



## **COLLEGE RECRUITING INFORMATION**

This information is intended to assist players and parents with college selection and admission while also shedding some light on the recruitment process. Kickers who wish to play soccer in college should begin looking at schools during their **sophomore year**, maybe even earlier.

### **HAVE A PLAN**

#### **What is really important to you?**

The main things to consider when selecting a college are: **the academic curriculum, the cost of tuition and fees**, and the **athletic (soccer) program**. Additionally, other factors to be taken into account are **school size, location** and distance from home as well as the institution's ability to house, counsel and offer job placement to students. Looking at the main concerns mentioned, I would suggest the following.

**Academics** - Students need to be realistic - very few people will become professional soccer players, therefore, education should be the top priority. Make sure you understand the eligibility requirements of the schools and programs in which you are interested. Remember that most college coaches are looking for good "student-athletes", not great players who are academically ineligible.

**Cost** - Choose a college that you and/or your parents can afford. Don't assume that you will get a scholarship to cover all/part of your tuition and living expenses. Explore and apply for all financial aid packages, including grants, loans and work-study programs. Never assume you are ineligible for financial assistance. Check with school guidance counselor & the **college coach** for available scholarships. Less than 1% of college soccer players are on a full-ride scholarship! Combine athletic, academic, financial aid to get "best package."

**Athletics** - Choose a college where the level of play is appropriate. It should not be so far above your ability that you sit on the bench for 4 years, but rather it should allow you the opportunity to improve. The soccer program should be thoroughly researched. Do your homework:

1. Websites: hundreds of colleges with differing levels of abilities. Find best fit – skill level, personality, desired experience.
2. NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA websites & others like Soccer America/College Guide (Sport Source), which review various college soccer programs.
3. **Talk to your Kickers coach and high school coach** to find out where they think you might succeed.
4. Watch the local area college teams in games.
5. Investigate the different divisions and levels of play. NCAA (Div I, II, III), NAIA, NJCAA

**School Size & Location** – Consider the Pros and Cons of small vs large schools, rural v urban/city campuses, schools near to home vs far away etc.

Unlike recruitment programs for collegiate football which are well staffed and financed, soccer recruitment programs have limited travel funds and scouting personnel. Additionally, there are fewer funds available for scholarships. This means that a great number of college-level players are never seen and miss the opportunity to play. Therefore, you should not assume that you will be 'discovered.' Very few athletes are actively recruited.

**Players need to market themselves. TAKE THE INITIATIVE – be proactive.**

### **MARKETING YOURSELF**

Marketing yourself effectively to college coaches means preparing an introduction. Email should be personalized (i.e. find out the name of the coach and general information about the soccer program). The following information should be included in the email or made into a resume/profile and attached:

1. Academic achievements (GPA, ACT score, class rank, honors, awards)
2. Intended field of study/interest (if known)
3. Soccer information (history, awards, statistics, etc.)
4. Soccer references (club, high school and/or Olympic Development Program coaches)
5. Assessment of talent (**be honest**). Compare yourself to other players and teams
6. Playing schedule – invite college coaches to a game (Give them the location, team color, your number, position + follow-up note/call to get feedback etc.)
7. Photo
8. **Video link** (e.g. YouTube) highlighting your recent playing ability
9. Complete online recruiting form
10. Ask for a campus visit – official or unofficial

### **RECRUITING**

When a coach receives an email from a prospective player of interest he/she will usually contact the player and maybe the player's references. If the coach is very interested, he/she will plan to watch the athlete play or use someone local as a scout. Players are recruited through referrals, high school and club teams, college showcase tournaments, Olympic Development Program and the school's own **College ID Camps**. Some colleges also hold open tryouts for any student enrolled in the University, although few players make the team through this avenue. Remember the importance of personalizing your correspondence. College coaches are far more impressed with a player who had taken the time to find out about the soccer program than someone who just sends a "form" letter talking about how much scholarship money he/she wants. If you do not hear back, contact the coach again maybe with a phone call to determine if there is any interest. If not, move on.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Maintain the highest GPA you can in high school. Higher grades/test scores mean more opportunities and scholarship \$\$\$.

1. Take ACT early and repeat as often as needed to achieve a satisfactory score. Only your highest score counts.
3. Apply early to colleges (beginning of senior year).
4. Personalize written correspondence to schools and coaches. When talking to college representatives always emphasize your strengths. Do not volunteer negative information.
5. Ask yourself questions. For example:
  - a) Would you be happy at the college without playing soccer?
  - b) What is the status of the soccer program (i.e. new, successful, room for growth, etc.)?

- c) Will freshmen really get a chance to play? How many played last year?
- 6. Talk with the current players and ask lots of questions
- 7. Develop relationships with coaches & players. Use Facebook/email/call/text/phone etc. – regular communication/updates – soccer, academic, admissions, financial aid
- 8. Video highlights are very important**
- 9. If you do nothing, probably expect nothing! Be proactive.**
- 10. Getting noticed must start early and maintained

**The steps above take time and effort and it is natural to seek shortcuts. However, remember that the process works. Selecting the college that best fits you will affect the rest of your life.**

