

Information for Prospective College Soccer Players



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WHAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RECRUITING

Overview

For athletes considering playing college level sports, it's important to understand that the recruiting process can be complex and exciting. Balancing the interest of the college coaches with the search for the right college and the demands of the admissions offices requires honest self-reflection, active communication, thorough research, a level of persistence and a willingness to be patient.

The recruitment process for women's soccer is becoming increasingly competitive, and college coaches are recruiting prospects earlier than ever—even as early as 8th grade. That is why it's valuable to start preparing at an early age and gaining a strong understanding of what the college recruitment process can look like. There are many organizations and guides available online, including NCSA College Recruiting. Gotham Girls Football club has put together this general handbook as a place to start. We encourage you to reach out to your coaches and alumni GGFC players with anything.

Self-Assessment

Take the time to be honest with yourself about your abilities and potential. As you consider collegiate athletics, talk to people who know you as a player and whom you trust. Your club soccer coaches and high school coaches can help you assess yourself as a potential collegiate athlete. Research the difference between D-I, D-II and D-III and see what is best for you both academically and athletically.

Commitment

Participating in collegiate-level varsity athletics will make strong demands on your time, energy and academic commitments. Are you willing to spend 18-24 hours a week involved in one activity? Coaches and teammates expect a total commitment to the program. Athletics should not be used simply to gain an edge in the admissions process. You must be willing to commit to the college team once you arrive on campus. It is also important to assess the personality, style and philosophy of the coaches who contact you. In reality, you will spend more time with your college coach than any other adult at the school, so carefully research not only the opportunities for yourself in the program but also the people who make up the organization including potential future teammates.

STUDENT-ATHLETE'S HIGH SCHOOL PLAN

Before Junior Year

- Talk to your coach(es) to assess your athletic ability and understand the recruiting process
- Start thinking about training in terms of college prep, train on off days, go to clinics and camps.
- Familiarize yourself with the NCAA rules and regulations governing athletic recruiting
- Learn about the different levels of competition (NCAA Division I, II or III)
- Film your games for future use
- Attend camps, clinics, showcases and/or other programs; be aware that coaches are observing and evaluating you. Reach out to coaches directly beforehand if you know who will be attending
- Communicate with the college coaches who have been present at your competitions via follow-up emails
- Fill in questionnaires that you receive from any colleges you might be interested in
- Maintain a strong GPA in school, participate in activities beside from soccer
- Ensure your Social Media sites are appropriate (instagram, facebook, twitter, tumblr, vine etc) as they may be checked by coaches

Junior Year

- Talk with your coach about a realistic assessment of which college level you can play
- Refine your list of possible college choices. Know their admission requirements. Identify the SAT/ACT Averages for your schools.
- Create a player profile with a sports resume and highlights reel or create an account on recruiting websites, such as [NCSA](#)
- Contact college coaches expressing your interest, and continue to follow up (coaches get many emails and may miss yours, so make sure you are persistent in reaching out)
- Fill in and return any questionnaires you receive from college coaches in a timely manner
 - Sometimes you can find these questionnaires on the team's website and fill them out
- Plan to visit colleges and schedule meetings with the coach and team members
- Make sure that your senior year courses are NCAA-approved if you plan to pursue opportunities at DI/DII schools
- Consider taking the ACT and/or SAT by the spring of your junior year. Many college coaches may be interested in knowing your scores before considering you. Some recruiting starts early and may require you to adjust your testing calendar

Senior Year

- Refine your college list and apply for admission
- Fill in and return any additional questionnaires you receive from college coaches
- Update coaches on a regular basis when there are changes in your performance, highlights, improvements, injuries or illnesses.
- Have your coach call or contact the college coach to recommend you if they have not already done so
- Plan visits to your top schools and reach out to the coach (review NCAA rules on official and unofficial visits)
- Be sure of your final choice before making any commitments
- Let coaches know when their school is no longer in the running. Thank them for their time and attention

CONTACT WITH COLLEGE COACHES

You need to take the initiative to contact college coaches directly. Let them know of your interest in applying to their school and your desire to participate in their program. Coaches are not only measuring your athletic ability but your willingness to commit to their program. It is important to show your interest through regular and positive communication. The following steps will help you get organized:

- Research the colleges that fit your academic and athletic needs. Establish a tentative list of colleges that you'd like to contact.
- Send an introduction email and your athletic resume to each college coach, along with a link to your highlight reel. (You can link your NCSA profile as your athletic resume).
- Consider taking the ACT and/or SAT by the spring of your junior year. Some college coaches will insist on knowing your scores before considering you.
- If you are pursuing NCAA Division I or II programs, file a completed NCAA Clearinghouse release form at the end of your junior year or beginning of senior year. You can find the release form at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- Colleges will often respond by asking you or your coach to complete an athletic questionnaire. Be your best advocate by staying in touch with coaches. If you receive a questionnaire from a school you are not yet actively considering, take the time to fill it out and return it promptly as it will allow you to be registered as part of their recruiting prospects. You never know when an unexpected opportunity might come your way.
- Keep in mind that summer sports camps and tournaments provide excellent opportunities for networking with college coaches. Just be sure that you are familiar with the rules that regulate such contact (see NCAA website for information). Not knowing the rules will not be an excuse for a recruiting violation. Moreover, coaches are as interested in your personality and sportsmanship as they are in your skill. Be prepared to make a good impression.

QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE COACHES

- What is the coach's relationship to the school? Are they the head coach or assistant coach? (Assurances carry different weight depending on whom they come from.)
- Ask about the coach's philosophy and the direction of the program.
- How many current team members are in your position/events? (Does the team need you?)
- What kind of playing time might you expect to see? And will this change based on your grade level?
- Ask the coach to describe a typical practice.
- Ask for details about athletic scholarships. Typically, athletic scholarships (or grants, as they are sometimes called) are for one year, renewable at the coach's discretion. If you get benched or injured, do you start paying your own way from then on?
- Ask coaches what they expect of players: time commitment, behavior, appearance, etc., and decide whether you can work with her/him.
- What is expected of players during the off-season?
- What is the procedure and timeframe for a pre-read from admissions?

Most importantly, ask yourself if the school would be right for you even if you weren't competing in athletics and are there limits to your academic options because of sports.

QUESTIONS TO ASK OF OTHER PLAYERS AT THE SCHOOL

- What does your typical daily schedule look like? In-season? Off-season?
- How rigorous is your travel schedule?
- Is the coach approachable? How would you describe your relationship with the coach?
- What are the coach's strengths? The team's strengths?
- What are the coach's priorities with respect to athletics and academics?
- Approximately how many hours a night do you study?
- What assistance is available if you have academic problems?
- Were changes made to any promises once you committed/enrolled?
- Is the program what you expected based on your recruiting experience?
- What is the team culture like? How insular is it?

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Remember that your interests and a coach's interests do not always overlap to your advantage. A coach's goal is to build the best team possible. Typically, coaches are allowed to present to the admissions committee a list of their desired candidates from among the applicant pool. There is no guarantee that the admissions committee will admit all candidates on a coach's list nor follow the order of preference; academic and personal factors have to be taken into consideration.

Coaches' promises are not a guarantee. Coaches who do guarantee your admission are probably overstepping their bounds. It is to a coach's benefit to keep the most athletes interested the longest. The admissions committee makes admissions decisions, not the coaches. Coaches may lead you to believe that you will make their list, but there are no guarantees. You could be bumped from a list at the last minute if the coach finds a better athlete or an equivalent or even a somewhat less talented athlete with stronger academic credentials who is more likely to make it through the admissions process.

It is not unusual for a coach to ask you to state which college is your first choice. After all, in choosing which athletes to support in the admission process, coaches do not want to waste energy or a high position on their list on a candidate who is not likely to enroll. Be care to not mislead coaches nor let your honesty put you at a disadvantage in the admissions process. If coaches start asking you to commit, it is of critical importance that you discuss this with your college counselor, parents and coach before responding.

HOW TO EMAIL COLLEGE COACHES

Overview

Soccer is a self recruiting sport, so the player must initiate contact. Coaches will expect you to do this early, clearly, and consistently. Communication will feel very one sided for the majority of the process, but this is not an indication in all cases of how it is going. Coaches may be getting hundreds of emails per day. It is normal for players to start to feel burnt out during the recruitment process, but consistency is key. Many questions will come up throughout this process, of which your coaches, GGFC alumni players, parents, online research, and high school college counselors can help you figure out. You do not need to pay the NCSA or other recruiting services to get questions answered or have a successful path. You can use them as a resource if you see fit.

What to do before you contact the coach? - Things to research:

1. Coaches resume
2. Team history
3. Academic reputation/areas of study
4. Roster size, positions and age of players (If you are a forward and there are 5 fwds on the roster, you might not be needed despite how good you are.)
5. Conference and non-conference opponents

Components of an introduction email -

Who are you?

- Full name, graduation year, school, gpa, club, position, player profile

Why them?

- Every email has to have something personal - at least one line about the school or program

What about Soccer?

- What is your league or events you have coming up? Do you have a highlight video? Who is your coach? (copy them and include their contact info)

Attachments?

- Player Profile
- If you are sending these for the first time as an 11th or 12th grader include your unofficial transcripts and test scores if you have them

Sample Email:

Dear Coach _____

My name is Casey Sommers; I am 17 years old and play for the Charles River United Soccer Club. I am currently in my junior year at North Attleboro High School in North Attleboro MA. I am 5'9 tall and play left midfield.

I have begun my college search and find that your university and soccer program are on the top of my list. I love the atmosphere of the campus with the old stone buildings and the ability to step out into the city for a change of pace.

Academically, Fordham has several degree options that I am considering, and I look forward to the challenge of such an excellent university. I feel that I could be an asset to your program due to my skills and speed with the ball. Please find my resume and game schedule attached for consideration for the class of 2011. Thank you in advance for your Time.

Best,
Casey Sommers
2 CRU Cheetah

NCSA COLLEGE RECRUITING SAMPLE EMAILS

- [Athletic-focused introduction \(linked\)](#)
 - Introducing yourself to a coach with an emphasis on your athletic accomplishments and stats.
- [Academic-focused introduction \(linked\)](#)
 - Introducing yourself to coach with an emphasis on your academic background.

Additional Emailing

After an initial email they become short. Your job as a player is to respond to whatever you do receive within a couple days.

If you do not hear back then you reply to the email you sent so they can see the history of contacts. This will get your name back at the top of the coach's inbox.

Things you can write -

- Updates about play (including video)
- Updates about academics
- Asking them questions about their program or congratulating them on their program's success
- Asking questions about camps
- Asking questions about visiting

NCAA INFORMATION

For general information on:

- ◆ Academic Eligibility for Divisions I, II, and III
- ◆ Recruiting Policies for Divisions I, II, and III
- ◆ Information on Approved Core Courses
- ◆ Information on Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse
- ◆ And much more!

1. Go to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
2. Click on “Register”