

Athletic Scholarship Timeline

How to get Sports Financial Aid. What to do and when to do it

The first thing that most athletes and parents want to know is " when do I start " and " what do I do first ". What's the first thing I need to do if I want to play at the college level and get an athletic scholarship?

1. It's never too early to start

The biggest mistake a student athlete can make is to wait until the last minute. Your key to success in the college athletic recruiting process is rigorous preparation accomplished over a number of years. If you have left it until the last minute don't just give up, submit your resume to as many college coaches as you can and if your good enough you should be recruited.

2. Freshman Year

You should be well settled into your School and enjoying High school sports. You should be looking for and playing your chosen sport with a local club as well. Keep your coach informed about your sporting achievements outside of the school environment.

Get involved in student government, leadership camps, local community groups, student exchange programs etc. These activities are a big plus when it comes to the awarding of athletic grants in aid.

3. Sophomore Year

Check out the NCAA Academic Requirements. Make sure you are on track. You might be the best soccer player on earth but if you don't meet the NCAA Academic Requirements you don't play. It's that simple. Make sure you are on track in relation to "core requirements".

Stay involved with your local sports team, your sports achievements here could be the key to getting noticed by college scouts.

Make a list of the colleges you would like to attend and send an introduction letter to the coaches at those colleges, Include updates of your sporting and academic achievements. At the end of your sophomore year send a further update to these coaches.

Now is the time to monitor the academic entrance requirements of the colleges you wish to attend.

Prepare a videotape that includes game footage, basic skills and drills and personal highlights if possible. Coaches want to see how you perform as part of a team, don't just prepare a "highlights" tape.

4. Junior Year

Prepare your Athletic Scholarship Resume and send it out now.

Send your ACT and SAT scores to the NCAA clearinghouse.

Work hard on your studies and keep focused on the NCAA Academic Requirements. Check to see if they have changed.

Prepare another videotape; include the "best" from your sophomore year tape. Send a copy to those colleges that request it.

At the end of the season send out another update letter to all the colleges on your list.

Watch as many college games in your sport as you can. If you can attend games played by teams on your short list of colleges all the better.

At the completion of your junior year you are permitted phone contact with college coaches. You can make as many calls as you like but keep in mind that coaches can not phone you until July 1st when you have completed your junior year.

5. Senior Year

Focus on the NCAA Academic requirements. Study hard and you will reap the benefits.

Send out a further resume with all your updated information and achievements including your team schedule.

Check with the NCAA about the "letter of intent" signing date for your chosen sport.

If you are offered paid college visits TAKE THEM. During your visits don't stop asking questions. Now is the time to prune your short list even further. Take into account what a college can offer you academically as well as the college's sporting programs.

This is the time when you may be asked to make an "official visit". The college pays for your travel, accommodation etc. during these home weekends.

Don't just give up on other schools keep on the phone to the college coaches.

IMPORTANT - Any commitment you make now is not binding until you sign a National Letter of Intent, [NLI], and an Offer of Financial Aid. If you sign and then change your mind you will lose at least 1 year of eligibility. The college is also not bound by anything they have said or offered you until after you have signed.