

## **COLLEGE RECRUITING – FAQ’S**

### **What are the chances of playing college sports?**

The NCAA has estimated that the probability of competing in athletics at the college level is not great. For example, according to the NCAA, high school men's basketball has close to 500,000 players; 157,000 are seniors. There are approximately 4,500 freshman positions available. This means that approximately 3% of high school senior basketball players will play NCAA sponsored basketball. Don't be put off by these figures. What hasn't been taken into account is that a large percentage of high school graduates will not attend college. These figures do not include NAIA, NCCAA, and 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

### **How good am I and at what level can I compete?**

Take a step back and try to honestly assess your talent level. How do you stack up physically? Ask your coaches for their opinion. Make a list of the colleges that may want you to play sports for them and start to market yourself to those coaches. Remember, you are marketing your ability to be of use to a college sports program, so it's to your benefit to have a clear idea of where you might fit in to that sports program. Most of all be realistic with yourself.

### **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 a athletic scholarship?**

**YES-YES-YES.** NCAA Division 111, NCCAA Division 11, and NJCAA Division 111 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 coach help me?**

Yes, of course. Most will. It all depends on your relationship with your coach and your level of talent. Discuss your goals with your high school coach and keep your coach up to date with your progress. I have first hand knowledge of an athlete who kept his coach 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 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 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 coaches knows your abilities better than anyone. Talk to your high school coach 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, and NJCAA. It's 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."

### **I am receiving calls and letters from coaches, can I count on a scholarship now?**

ABSOLUTELY NOT! Coaches telephone and send letters and questionnaires to many more student athletes than they actually recruit. It's a good sign to receive calls and letters but remember that the recruiting process is not complete until you sign. Other players are competing with you for the same roster spot and if someone else accepts before you, or is considered a better prospect than you, then that coaches interest in you will disappear overnight.

### **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.

### **What about recruiting services?**

Just like everything else--check them out--if you can--There are hundreds of them. Find out exactly what is offered. If a recruiting service guarantees you a scholarship and you believe them then you are gullible as well as stupid. Does the recruiting service offer services that you can perform yourself? Some athletic recruiting services charge upwards of \$3000 which is a lot of money whichever way you look at it. Make sure that whatever fee you pay is value for money.

There are some really good athletic scholarship recruiting services out there, they prepare your resume for you and they have up to date database's containing the names and contacts of all the college coaches, but remember, you can do all this yourself but it will take a lot of time and effort.

The good services will explain to you exactly what they do and what to expect, they will tell you that there are no guarantees.

There is no point using a athletic recruiting service that just posts your profile online. Coaches don't go surfing the web very often looking for talent; don't use a service that sends your resume out on their letterhead, it must look like it was written and sent by you.

Finally beware of anyone who claims to know the "secrets" of the recruiting process; there are no secrets just as there are no guarantees.

**What is the NCAA?**

The NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The NCAA is the organization through which its member schools administer athletics at a national level.

**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.

**What is the NCAA Letter of Intent?**

This is a document that sets out your agreement or "intent" to attend the college for which you have signed for 1 academic year in exchange for college financial aid, including an athletic scholarship. The NCAA letter of intent is for Division 1 and 2 athletes.

**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.