

General Questions and Answers:

What are the chances of playing college sports?

Not including the NAIA, NCCAA, NJCAA colleges. Your chances of receiving athletic scholarship offers will vary depending on the sport you play. Another big factor is the application of Title IX for women athletes

What are you looking for in a college?

Look for a good fit for you. Would you consider attending a particular college if you were not going to play sports at that college? You want to go to a college that you would attend even if you were not playing sport. Does the college have the academic majors and social features that are suited to you? Does the college have a solid tutoring program? What is the graduation rate for student athletes and in what sports? Does the college sponsor your sport? Not all colleges sponsor every sport, check it out first. Do you want to live at home, be fairly close to home or attend college at a distance from home? Do you want to attend a big school-medium school-small school? Are you willing to attend a college affiliated with a religious denomination that is not your own? Do you have an idea of the substantial time you must invest at the college level to participate in sports? Do you know that some schools such as NCAA Division III schools can not offer athletic scholarships but can offer excellent educational and sports opportunities? Start a list of things that are important to you in a college and revise the list as you refine your search.

Will I play?

A coach may well tell you that you are competing for a starting position. This may or may not be completely accurate. Coaches often have a good idea of what positions are set for the following year. In any case, many things can happen in four [4] years that will allow you to get your shot. Always keep in mind that your primary goal is a quality college education.

Who can make my goal of playing college sport and getting a athletic scholarship happen?

YOU, YOU, YOU and only you. You can get assistance from your parents, coaches and recruiting services but ultimately you are the only person that can make your dream of playing college sport come true. Make lists, ask questions, write letters surf the web for information and ask your coaches and academic advisors for tips and advice. If you know of someone who has been through the recruiting process make

it a point to talk to them and seek their advice. You must be relentless in the pursuit of your goal. Don't count on anyone else to help you accomplish your goal, except your parents who truly will move heaven and earth if they could to help you get that athletic scholarship.

What does it take to play college sport?

You must have: Talent, character, academic credentials, motivation, exposure, luck and good timing. Even if you have all of these and work your tail off, there is absolutely no guarantee that you will get an athletic scholarship. BUT, if you don't work hard, do not do your research and think that because you have some athletic ability that college coaches will be knocking at your door or calling you at all hours--then just forget it. Only the elite or "blue-chip" athlete will be pursued by colleges automatically. There is a real chance that the college coach in your own home town has no idea who you are. YOU MUST LET THE COLLEGE COACHES KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU CAN OFFER THEIR SPORTS PROGRAM. You must also bear in mind that playing sport at college level is very time consuming and you must be extremely disciplined if you are to maintain your studies. Remember your primary reason for going to college is to earn a DEGREE.

When should I start the ball rolling on playing college sports?

NOW!!!!. Time can be your friend or foe. Make time an asset and use it to your advantage. Start your college research right now regardless of whether you plan to play college sports or not. Research colleges and how they rank academically and socially. Find colleges that can offer you the academic, social and sports programs you are interested in. Last but not least learn about financing a college education. START NOW.

What about grades and test scores?

IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT. Simply put--get good grades. Test scores and your class rank can mean scholarship money towards your college tuition. IN ADDITION TO ANY ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP YOU MIGHT RECEIVE. Don't coast your senior year. College classes are tough so don't slack off and get into any bad habits. If you have all your high school credits then take a college class or two to get a jump start on your college education. You will need to meet and maintain certain scholastic minimums to even play college sports. So hit the books now and get into the habit. Its to your advantage no matter how things work out with your athletic scholarship aspirations.

What about college finances?

Now is the time to start your research on college finances. Learn everything you can about this subject. You certainly want the best deal for yourself and the least amount of debt possible when you graduate. Text books alone can cost upwards of \$1,000 per year. Many athletic programs will not offer you a full-ride scholarship but rather a partial athletic scholarship which means you will have to come up with the additional funding. Some schools do not offer athletic scholarship funding, {E.G. NCAA Division 111}, but can have both excellent sport and academic programs. Become familiar with the FAFSA, {Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form}, that colleges require to process Federal Aid and in most cases state and other college aid.

What kind of schools offer athletic scholarships?

NCAA Division 1, NCAA Division 2, NAIA , NJCAA Division 1 , and NJCAA Division 2 can offer athletic scholarships. Also you should be aware that individual colleges and conferences have their own athletic scholarship rules and policies.

Can I play college sports without an athletic scholarship?

YES-YES-YES. NCAA Division III, NCCAA Division II, and NJCAA Division III junior colleges offer excellent opportunities to play sports at the college level and obtain a quality education without the benefits of a athletic scholarship. Athletes who excel at the junior college level often transfer with a scholarship to other colleges. If your heart is absolutely set on a particular school that does not seem interested in your athletic talents then consider "walking on " - Yes I know its a long shot but remember, nothing ventured nothing gained.

How can I gain exposure?

Do you play with good teams? Is your conference known as a tough conference with top notch competition? Do you play summer or club sports, attend camps and play in tournaments? These things can help but good teams aren't everything. Write letters, complete athletic questionnaires that many colleges have on their web sites, have a highlight video made of you in action,(most coaches will want to see a complete game tape as well, not just highlights), and ask your coaches for any help or advice they can give you. Be creative and relentless. The key is to get college coaches to notice you and become familiar with your talents.

What are college coaches looking for?

The college coach is looking for an athlete that will fit in and help the program succeed. Coaches want to keep their jobs, receive promotions and get better jobs, their success on the field is their best way of doing this. Coaches also look for what they need at the time. For example, the starting point guard is a senior so the coach is therefore looking to develop a replacement. If you are a really talented athlete then timing is not as important but to most athletes timing could mean everything. Remember your agenda is to play college sport and receive a quality education. Coaches have a different agenda so use your head and evaluate each situation. What situation is best for you and feels right, Ask questions and visit the campus, ask your high school coaches for their opinions. To sum up, be aware that what the college coach wants is not necessarily what you want, look at the roster, you will be able to see where the gaps will be in say 12 months, if you can fill one of those gaps your off to a great start.

Can my high school and Travel coach help me?

Yes, of course. Most will. It all depends on your relationship with your coaches and your level of talent. Discuss your goals with your high school and Travel coaches and keep your coaches up to date with your progress. I have first hand knowledge of an athlete who kept his coaches in the picture, it turned out that his high school coach had played with the college coach at one of the colleges he had short listed, Yes he got the scholarship. There are many high school and Travel coaches who will do anything they can to help the student athlete. These are the coaches who will fill out questionnaires, and write letters of recommendation for you and make phone calls to college coaches for their athletes. Your high school and Travel coach's opinion is very important, after all, you have most likely been part of that coaches athletic program for 4 years and your high school and Travel coaches knows your abilities better than anyone. Talk to your high school and Travel coaches and find out if you can count on his/her support, in most cases your coach will be happy to help. Remember you have to do the work, your coach can only help, don't rely on your coach doing it all for you.

How important is timing?

Timing is very important as is everything in life. If a college has quarterbacks that are freshman, sophomores or juniors how anxious do you think the college would be to add another quarterback to their program next year? The college you are really interested in might simply not have a need for your specific talent. This doesn't make things impossible only harder. If you really want to play at a particular school don't let anything stand in your way but always keep your options open.

If I get the chance should I sign early?

Tough question. You have to ask yourself a few questions first. Is this the college I really want to attend? Is this the best deal I am going to get? Will this take the pressure of recruitment and choosing a college off me? Remember that the offer may very well not be there later, don't ever think that you are the only athlete that's been approached. This is a tough call but if you have done your homework and know what you want it should make your decision easier.

What are the recruiting regulations?

Each college association has its own rules and regulations for recruiting and eligibility. Check out the web sites of associations such as the NCAA, NAIA, NCCAA, NJCAA. Its your responsibility to know the rules. Do not count on anyone else.

Are there other rules to be aware of other than those of the NCAA, NAIA ,NJCAA. etc.?

Each college may have their own recruiting and eligibility rules. Each college conference may also have their own rules and regulations. These rules and regulations can sometimes be more stringent than those of major athletic associations Check with the school or conference to which the school belongs.

What is Title IX?

Title IX is a federal law that states "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Should I be completing and returning all of these questionnaires I am receiving?

Yes! If you have any interest in the school whatsoever, or think that you might be interested in the school then send back the questionnaires. Completing a questionnaire will show the coach that you are really interested in playing for that school. It wont hurt you to complete all the questionnaires you receive, you don't know how things will work out later on during the recruiting process and some coaches will actually pass your resume onto other coaches they know.

How many NCAA Divisions are there?

There are three (3) Divisions in the NCAA. Division 1 and 2 colleges offer athletic scholarships, division 3 colleges cannot offer scholarships based on athletic ability but can and do offer other forms of financial aid.

What is the NCAA Clearinghouse?

To participate in NCAA Division 1 and 2 athletics as a freshman you must meet minimum academic requirements and register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. For further information see our "Resource links" page.

What is the NAIA?

The NAIA is the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. It is an organization that promotes athletics as an integral part of education. NAIA member colleges award athletic scholarships.

What is the NJCAA?

The NJCAA is the National Junior College Athletic Association. Junior college is an excellent way to get both a quality education and play college sports at an affordable price. NJCAA member schools in Division 1 and 2 offer athletic scholarships. NJCAA Division 3 schools do not offer athletic scholarships.

What is the NJCAA Letter of Intent?

The NJCAA Letter of Intent is basically the same as for the NCAA and commits the athlete to that institution for 1 academic year.

What is the NCCAA?

The NCCAA is the National Christian College Athletic Association. Many NCCAA colleges are also NCAA or NAIA members. The NCCAA is divided into Division 1 and 2 schools. Division 1 colleges offer athletic scholarships, division 2 colleges do not.

Scholarships Information

Not all athletic scholarships are full ride like football and basketball, so called "head count sports"; most are classed as "equivalency sports", like soccer. Put simply this means that coaches can "share" their allocation between a larger number of players.

This is good news for the players. If we take women's soccer as an example we see that a coach can divide the "12" scholarships between a larger number of soccer players. Say 25 partial scholarships instead of 12 full ride.

The NCAA allows each division 1 soccer program 12 scholarships for women. In division 2 it's 9.9 for women. If you are good enough of course then a full ride soccer scholarship is always on the cards.

Women's soccer is one of the fastest growing intercollegiate sports mainly due to the application of TITLE IX so there are many opportunities out there for women.

There are a number of things that you can do to increase your chances of playing soccer at college level. It is important that you play for a good club as well as for your high school. You **MUST, MUST, MUST** get involved with the Olympic Development Program (ODP). Tryouts are open to club members and if you make your state team then you're well on your way. Participation in the ODP has helped many soccer players get recruited. There is more chance of being spotted at a ODP regional camp than a local high school game. The ODP gives you access to regional and national camps and hence much greater exposure. Your "Soccer Scholarship Resume" will look a whole lot better with the inclusion of your ODP participation.

Many fine young soccer players are overlooked each year because they didn't submit their soccer scholarship resume to the "right" colleges or left out vital information. It's also a fact that many colleges simply don't allocate all of their soccer recruiting funds because "suitable" athletes didn't approach them.

NCAA WOMEN'S SOCCER SCHOLARSHIPS

This does not suggest that each college program offers the full amount of possible scholarships for each sport. That decision is governed by each school's sports budget and other factors.

NCAA DIVISION I 12

NCAA DIVISION II 9.9

What do I need to do to play college sports?

Be realistic.

You need to have very realistic impressions of how good a player you are, and what your chances are of playing in college. Those of you who are playing on TOP soccer teams generally know you are. Here I am talking about Colorado Rush, San Diego Surf, Texas Challenge, Ohio Premier, Busch SC, etc. The opportunity for you to realize your dreams of playing at a very high college level are quite good, but certainly not guaranteed. Those playing for smaller or less strong clubs really are going to have to take a hard look at where you want to play.

Focus on your education.

The number of female soccer players who earn a living after college in the sport is incredibly small. This means that when you graduate, you will need to have a good education. Select a school where you can do well. If you go to a high school that is in a small town and has 15 people in a class, don't assume that if you go to a large school like Ohio State or Florida state, and you have 500 people in your freshman biology class, that you will do well. If you go to school in the northeast, is moving to the desert southwest REALLY a smart thing? Don't pick your school based on soccer alone.

Work at your grades and test scores.

Believe it or not, college coaches will usually look at your GPA, class rank, and SAT/ACT scores before they watch you play. The better your grades, and the better your test scores, the more attractive you are to most college coaches. This doesn't mean you need to be on the Dean's list to get into your school (usually) but it means that the college coach will have to spend less money on your scholarship which greatly increases your chances of getting to play where you'd like to play.

Have a complete set of fundamentals before you ask a coach to come watch you.

If you want to play striker at a large school, you need to be able to receive, turn and shoot under pressure and at match speed, with both feet. Your shots need to be on target and strong enough to beat a good goalkeeper. College coaches are not looking for players to sit the bench. They are looking for players who can come right out of high school and start. This is how teams get better. So when you watch UNC or

Stanford, and you decide that is where you want to play, you must ask yourself honestly if you could step on that field and be better than at least 5-7 of the girls starting. If not, you need to get better, or choose another school where you will have a better chance.

Contact schools early.

When you are a Junior, and you begin selecting schools, send emails to the coaches at the schools you are interested in. This is especially important if the school is some distance away. Most colleges have very tight budgets and coaches must decide quite early who they are going to go see. Quite often coaches will recruit at a few specific tournaments and that will be all. They will generally go to the largest tournament in their home state, and 2-3 national tournaments like WAGS, Raleigh Shootout, Orange Classic, Dallas Cup, USA Cup, Surf Cup, etc. If you want to get seen by larger schools, you need to get yourself to these tournaments.

When you make your college profile, include your intended major AND the size of school you are interested in.

If you've decided that you don't want more than 20 kids in your classes with you, don't call up UF or Portland.

Don't be afraid of smaller schools.

If you are a good player, don't ignore smaller schools. Very often small schools will make very generous offers to strong players. Many players who would only get small scholarships at large schools and limited playing time, would often be able to attend school for free, or very cheaply. If you are a senior and an ODP state player or Region player, call a few small schools in your state and see what they have to offer. Quite often you'll find they will bend over backwards to have you, and the team will appreciate having you. Many smaller schools play larger schools anyway so the level of competition is often quite similar.

Keep your parents involved at every step.

The most important relationship in the life of scholarship athlete is the one between your parents and the coach. When your parents and the coach have a good relationship, it usually benefits everyone. Your parents can talk to college coaches on your behalf (during the legal time periods), and can smooth the way for you to be able to play at the schools of your choice.

Be polite.

If you've written a school and you ask them to come see you play and they do, be thankful. Nothing turns off a college coach faster than having a player ignore or disregard them. You don't have to fawn all over the coach, but let them know you appreciate the effort they put into coming to see you. In my own case, I spent several hundred dollars (of my own money) to go watch 5 players. I left my home at 4am, worked 18 hours on Saturday, 8 hours Sunday, and got home at 11pm. Each player I spoke with was very polite and thankful. Those players may not come to my school, but I appreciated them listening to what I had to say and acting interested. Send thank you letters if a coach comes to see you. The coach will potentially spend tens of thousands of dollars on you. Let them know that you are willing to spend 35 cents on a letter to say thanks.

Be happy with what you get.

If you do your research and find out that a school is the right place for you to play then go there and enjoy it to the best of your ability. Don't go and be angry that you maybe didn't get into your first choice school. If you are a good player your teammates may resent you feeling that way because maybe that was their first choice. If your school doesn't have a shoe contract, or only buys uniforms every other year instead of every year like your club might, don't get angry. Be thankful and remember that there are over 20,000 girls every year who never even get selected by ANY college and never get to realize their dream of playing at the next level. If you find that you don't like the coach or you can't stand your teammates, don't blame the coach. It's up to you to do the research on the school, spend time with the coach, meet some players, and ask the right questions before you accept the school offer.

FINISH SCHOOL.

Even if you don't play soccer, you are there to get a degree. Do that much. If you have to transfer to another school to finish school, then do so, but make sure you finish school.

Once you are in front of the coach and their staff, there are 10 key questions that need to be posed:

1. Your team has X seniors and X juniors (do your homework), how many players do you expect to recruit/sign over each of the next two years?
2. What is the typical scholarship range for a freshman at my level and what do I have to accomplish early in my collegiate career to realize a scholarship increase?
3. Specifically, how do the coaches interact with the players during practice in an effort to improve their games? How do you structure the practice week for the team to balance "team-together" practicing and also allowing time for players to work on their individual needs?
4. Does your team have a mandatory strength and conditioning program and if so, what does it include?
5. If a player has to miss practice to get caught up in school do you penalize that player?
6. How do you determine which players on your roster make the traveling team (qualifying, coach's selection, or a combination of both)?
7. What practice facilities do your players have access to and is the access allowed seven days a week?
8. How competitive do you think your team will be over the next several years?
9. What is your coaching style?
10. Who are some other players in my graduating class that you are recruiting?

Questions about the College:

1. Is this a four year or two year school?
2. Is the school public or private? Church affiliated?
3. Where is the school located?
4. Is this in the country, a small town, or in an urban area?
5. What is the campus like?
6. How large is the school, what is the undergraduate enrollment?
7. What are the strongest degree programs offered, and which are the best academic departments?
8. What degree programs are popular with current soccer players?
9. Do most students live on campus or in off-campus apartments?
10. What is the student housing like?
11. Do the members of the soccer team room together?
12. What transportation is possible from my home to the campus?
13. What is the academic calendar - quarters, semesters, trimesters?
14. What computing resources and library services are available to students?
15. What do you do to help players with their school work? Is tutoring provided?

About the College Soccer Program and the Team

1. In what division does the school play? (NAIA, I, II, III, NJCAA)
2. In what conference is the team?
3. What important non-conference teams are scheduled?
4. Can you provide a schedule for next fall?
5. What was the team's conference and overall record this year?
6. How many players will there be on the roster next year?
7. How many will travel with the team?
8. What training happens between seasons?

9. What is the pre-season schedule?
10. What is the practice schedule after school starts?
11. Including meetings, training, travel, and matches, how much time is required?
12. What facilities and staff are available to take care of injuries and rehab?
13. What is the style of play you want to see?
14. What are your goals for the team?

About the Coach's Needs for the Soccer Team

1. How many seniors are graduating?
2. Are there red shirt players returning?
3. Where would I play in the team?
4. How much playing time should I expect as a freshman?
5. How many other players are playing that position?
6. Are you recruiting other players for that position? Have you committed to any?

How to Go Forward

1. Where am I on your board now?
2. Have you seen me play?
3. Which tournaments will you be attending? (appropriate before January)
4. Do you have our team's schedule for this fall? (appropriate in the Fall)
5. Have you talked with my coaches?
6. Do you have a copy of my playing resume and references?
7. What's the next step? What should I do? Do you see me as a serious possibility?

After this last question, let silence work for you. Listen carefully and let the coach explain fully.

NCAA Eligibility Center

Welcome to the Student Information Page

The Eligibility Center will be closed Wednesday, December 24, through Sunday, January 4, 2009, for the holiday season. Normal business hours will resume Monday, January 5. The Web site will be fully functional during this time.

ATTENTION:

All prospective student-athletes must complete the amateurism certification questionnaire. If you are looking to enroll January 2009, you will need to login and request final amateurism certification by signing the 10.1 statement now.

(If you enrolled full time in a Division I or II institution prior to 2007, you do not need to complete the amateurism questions.)

NOTE: Test scores must be reported directly from either ACT or SAT using code 9999.

Hot Topics

* Test score rule: Test scores must be reported to the eligibility center directly from ACT or SAT.

* High school core-course list: Is yours up to date? Verify the classes you are taking and/or scheduled to take appear on your high school's approved core-course list.

* Amateurism questionnaire and final authorization signature: Remember to log back in to your account and finalize your amateurism questionnaire before you enroll in college. If you are beginning school in the fall semester (August), you will need to complete the amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature on or after April 1 prior to enrollment. If you are beginning school in the spring semester (January), you will need to complete the amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature on or after October 1 of the year prior to enrollment.

What Do I Need To Do?

Grade 9

Verify with your high school guidance counselor and the online core-course listing to make sure you are on track.

Grade 10

Verify with your high school guidance counselor and the online core-course listing to make sure you are on track.

Grade 11

1. Register with the eligibility center.
2. Make sure you are still on course to meet core-course requirements (verify you have the correct number of core courses and that the core courses are on your high school's 48-H with the eligibility center).
3. After your junior year, have your high school guidance counselor send a copy of your transcript. If you have attended any other high schools, make sure a transcript is sent to the eligibility center from each high school.
4. When taking the ACT or SAT, request test scores to be sent to the eligibility center (the code is "9999").
5. Begin your amateurism questionnaire.

Grade 12

1. When taking the ACT or SAT, request test scores to be sent to the eligibility center (the code is "9999").
2. Complete amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature online on or after April 1 if you are expecting to enroll in college in the fall semester. (If you are expecting to enroll for spring semester, sign the final authorization signature on or after October 1 of the year prior to enrollment.)
3. Have your high school guidance counselor send a final transcript with proof of graduation to the eligibility center.

NCAA Eligibility Center address: P.O. Box 7136, Indianapolis, IN 46207