

College Recruiting Info

The following information are excerpts from multiple sources, including other clubs from around the country, the NCAA and "The Sports Source" database and information system.

Facts

1. The numbers competing in athletics beyond the high school level, according to the NCAA (2006), using student-athletes in men's soccer data:

High school athletes 321,400

High school senior athletes 91,800

NCAA athletes 18,200

NCAA freshman roster spots 5,200

NCAA senior athletes 4,100

NCAA athletes drafted 76

Pct. NCAA athletes that play pro 1.9

2. College soccer programs in U.S (2006)

- Division I 198 male, 301 women - NAIA 224 male, 219 women

- Division II 171 male, 199 women - NJCAA 173 male, 125 women

- Division III 361 male, 378 women - NCCAA 45 male, 35 women

3. In the NCAA, women's and men's soccer is an "equivalent" based sport when it comes to scholarships. Coaches can divide scholarships as they wish and it is not an all or none event.

- A fully-funded Division I program has 9.9 (men) & 14 (women) total 100% scholarships available

- Division II has 9 (men) & 9.9 (women) total 100% scholarships available

- These total scholarships are over the entire roster, typically 25-40 players, and are divided up as the coach wishes among the roster.

- Division III schools do not offer athletic money

- NAIA schools offer athletic money and are governed by different rules. Typically, more athletic money may be available at these schools.

- Most schools will offer a combination of athletic and academic aid because academic money does NOT count against their athletic scholarship total. (there is a lot of academic money available for students with good grades).

- Athletic scholarship offers are technically good for only 1 year and players must re-sign annually.

- The NCAA permits a coach to increase or decrease the scholarship money each year, but it is fairly uncommon for a coach to decrease a player's scholarship amount without prior notice or agreement

- A "verbal commitment" means that a player has verbally told a coach that they have decided to attend their school. Players cannot officially commit in writing to a school until the first Wed. in February of their Senior year, but they can verbally commit anytime they wish which then puts

an end to the recruiting process. This is NOT a binding agreement, but in soccer it is generally frowned upon if a player (or school) does not honor this agreement and if other schools continue to recruit a player who has verbally committed to a certain school.

- "Signed with" or "written commitment" means a player has signed a National Letter of Intent (NLI) which is a binding written agreement between the player and the school saying they will be a part of their soccer program in return for athletic aid. The earliest opportunity a player can "sign" is the first Wed, of February of their Senior year. Once this is signed, a player would have to go through an appeals process with the school and NCAA if the player changed her mind and wanted to go to another school or later wants to transfer schools.

COLLEGE RECRUITING MYTHS

Myth 1:

The number one most popular myth is that players just get recruited. The majority of students and parents believe talented high school age athletes are actively recruited and even offered "full-ride" sports scholarships by college coaches.

Reality:

- It is a two-way street, there are 10,000s of players – the players that are most successful with the college recruiting process are proactive in contacting schools to introduce themselves and notify them when and where they are playing.

- 2% of these athletes are "actively recruited" by leading college coaches, leaving the remaining 98% to "recruit themselves." (The Sports Source)

MYTH 2: Soccer players are recruited from high school programs so playing in high school is critical to the process.

Reality: Unlike in other college sports, the majority of college soccer coaches do not rely on high school programs as a recruiting source for potential student-athletes. The US youth club soccer system provides an easier and economically efficient opportunity for college coaches to scout and recruit. College soccer coaches rely on club soccer and ODP and showcase tournaments to watch and recruit student-athletes.

MYTH 3: Simply playing in showcase tournaments and playing on a "top level" team will get you recruited.

Reality: While college coaches are constantly on the look-out for new prospects, you are one of hundreds of players at these tournaments. Standing out in a match to a neutral observer is not easy or noticeable. Getting seen by college coaches begins with you the player. Many coaches begin identifying potential prospects in players' sophomore and junior year of high school (club soccer U16 and U17). Most college soccer players marketed themselves. "You must let the coaches know you exist, so they can watch you play." Soccer is so big and so organized albeit under the college publicity radar that often college coaches won't know how to look for you unless you let them know who you are and where you will be. The sophomore and junior years are the most critical years to the process.

Myth 4: Soccer programs offer "full rides" to the best players.

Reality: Division I men's soccer programs have a maximum of 9.9 scholarships, Div. II 9.0. Division I women's soccer has a maximum of 14 scholarships, Div. II 9.9. Not all schools provide their soccer programs with the full allotment. Before disbanding, Vanderbilt University for example had less than 3 scholarships for its men's program. Scholarships are usually divided amongst 20 to 40 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.

MYTH 5: Parents are effective as “player agents”.

Reality: 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. Similarly some club coaches use the promise or lure of a college scholarship to bring players onto their team. Make sure you use due diligence when dissecting the motives behind these promises to you during their recruitment efforts.

MYTH 6: Division I is Always the Best.

Reality: "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, without a good understanding of the options and reality. There are Division I programs that are no better than Division II or III programs. A lot of people have a misconception about the level of play at various universities. The top 20 division III teams will beat many division I teams. The best NAIA teams will beat all but the very top NCAA teams. Determining the division in which a college plays soccer has more to do with the size of the school, the money it offers (and how it is offered) and other factors away from the athletics field.

MYTH 7: All prospective college soccer programs are the same.

Reality: 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.

MYTH 8: High school and club team stars automatically become college stars.

Reality: If you are recruited by a major college, chances are you are one of the best players on your club team. You've been a "go-to player," the one who dictates the pace, the one everybody counts on. It's been a nice ride, but it's over in college. Some assume that since they were the star of their club team that they will also be the star in college. They don't fully understand the level of college soccer. They may 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 ready for the demands and pace of college soccer.

RECRUITING TIMELINE

Sophomore Year

- Make a list of schools (roughly 8) of different sizes and types that may interest you and visit as many as possible to get a feel for where you want to go
- Send emails to coaches and fill out recruiting questionnaires encouraging coaches to come see you play
- Keep your grades up!!

Junior Year

(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 league games.
- 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. Start by calling the coach at your least favorite school. You will probably be nervous when you talk to this coach however, by talking to a coach at your least favorite college/university, you will gain confidence for when you contact the coaches who are higher on your priority list.
- Most likely, if you are calling a coach, you will get his or her voicemail. Practice leaving a message beforehand. 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 tournaments, summer tournaments or participate in ODP events.
- 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.
- Take the SAT or ACT tests. Make sure scores are sent to your schools of interest.
- Check your status with the NCAA Eligibility Center or the NAIA Eligibility Center.

- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.

Senior Year

(As of July 1, you can now talk on the phone with a coach. If you are a top level player, expect some phone calls. If not, call the coach yourself. A letter followed by a call shows interest in the program. Only one call per week is allowed from the coach to you).

- Don't let down in your class work. Finish strong.
- Narrow your search to 5 schools.
- Complete FAFSA form with recent tax information.
- Respond immediately to any interest shown by colleges
- Schedule and complete official visits (at schools expense). Meet with the coach and the team and stay overnight if possible, see the team play.
- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.
- Narrow down your choices and get your applications done early.
- Keep coaches updated by sending them your resume through the fall and play in high level events in November and December.
- Provide your coach and counselor with your interest college list. Discuss college interest with your coach and counselor.
- Make a decision!