academic studies seriously. Many student-athletes are not student-athletes, but rather athletes who are inconvenienced by going to classes. If you are not committed academically to a school, you will not succeed. The whole point of college is to get an education, so you need to focus your energy on your studies first.

Student-athletes don't realize the time and effort commitment that they are getting involved in and the sacrifices they are going to make. After classes and practices, you are left with very little free time to do school work and be social with your friends.

Student-athletes don't handle coaching well. There have been many talented high school players who didn't receive any coaching in high school. When they get to college they often receive more coaching and more discipline than they are used to. Players often interpret this increased attention and instruction as negative, thus leading to conflicts with the coaching staff.

Student-athletes sign with the wrong program. Many student-athletes select programs because they think it is the "best" program and they have little regard for how many current players are on the team or how many other players the coach has signed or is recruiting.



College Athletics Myths

From The Nuke Soccer Newsletter, Article Courtesy of Andrew H. McGann
<http://www.loop48.com/newsletterc.htm>

Talented high school athletes are actively recruited by Division I schools. The majority of high school athletes and parents believe that talented high school/rep athletes are actively recruited by Division I college coaches. The reality is that only about 2% of these athletes are “actively recruited” by leading college coaches, leaving the remaining 98% to “recruit themselves” through self-directed efforts.

Most Division I schools give players full rides. Division I men's soccer has 9.9 scholarships. Division I women's soccer has 12 scholarships. Not all schools provide their soccer programs with the full allotment. The scholarships are usually divided amongst 22 to 30 players. Most schools shy away from full scholarships, because it is a large investment in one player, and it often costs a team potential depth. As well, many schools choose to increase individual player scholarships year by year, based on performance.

Scholarship money can only be found at Division I and Division II schools. While only Division I and Division II NCAA schools offer scholarships, many Division III schools have money available based on need, grants, etc. Many schools take a holistic approach to recruiting students, and being an athlete at Division III might increase your chances of receiving other forms of aid. NAIA schools also offer scholarships and might be a direction to consider. Whichever Division you choose, approach the economic aspects of college from every direction.

Being on the National Team, Regional Team or a good club team is all you need to do to get recruited. Do not leave anything to chance. On a given weekend in the US, college coaches see 300 to 400 players. If your team is going to a US tournament, make yourself seen. Write letters. Give coaches your schedule, your jersey number. Make phone calls. It is much easier for coaches to evaluate you when they know of you ahead of time. This will only increase interest and exposure. The school you want to go to will now make an effort to see you play.

Players need Parent Agents. Stories of parent agents have received notorious status in the college ranks. A parent agent is considered a red flag, and often means an immature recruit, or an unenthusiastic recruit. To put it simply, college coaches are weary of parents who are the initiators in the recruiting process. Coaches want to hear from the kids. They want to know if kids are well spoken, mature, intelligent and enthusiastic about their university. In other words, coaches do not want to recruit the parent.

RECRUITING MISCONCEPTIONS

From The Nuke Soccer Newsletter, Article Courtesy of Andrew H. McGann

<http://www.loop48.com/newsletterc.htm>

Some schools are simply too expensive to consider. "Discounted tuition" is a term used to describe the amount of money you are paying after you receive your financial aid package. Schools will often work with coaches to provide a package for a student-athlete, whom they believe will be a positive addition to their institution.

Division I is Always The Best. "Some players don't have a good understanding of what Division I is," say some college coaches. They might say, "I want to play Division I," but I could recommend a good DII, or DIII school. In reality, there are some Division I programs that are no better than some Division II, or III programs. A lot of people have a misconception about the level of play at various universities.

All Programs Are The Same. Often; players will contact a college coach about attending their school and know nothing about the soccer team, the players, the coach, or the style of play. If you are a left midfielder, and the team has three sophomore left midfielders, chances are good that is not the school for you. If another school may have a graduating senior and a junior at your position, you're more likely to get playing time earlier. If you are interested in a particular school, I recommend going and watching that team play. Watching one game will answer a lot of your questions. It is recommended that student-athletes make a list of the top schools of interest to them and then find out as much as they can about each school.

I Can't Call The Coach. The NCAA rules regarding recruiting are more difficult to understand than any foreign language class that you are required to take in school. There are rules regarding visits to a university, gifts from a coach, pickup games while you are on recruiting visits and contact with the coach. Many student-athletes are worried they will break the rules and somehow risk their college soccer career. However, most of those rules pertain to the coach and not the player.

High School Stars Automatically Become College Stars. If you are recruited by a major college, chances are you were one of the best players on your rep team. You've been the "go-to player," the one who dictates the pace, the one everybody counts on. It's been a nice ride, but it's over. Some kids assume that since they were the star of their rep team, which they will be the star in college, too. They don't fully understand the level of college soccer. They think they do, and their parents think they do, but they don't. The pace of college soccer is like nothing else they've seen before, and even players who come from some of the top club teams aren't used to the demands in college.



FRESHMAN YEAR

It is not time to panic about college but start thinking ahead, the earlier you get started the more prepared you will be. This year is more about looking ahead and getting into good habits. No decisions need to be made at this stage.

- Start off with the best grades you can.
- Your goal is to graduate in the top 10 % of your class.
- Join a good club team that will travel to high level tournaments in the USA.
- Represent your state, region, and nation if possible.
- Participate in High School Orientation.
- Set Academic Plan for Freshman Year.
- Explore possible Community Service Opportunities.
- Write a description of your “ideal” College Program.
- Start a college file.
- Review progress with parents/ coach.
- Set Individual athletic goals for the summer.
- Set academic plan for next year.
- Begin to write or email coaches (Coaches may respond with camp brochures but can not communicate directly). *Its good for coaches to start hearing your name early.*
- You can find a list of college coaches attending a tournament usually at a tournament website.
- Make sure you tell them your number, your age, your schedule for tournament and info about your team.



SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Send resume & cover letter along with tournaments you will be attending (see examples).
- Take PSAT/SAT/ACT Test
- Check with academic counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate.
- Think about attending an overnight soccer camp of a potential college. This gives you a great chance to see the campus, athletic facilities and meet the coach and learn his coaching style.
- Continue to represent your state, region, or national team.
- Continue to travel to high level tournaments.
- Set-up files - begin to assemble college information
- Review progress with parents/coaches
- Begin to identify 10-20 college programs (your coach can give a good assessment now of realistic level schools to play for) including Div. 1, 2, 3 and NAIA schools. ACADEMICS are the most crucial part in making a college decision. Find schools that will benefit your area of interest and academic ability. Base your decision's on academics.... not soccer.
- Begin a College Contact List
- Plan next year's academic program
- Attend College Night at high school gather college information brochures
- Continue requesting information
- If you have not taken the PSAT plan to do this now
- Begin to look at university and their soccer program. Example the coach history, teams record lately, conference they are in, what kind of players do they recruit (only 6ft. tall?), how many center forwards do they have, etc... You can find this info at the university's website under athletics and then the soccer link. For example:
 - University of Connecticut: (www.uconn.edu)
 - Women's soccer: <http://www.uconnhuskies.com/sports/WSoccer/index.html>
 - *You will find a menu on either side of the page that has a roster, statistics, coaches*
- Make sure you are keep coaches posted on soccer tournaments, ODP, etc. Try emailing coaches/universities you are interested in once every one/two months. *You must put in the work to market yourself!* This becomes more important your sophomore and junior year.
- Assess what regions of the United States you would MOST want to play in: the west coast (California, Oregon, etc.) What weather do you want to live in all year? What regions do you not want to play in?
- When you attend tournaments your sophomore/junior year see you can visit colleges nearby and visit its campus. If you give the coach a big enough "heads up" you can often arrange to meet and talk with them. This acts as an "unofficial visit." You can also look at local schools to get started: St Mikes, Norwich, Middlebury, UVM, Lyndon State, JSC, Castleton, etc...



JUNIOR YEAR

- Continue to represent your State, region and national team.
- Continue playing club and have a player bio ready for tournaments.
- Repeat/take your SAT/ACT and improve your scores.
- Your goal is to try and make the Regional ODP team.
- Select a college camp based on one of your top 5 choices.
- Don't let your grades slip - top 10% of your class.
- Register with the NCAA Clearing House: Website is www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- Request that your transcripts are sent out to schools.
- Review academic plan for Junior year
- Develop more selective college contact list-begin writing to colleges & coaches
- Explore opportunities for college / high school joint enrollment credit
- Visit College Nights / College Fairs
- Verify SAT registration deadline with counselor
- Get Letters of Recommendation/References
- Organize your personal portfolio
- Visit local colleges of different types & sizes
- Explore possibility of enrolling in AP courses during senior year for college credit
- Develop your preferred college list (Coach can/should help)
- Review admission applications questions & concerns with counselors
- What do you want to do when you get older? You will need to look at the universities/colleges that offer degrees in those areas.
- Your junior year you can communicate with the coach via email and call them and talk to them on the phone. But only if you call them! Come July 1st (before your senior year) coaches can begin calling players and talking to them about scholarship money, arranging official visits, basically recruiting players.
- Don't be rushed into decisions. College coaches "play the game" to some extent so don't be forced into making a decision (obviously if somewhere feels like the perfect fit then fine). They need to get the best players they can for the least amount of money possible. Be persistent when offers are made - don't necessarily accept the first offer made. Players need to learn to also "play the game" a bit as well.



SENIOR YEAR

Don't be rushed into decisions. College coaches "play the game" to some extent so don't be forced into making a decision (obviously if somewhere feels like the perfect fit then fine). They need to get the best players they can for the least amount of money possible. Be persistent when offers are made - don't necessarily accept the first offer made. Players need to learn to also "play the game" a bit as well.

- Begin campus visits (Sept. 1)
- Protect your GPA
- Retake SAT/ACT
- Submit FAF (Financial Assistance Form)
- Continue playing at the highest level possible
- Continue playing in club tournaments
- Finalize application essay topics
- Request referrals from teachers/coaches
- Review application essays with teachers- parents for suggestions & proofing
- Get tax records to prepare financial aid forms (www.fafsa.org)
- Obtain and file financial Aid Forms ASAP after Jan. 1
- Make sure all applications have been sent
- Parent/student meeting with counselor to verify all transcript verification is complete
- Review acceptances and offers - choose college you wish to attend
- If put on waiting lists, contact college admissions officers & guidance counselor
- Submit necessary deposits to college chosen
- Notify college you have chosen to attend
- Notify colleges applied not attending
- Notify counselor of final choice and have final grades, proof of graduation, etc. sent
- You are allowed 5 "official visits" and as many "unofficial visits" as you want. An official visit a school will pay for you to visit the school, meet the coaches, and meet the players (see College Visits).

SAMPLE LETTER

Letter courtesy of www.thesportsource.com

Dear (Coach's Name):

Based on my research in preparation for choosing a college, (name of college) has both an excellent reputation, and the types of academic and athletic programs I hope to pursue after graduation from high school. The enclosed resume details my academic standing and Soccer experience. I am currently a junior, with a GPA of ___ on a 4.0 scale, and taking college preparatory classes with an emphasis on (list core courses). The strength and variety of courses offered at (name of college) provide several degree plans of interest to me, although I have not yet decided on a specific major area of study.

More specifically, your soccer program is of primary interest to me. I believe my skills and abilities would fit well into your program, and enable me to contribute to the success of the (team name) while continuing to develop my Soccer talents under your style of play.

I would like to pursue all available means for financial aid, and I believe my academic standing should qualify me for scholarship assistance.

Thank you for any consideration you can give me as a future (team name). Please send me information on your program, and any suggestions you may have on how best to prepare for attendance at (name of school) in the fall of (your graduation year).

Sincerely,

Your Name

Grad Year

Club Team

Uniform #

SIMPLE PLAYER RESUME

Name

Mailing Address

Phone/s

E-Mail

Grad yr: 2010

Position: Defender

DOB: 5/20/1992

Club: El Paso Juventus

Uniform #:

Height: 5'9" Weight: 161

Coach:

Phone number:

Additional Coach Info:

GPA: 3.1

SAT/ACT: in process. NCAA clearinghouse #: in process

High School: Americas High School

Varsity Starter as Sophomore

Area Champions

2X District Champions

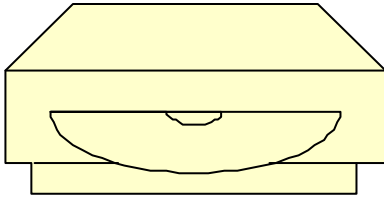
Club: El Paso Juventus

2009 US Club Regional Finalist

2X South Texas State Semi-Finalist, 2008 & 2009

Team MVP

Club MVP



Recruiting Videos

College coaches are eager to see you in action. Although your list of athletic accomplishments may be stellar, a videotape with footage of you playing soccer is a first-rate way to show coaches what you're all about on the field. Videotapes are not always necessary, but if a coach requests one, you should try to provide it. It does not need to be an elaborate, state-of-the-art video, so you can have a family member videotape you in action and avoid the added costs of hiring a professional. If you and your family do not want to take the responsibility of creating homemade videotapes, ask other members of your team if they are interested in creating recruitment tapes and would like to split the costs of hiring a professional. This is a thrifty idea that will yield quality videotapes.

Guidelines for creating your own videotape:

- The tape should be no longer than 15 minutes. College coaches can tell if they like what they see after 10 or 12 minutes so don't discourage them by providing too much footage. In addition, coaches receive loads of videotapes, and they will be thankful if you keep your video short.
- College coaches want to see everything you are capable of doing on the field. Although you may be an excellent goal scorer, do not only show footage of you scoring goals. Coaches want to see footage of different skills to get a sense of your versatility on the field dribbling, defensive positioning, free kicks, throw-ins, sprinting - show it all. Coaches even like to see how you react to mistakes on the field. The best way to give coaches a comprehensive look at you on the field is to choose footage of an actual game. This way coaches can see your skills, athleticism and speed during a real game. Videotape several games so that you will have a variety of segments from which to choose.
- If you choose to make your own videotape, it may be helpful to use a tripod when filming to prevent jostling and shaking of the camera that will give anyone watching a headache. A tripod will keep the camera stationary and will allow the videotape recorder to focus on the game.
- If you are a goalie, you may want to include footage of you participating in various goalie drills. Since goalies do not normally see a great amount of action during games, these drills will allow you to continuously demonstrate your skills in goal. Make sure you diversify the drills you include in your video to demonstrate your goalie skills on the ground, in the air, and punting and throwing techniques. In addition, you should include some footage of you in goal during a real game. This footage allows college coaches to note your temperament and leadership during actual games.

VIDEO GUIDELINES

How to Make a Recruiting Video www.usyouthsoccer.org

You're ready to try your hand at making a video. So, where do you start? Just listen to the advice of some of the nation's top coaches to help you avoid wasted time and money. "A video gives a coach an idea of the type of player and the level they are playing at," Clemson coach Mike Noonan says. "For one, it's very difficult to gauge speed on tape. Plus, if anybody offers a scholarship from a video, kids should question right off as far as how serious the program is."

From a video, the recruiters are expecting to see your best performances, so you have to make sure it is your best. If you mail a poor video, you are hurting your chances even more than if you didn't send one at all.

"The more time they put into preparing the video, the more likely I'm going to look at it," ex-Ohio State head coach Lori Henry says. "If it is just thrown together and is not a good video, I don't have time to look at it."

You need to understand coaches are busy people during the entire calendar year, so don't waste time sending game tapes. "The types of tapes we don't like to receive are just regular two-hour tapes of a game," Henry says. "We don't have the time to sit and watch a tape where someone's daughter might only touch the ball a half-a-dozen times in a game. The tapes we generally like are videos of games they have edited," says Henry. "Showing their daughters with the ball, defending or making a great save puts them in a game environment for us and cuts out all the dead play they are not involved in - maybe a 10 or 15 minute tape tops."

As you get caught up in creating the video, don't forget the basics. "First, and probably the most important, is the color of the uniform you are wearing, what number you are wearing and what position you are playing," University of Syracuse women's coach April Kater says. "You don't know how many videos we will get where the player will give their name, address and phone number, but they will not tell us who they are on the video, how to find them from 22 kids or whether they are a goalkeeper or striker. "Basically, what we like to see is a tape broken down into different parts," Kater adds. "Maybe add a little segment of themselves or a few highlights where they take 10 or 15 minutes from one game where they might of touched the ball a lot and you can see them clearly in a game setting. Then maybe even some individual stuff. It's not bad. Kids think it's kind of corny, but for us to see a person touch the ball 150 times within a three-minute span can really give us a good idea of what that kid is like." Bob Bradley, the former Princeton coach who is now head coach of the MLS Chicago Fire adds, "Sometimes you might see some clear game action. You can see who is who and still see the whole field, and it's against another good team so the game is competitive. Now that gives us a chance to see how a person handles themselves in that situation."

It wouldn't hurt to take the time to find out what a coach would like to see. Perhaps you could talk to someone who is connected with the program. Maybe your high school or club team coach has been called for a reference in the past or you know one of the players at a university or someone who does.

While coaches have already established their opinions about videos in one form or another, one thing is certain, it can't hurt ... if done well. Bradley explained why it can be so difficult to evaluate someone from a video let alone recruit them. "Some players have gotten very sophisticated and spent a lot of money in terms of creating videotapes that are flashy, have music and stop action but that doesn't mean very much. You just need some game action. "Most coaches are looking beyond just a good play or two to see how a player handles himself on the field. You might get some wonderful highlight clips that were spliced together and have some catchy music, but you can see through the whole thing. Obviously, something like that just doesn't mean much."

Five Steps to a Better Video

1. Be sure to identify the subject player with color of jersey and number.
2. Edit it. Don't show the entire game.
3. Add a personal "interview" with the subject player.
4. Include a schedule of games so the coach can come and watch in person.
5. Film from an elevated spot.