

College Planning by The Sport Source®



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One of the most important decisions a young person will make while in high school is the choice of a college to attend. If the young student is fortunate to not only be academically qualified but also athletically as well, then opportunities exist to secure a college scholarship. A number of factors need to be taken into account when selecting a college such as:

- Local vs away-from-home
- Commuting vs residential campus
- Large vs small school
- Area of academic interest
- And of course the cost of education

The lucky student who also possesses recognized soccer abilities and skills has additional opportunities. College coaches are constantly on the lookout for new prospects. Oftentimes you will find coaches at tournaments viewing any number of players. As a prospective college player, it is of utmost importance that you do a thorough investigation of potential colleges and that you be identified as early as possible. Important vehicles for showcasing your abilities include tournaments, club soccer, high school soccer, and the US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program. Many coaches begin identifying potential prospects in a player's junior year of high school.

College Resources

- Sample Resume [[doc](#)]
- Sample Cover Letter [[doc](#)]
- NCAA Soccer Programs and Scholarship Information [[link](#)]

College Planning Tips

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The College Admissions

Most people travel from the known to the unknown. The known is that you are a junior or senior in high school with a certain GPA and test scores. The unknown is, "Where am I going to college?" The task is not impossible. You will simply need to identify a school that offers the academic programs that best suit your needs, and a Soccer program that is compatible with your athletic ability. You may have as many as 20 schools on your initial list, but only target those schools where the minimum test scores and required GPA fit your own.

The Sport Source® offers a College Guide and Workbook to help you navigate your college search and we encourage student-athletes to ask questions of your parents, guidance counselors, coaches and other administrators at the colleges that interest you. Gather your information carefully; then examine your options. With regard to your own athletic and academic career, this may be the single biggest decision you will make to this point in your life. While it requires careful consideration, the process itself should never be a stumbling block, but rather a fun and exciting time to share with your parents in planning for your future. It does require a focused and concerted effort, however, a lack of follow-through may create roadblocks forcing you to make unnecessary compromises in the type of school or sports program you may be seeking.

The process of identifying your interests and selecting the appropriate colleges should begin early. Your freshman year in high school is not too soon to begin the process. Those especially talented players will have less to worry about - the college coaches will be pursuing them. However, it is the greater majority of student-athletes who need to be prepared. As a prospective college player, it is critical that you do your research, and are identified by college coaches as early as possible. Your high school varsity Soccer program and summer leagues are the best vehicles for college coaches to spot you as a prospective recruit. Olympic Development Programs, "All-Star," and college showcase events are also effective activities for personal recognition and identification by college coaches. Those student-athletes who make a conscious effort to evaluate college programs, and narrow those choices as they progress through their high school career, will have identified two to three solid choices by December of their senior year.

Most college coaches begin to identify student-athletes as high school juniors - your year to shine as both a player and a student. But even if you have delayed the process of selecting a college until your senior year, all hope is not lost. High school and club coaches who are well-connected will be able to pinpoint tournaments or showcase events where college coaches will be present. You must take the initiative to contact the coach at the school or schools that interest you by sending them your resume.

Preface it with a personalized cover letter and be sure to mention your game schedule and the dates of any showcase events where you might be playing. In this situation, time is very critical - you will need to be seen quickly by college coaches in order for them to fairly evaluate your abilities before they make commitments to other players.

Throughout the evaluation process, be advised that college coaches are selling their programs. They are going to tell you all the best things about their school and their team. Remember also, that college coaches are not just promoting their program to you, but to 25 or more other players as well. It is important to make sure the information you hear is accurate. If you do your homework, you won't overestimate your ability, or underestimate the competition for the position you wish to play. There may also be weaknesses and shortcomings in the program that you will be forced to identify on your own. If you make a mistake in your quest to join a high-profile program, you may end up riding the bench for four years or transferring to another school. This is the reason it is so very important to

take an analytical approach to this process. Do your homework and be sure to do a thorough job.

One of the most critical steps in the recruitment process is your direct correspondence with the college coach. Because there are often coaching changes, it is highly recommended that you contact the college athletic department to verify the current coach and the correct spelling of the name before mailing any correspondence. Compose your resume and address a personalized cover letter directly to the Soccer coach. Be sure to include specific information about the program - information contained in the academic and athletic profiles listed in the Official Athletic College Guide: Soccer . Typically, the 2,200+ profiles will also include information on the number of regional and national pool ODP players, and foreign players participating in the Soccer program. If a team indicates that out of 20 players, they have 7 regional ODP players, 3 national ODP players, and 2 foreign players, you can assume this to be a very strong program. Other colleges may list 7 or 8 "walk-ons" on their roster. Assess your interests and ability accordingly.

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Getting Started

The first step in the identification and evaluation process is to thoroughly explore your options as a student first and an athlete second. Choosing the best avenue to continue your education and athletic development really is not as hard as it seems. We hope the tips being provided will assist you in making the right choice. We believe there is a program to fit everyone's needs. With proper research, you will find the program that is right for you.

The Sport Source® and US Youth Soccer wishes you much success in the classroom and on the field of play!

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What does it take to play in college?

The question of "what does it takes for a player to compete as a college student-athlete?" is asked of college coaches across the nation on a daily basis. The answer may be as broad and vague as the question. With the help of our educational board of advisors, here are a few areas that you will need to understand if you want to pursue college athletics.

In soccer there are more than 2200 athletic programs covering both men's and women's soccer. Is there a program for you? Yes. Can you walk into any program and compete immediately? No.

To compete as a college soccer player, a student-athlete must be focused, dedicated, and opportunistic. However, to play college athletics you don't have to do it at the Division I level.

NCAA Division I is the most recognized level of college sports. There is also NCAA Division II, Division III, NAIA and NJCAA. At all of these levels, players and coaches put in long hours all year to insure success and development. These hours (12 - 20 per week, depending on the team) are in addition to college classes, individual study, and social activities. The time commitment of a college soccer player is likened to a full-time job which thousands of players line up for every year.

Speed is the primary component that distinguishes a Division I player from Division II, Division III, and NAIA. The technical speed of a player with the ability to take control of the ball and do it in as few touches as possible separates the top Division I player from all others. The tactical speed is the ability to read and anticipate the flow of the game rather than just reacting to events as they happen. The physical speed of a player is the most obvious. This is the ability of the player to get from one area of the field to another faster than his/her opponent. Depending on your relative speed in all of three of these areas, you should look for an appropriate level of play where you can compete with success.

College coaches receive letters and phone calls every week from high school players, coaches, and parents claiming that they have a player that can play at that school. The college coach's first question is always, "Have you ever seen my team play?" and "Do you know what our level of play is like?" Too often they don't. They have only seen youth and high school games and are not aware of the speed of play at the college level. The same could be said of college coaches pushing their players to the pro or international level; we don't always get a chance to truly see that game and naturally think that our most talented players can excel at that level without truly understanding what that level demands.

We encourage all aspiring college bound student-athletes to go watch college games, go early and watch the team in warm-up and then during the game consider the position they could be playing and ask a self-examining questions like "Could I contribute to the teams success?" "Could I be an impact player for the team?" The right college or university is a program where a player can contribute to a program and play at a championship level and graduate with a meaningful degree.

A quality college soccer player, typically has a clear repertoire of attributes to bring to a college team. A player needs certain technical, tactical, physical and psychological levels, and yet there are players who have won either a world championship or gold medal who didn't have a dimension that is considered a requirement to being successful. What you need is some kind of balance. Be assured, it is critical to be extraordinary in at least one

area. Then you will have an impact. If you have world-class speed, you can have an impact. If you are a psychological rock, but have no tactical awareness, you can have an impact.

The great players, obviously, are extraordinary in more than one area, and the greatest players are extraordinary in all areas. It's based on a mix of all these different qualities. One of the most important of all these qualities is your psychological strength, because the quality that separates winners is the ability to constantly reach down to find something deep inside them to make the commitment other people are not willing to make. With that in mind, here are the four dimensions that are necessary to be a successful college soccer player.

Psychological

This is the capacity to be able to deal with all kinds of adversity. It is also the capacity to be so hard that in your duels with opposing players, you are not intimidated. In great duels, there are defining moments. There is the moment when you get a sense of the other person's hardness. It may be a physical risk issue or a fitness issue.

When you are competing, you measure your capacity to take physical risks, your capacity to push through pain threshold, and your capacity to not back down psychologically from someone. Those defining moments are constant in contact sports. If two players are running for the same destination, the one with the weaker psychological dimension is going to time it so he/she gets to the defined point late. In other words, he/she is going to time it so he/she misses the confrontation with the other player. That's the defining moment of that duel - who is going to slow down and who isn't.

Physical

A lot of this is inherited - your quickness, your speed, your agility, and your strength and some of it can be developed. You can improve your quickness, your endurance and, to a certain extent, you can develop speed. The person who fills the physical dimension is the one who has an intelligent and consistent work ethic to improve all the physical qualities. Most people don't have the understanding that all these things work against each other.

For instance, the process of developing speed actually retards agility. If you are developing a good cardiovascular base, it actually hurts your speed development. If you are running 20 or 30 minutes over miles and miles, it actually detracts from your capacity to sprint. You need to develop a balance of all these qualities.

Technical

Speed of play is the critical element in a player's technical and eventually, tactical development. Speed of play is your ability to do things quickly with seamless effort. As you go from one level to the next technically, you are required to be able to do things so

much faster - under pressure, do things with without time and space more efficiently. That's the ascension of your tactical growth.

Tactical

The tactical requirement actually has two parts. The first is being able to recognize what is happening on the field. The second is being able to make a decision that will help your team the most and hurt the other team the most. So your tactical requirements are having the awareness as to what is going on in the game by seeing it, then having the decision-making process to sort out what's best. And what' is best is going to be determined by a lot of different factors - the field you are on, your match-up, time and space, etc.

What does it take to play college athletics? The answer is "What do you want from your college experience?" If you have the technical, tactical, and physical tools to play at the Division I level, do you have the time and dedication? If you had to sit the bench for a Division I team for 1 or 2 years, would you be happier playing for a Division II, III, or NAIA program?

The answers to questions ultimately lie in your abilities and aspirations.

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Choosing the right college - applying to selective colleges

The Admissions Committee

What makes applying to selective colleges and universities more of a challenge is that they are in fact selective; that is to say, they have many applicants to choose from and have therefore established selection criteria to determine worthy candidates. Students are not chosen solely on the basis of academic credentials, but also based on what the college is looking for in terms of filling academic and athletic programs. As a Soccer player, you will not be evaluated like other candidates; your ability, as well as the needs of the team will be taken into careful consideration. Although the coach will have input, he will not have the authority to make the final decision regarding your admission request.

The matching approach to college admissions requires two basic steps: getting a realistic view of what is available, and an accurate assessment of your abilities. The number of selective colleges is small and can be defined easily by looking at any of the readily available guidebooks. Although definitions of "selective" may vary, most knowledgeable sources would say there are perhaps two hundred such institutions in the country. Of these, not all schools offer Soccer programs, compete in NCAA Division I, offer scholarships or have strong winning traditions. The point is that by evaluating academic admission requirements and strength of the Soccer program, you can separate institutions into categories and place them in a simple matrix or grid. The programs more suitable to your abilities will appear with the higher accumulated values.

You can, and should, undertake a similar exercise for yourself looking at your academic achievements and standardized test scores, and rank them along with your Soccer abilities. As an example, assign values for your SAT scores with a ranking from a high of 1600 = 10, to 1000 = 4 or a top 20% class ranking being worth an 8. Create similar values for playing on district or state level teams, all league and MVP honors, invitational opportunities, and so on through your senior year. You can then roughly determine where you stand. Keep in mind that there are relatively few institutions or individuals that score high in all areas. Just as it is very difficult to find institutions that have high academic standards and offer competitive Soccer with a strong winning tradition, it is very difficult to find "blue chip" athletes that are similarly "blue chip" scholars. In fact, college administrators concede that there are only a limited number of gifted Soccer players with superb academic credentials to fill the needs of their institutions. The resulting compromise is to balance academic standards with athletic abilities in order to find qualified student-athletes to fill college rosters. If your Soccer abilities are stronger than your academics, try to match-up with those schools that are stronger in Soccer than academics, and vice versa.

Once you have identified compatible colleges and universities, you can begin to eliminate schools from this list based on standard evaluation criteria - academic programs offered, distance from home, cost, and so on. This will further narrow your choices and give you an idea of where you might want to make initial contacts. Of course, while you are looking at colleges, coaches may be contacting you, which may continue to expand the number of colleges on your list.

Further elimination will occur by looking at particulars of your given situation - how much a college may want you to enroll, and whether your academic credentials deviate too far from their norm. In other words, are you as qualified as other applicants? If not, how far might an admissions committee be willing to compromise to get a talented Soccer athlete?

First, try to gauge your value to the Soccer program. Keep in mind that not all institutions apply the same admission standards to their athletes as other students. Look at your position - what is the depth of the team at that position, and graduation year of the starters? Is their skill level far greater than yours? In short, do they need help, and do they need it right away? If the answer is clearly yes, an admissions committee may be likely to compromise on the academic side. However, there is a limit to how far they will go, even for a marquee player!

This "flexibility" can only be estimated, and the only truly reliable way to know is to ask the players. The coach should be willing to give you their phone numbers. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact them about their background and success academically on campus. Of course, be sure to ask how many hours they commit to their studies, so that you can fairly assess both their ability and willingness to work. If your credentials are well below key players, your chances are not good; if they are the same as average players, they are good; and if they are better than average players, your chances are excellent.

This should give you a clear picture of your chances allowing you to direct your inquiries accordingly. Your chances for success will magnify where your academic credentials are close to current players, and your Soccer ability is within two years of making a contribution at your position. Be wary of long shots because they are just that and rarely pan out. Be aware, also, that any time you show a college both athletic and academic promise, you not only assure your chances of admission, but also greatly increase your chances for a merit scholarship.

Important differences among selective institutions:

The Six Categories

It is worthwhile to identify the various types of colleges and universities, and to learn more about their admissions criteria. The six types of institutions are private colleges and universities (including the Ivy League), and state or public universities, the U.S. Service Academies, state and private military academies, and junior colleges. While there are clearly differences among the various members within each group, understanding the common characteristics is beneficial to understanding the admissions process. As a group, the private selective colleges including the Ivy League have the most freedom in pursuing any type of mission that they choose, and almost total freedom in choosing whatever students they wish to admit to achieve that mission. This freedom is occasionally curbed by athletic league affiliations, but more generally is curbed by faculty review of the admissions activities, usually by setting higher academic standards as a part of the admission policy. Although it is extremely rare for faculty to be involved in selecting candidates, it does happen in some instances, and you need to be aware of this in researching schools.

Faculty members generally put more weight on academic indicators and objective test scores than admissions officers. Most admissions officers are very reluctant to admit athletes who are significantly less qualified academically than other candidates because of the negative opinion that will be formed. Be sure as well that your references include high school faculty who can vouch for your character, integrity, and academic accomplishments.

The Ivy League is an association of *private colleges* comprising a specific athletic conference; it is the only athletic association founded on the premise that athletes should not be given scholarships. While this may be important if you are looking for an athletic scholarship, it has even more important ramifications for admissions. As an athletic conference, each member institution is required to report the academic qualifications of recruited athletes to other member institutions such that all athletes are within certain guidelines for the general population of admitted and enrolled students.

State and Public Colleges and Universities will typically have lower academic admission standards for residents of their state; however, they often have higher standards for those out-of-state applicants. Applying to a selective university in your state always makes good sense. Applying to a public college or university out-of-state should

be carefully evaluated since private selective may be more generous in terms of admissions standards and financial aid. One way to gauge this is to look at the geographic composition of the members of the Soccer team. If a large number of the players come from out-of-state you know that the admission committee has sufficient leeway to give you reasonable consideration; if the converse is true you may want to place your bets elsewhere. Remember, too, that the number of public selective institutions is rather small. This is due to the fact that, by their public nature, tuition and admission requirements must be affordable for residents, yet still attractive to qualified out-of-state applicants. For this reason, your residence may be as much a factor in determining your chance for admission as your credentials. View this, of course, in light of the geographic composition of the athletic teams as indicated above.

The U.S. Service Academies differ from the other groups in several important respects, not the least of which is the fact that they are free to those student athlete's who gain appointment. While the Ivy League offers no merit scholarships, although they are very generous with those demonstrating need, the service academies offer all appointees a merit scholarship. Of course, the hitch is that applicants must be sure they want the discipline and lifestyle that these institutions offer, and also willing to accept military service requirements after graduation. The other salient difference is that although these institutions are selective, they conduct their admissions business very differently from all the rest. Essentially, almost everyone who is admitted attends. As a result, the number of students admitted is very small compared to other institutions where (as a general rule) fewer than half of the admitted students will choose to enroll. Since the general admission procedures are readily available, there is no need to cover them here. Be sure, however, that you understand the singular nature of these institutions, the unique environment and curriculum, and the difficulty of transferring to another college or university later if you find it's not for you.

State and Private Military Academies have the same characteristics as other state and private colleges and universities for admissions and available financial aid, but offer similar discipline and lifestyle as the U.S. Service Academies without the mandatory military service requirements after graduation.

Junior Colleges - There are many paths to follow in your pursuit of higher education. A junior college is often a viable alternative to beginning a college education at a four-year school. A student-athlete may make a more comfortable transition to campus life in a smaller, friendlier and more familiar setting. The junior college also offers an Associate Degree for those who are seeking to gain employment after only two years of study.

Most junior colleges build a solid academic foundation for students who wish to move on to a four-year degree program and for those who have not fully applied themselves in previous settings. They allow students to acclimate themselves more slowly to the rigors of college life relieving some of the academic pressure by adding a personal touch that may not be found at larger universities. This does not mean, however, that they are less demanding than four-year institutions.

Junior colleges almost always offer a smaller student-instructor ratio than that of a larger state school. And, because building the "academic foundation" is paramount, the junior college normally excels in support services. Resource rooms, tutoring, labs, mentoring programs, and academic counseling are staples of a junior college education.

When selecting a college, money may be a primary concern. Attending a nearby community college while living at home for the first year or two can significantly cut the cost of a four-year degree. The junior college offers a very affordable tuition that allows students and their parents some breathing room in the first two years. Moving away from home to attend a junior college offer the advantage of lower tuition, however housing, food and miscellaneous living expenses may match the costs for room and board while attending an in-state university.

Many junior college programs are serious about athletics, recognizing that they are valuable in the overall education of an individual. It is also widely recognized that through athletics an individual can increase his or her market value as a prospective student-athlete to a four-year school.

Junior college athletics are geared towards the continuation of skill development for an individual in a particular sport. Some athletes do not reach their full potential in high school. As in the academic areas, the junior college athletic program is also geared to improving the student's physical abilities. NJCAA intercollegiate athletic competition is very keen, with the various conference, district, regional and national play-offs and tournaments providing a great proving ground and barometer for student-athletes who want to pursue their sport at the NCAA Division I, II, and III levels, or in the NAIA.

Many student-athletes fall through the cracks of the recruiting process, while others are simply unable to make a decision about their future in education and athletics. For some, the financial situation is appealing; for others, the need to develop academically is a priority. These are all reasons that may best describe the cross section of student-athletes found in many junior colleges. Junior college affords them the opportunity to play Soccer at the collegiate level. For the most part, these student-athletes continue their education and playing careers at four-year schools. Many are recruited from the junior college setting, and many receive scholarships. These are success stories that cannot be ignored or discounted.

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Summary

Evaluate yourself and selective institutions on two dimensions - athletic and academic, then match them as closely as possible. Apply early and taking care to make a good first impression both on the application and during interviews or visits. Understand the differences that exist among the general grouping of selective institutions, and use this information to your advantage as you attempt to choose the best match possible.

Above all, do not get caught up thinking this is a "life or death" decision, or that only one college could possibly be the "right" one for you. The fact is that if a college can provide the educational opportunities you want for your future and offer you an opportunity to play Soccer, it is really hard to see how you can lose!

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When you are ready to play college athletics

Once you have completed your junior year in high school and wish to pursue an NCAA Division I or II program you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse – this is done by going to www.NCAAClearinghouse.net the fee is \$50.00 and if applicable a student can request a waiver from the high school if he or she meets the criteria.

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Paying for college - schedule for financial aid applicants

Junior Year

As you investigate colleges, check each college's literature for financial aid application requirements, deadlines, and any special programs for which you may be eligible. When planning your college visits, try to set an appointment to see a financial aid officer. Be prepared with specific questions about application requirements, competitive scholarship programs, packaging policies, alternative loan programs, and other questions important to your family.

Senior Year

September - get a copy of "Meeting College Costs," a publication of the College Scholarship Service, available in most guidance offices. Use the charts in this handy guide to estimate your family contribution and financial needs.

December - get the FAFSA (Financial Aid Form), the SAAC (Student Aid Application for California) or the FFS (Family Financial Statement) from the guidance office. The form may not be submitted before January 1, but you should familiarize yourself with requested information and begin to gather the financial records you will need to complete the form.

January / February - complete and submit the FAFSA (or SAAC or FFS). Make a copy for your records before sending them. Complete other financial aid application materials and send them to the colleges to which you are applying. Make one last check for forms you may also need to submit to be considered for private scholarship programs or other outside aid. If you anticipate that you may not be eligible or receive enough need-based aid, you should complete your investigation of alternative loan programs and other sources of non-need based aid. Be sure to include college financial aid officers as you seek advice on these matters.

April/May - carefully compare the bottom line costs to your family from each of the colleges offering you financial aid. As you inform your first choice of colleges of your decision to attend, respond also to school's offer of financial aid. Be sure to let the other colleges know of your decision to attend the first choice college.

May/June - by now your family should have submitted copies of its federal tax returns, promissory notes for student loans and other required documents to the appropriate financial aid office. If suggested by your college, the Stafford loan application should be submitted at that time.

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Whom can I trust

While your high school coach and the college athletic recruiter may be very helpful and eager to assist you in the college search, it is important that you and your family maintain direct contact with the college financial aid offices. Do not send your financial aid application materials through the coach and do not rely on his or her interpretation of your eligibility for financial aid. Too many lost documents, missed deadlines, and misinterpreted financial aid packages have been attributed to well-meaning but unnecessary intercession by athletic recruiters.

While some high school officers may not have as much time or good information as you would like, they are still the best place to start when seeking financial aid advice. At a minimum, they can put valuable material into your hands and guide you to other people who can help. Financial aid officers at the college you are considering are probably in the best position to analyze your circumstances and lead you to the best sources of need-based and non need-based financial assistance.

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Paying for college - foreign students

THE SPORT SOURCE® has learned since our inception in 1989 that many student-athletes outside of the U.S. are using our College Guides. Because of this, we continue to include a brief outline of the steps necessary for international students to apply to schools in the U.S. If you plan to pursue athletics at a NCAA Division I or II institution - you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. To register visit www.NCAAClearinghouse.net - Choose the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse Online Application for Foreign Student-Athletes. The fee is \$50.00 to register and is non-refundable.

As an international applicant it is important to begin the process as early as possible. You should apply no later than 6 months prior to the semester in which you wish to begin your studies. You will need the extra time to obtain your official school records, arrange for the required examinations, forward bank verification of your financial resources, for your

application to be reviewed, and to obtain your visa. It is important to note that many U.S. colleges and universities require international students applying for undergraduate studies (bachelor's degree) to pay all expenses themselves. Many universities do not give scholarships or financial aid to international students seeking undergraduate studies, we encourage the student to check with each college or university before they apply and ask what financial aid if any would be available.

Requirements

International students usually are required to be proficient in the English language, and good students in their own countries before they will be considered for admission into a college in the U.S. Students usually should have 12 years of study in their own country, beginning at age six. The last four or five years should include the study of English, history, mathematics and science. Although each university may be different, this is a basic overview of what many universities require for application from international students:

An Application Form: Answer every question. Your principal or headmaster may also be asked to answer questions on the form. There may or may not be an application fee.

Financial Certification: The student or his/her parents must often submit proof that the family or sponsor can pay for the schooling. This amount can range anywhere from \$14,000-\$20,000 per year, including tuition, room, food, books, and other miscellaneous expenses. The university needs an official statement from a bank, employer, sponsor, or other official affidavit of support.

School Records: These are transcripts or certificates of satisfactory study. Records should include an English translation of the subjects the student has studied and grades the student has made in each subject. It is very important to explain the grading system of each school attended.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): This is usually required for all international students except those whose native language is English. Information about this test can be found at U.S. Embassies, Consulates, offices of the United States Information Services, or at schools in your home country.

Aptitude Tests (SAT/ACT): These tests, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing's (ACT) Assessment Program which measure verbal and mathematical ability are required for both international students and American students. If your school does not have information about these examinations, contact ACT Universal Testing at: 319-337-1448 Monday -Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm Central Standard Time or College Board SAT Program at: 609-771-7600 Monday -Friday 8:30am - 9:30pm Eastern Standard Time.

Visa

After you have been admitted and have submitted the financial certification information

with bank statements, the university will send you a visa qualifying document. In most cases, you will be sent an I-20 Form which is used to get an F-1 student visa. To get the visa, you will need to go to your nearest American Embassy or Consulate and show the following

Three items:

Your Passport

Your I-20

Your Current Financial Certification

Because you may be asked to prove your financial resources, you should retain certified copies of the original financial information that you are sending to U. S. colleges when applying. If you already are in the United States, you will not need to get a new visa; you will receive a transfer, which will extend your time to the dates of the appropriate academic program. An I-20 will be sent for you to do your transfer.

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The student athlete's role in choosing a college

The diversity and abundance of opportunities for young men and women to participate in a college Soccer program is overwhelming when considering the full range of classifications from NCAA Division I, II, III, NAIA, and NJCAA. To date there are 2,100+ colleges and universities that sponsor Men's and Women's Soccer programs.

Each of these schools is unique in three key areas: academic programs, social and environmental factors, and athletic standards. The obvious result of any comprehensive search is that a positive match for the prepared and well-informed student-athlete does certainly exist.

The recommended process involves a focused effort in three areas. These are simply referred to as **THE THREE P's**.

I) Be proactive: Take a proactive approach to gathering information beginning the sophomore year. This should involve a system for prioritizing choices and a continuous evaluation of personal athletic and academic goals.

II) Be persistent: Once prioritized, be persistent in communicating your goals and personal interests to the program(s) of choice.

III) Be prepared: Prepare both athletically and academically to meet necessary eligibility and admission requirements.

The well-informed student athlete

What are the variables to consider in selecting a college? The most frequent questions and discussion topics encountered may be generally categorized as academic, social and athletic related. Essentially, the student-athlete should be attempting to set a variety of immediate and long-term goals for their own personal growth in each of these key areas. Matching a college opportunity to these goals is a vital step in achieving them.

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Essential questions to consider

ACADEMICALLY...Will I have the desire, support, and ability to succeed here?

SOCIALLY...Will I be comfortable with my surroundings and able to grow as a person?

ATHLETICALLY...Will I contribute and become a better player?

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Academic eligibility & admission requirements

Each Division (I, II, III) of the NCAA has some variability in eligibility requirements. The NAIA and NJCAA are significantly different from the NCAA. As well, the admissions requirements for various colleges and universities may be unique and vary greatly from one to another. However, it is possible to generally view the following items as essential elements for admission criteria to most colleges.

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Know the recruiting rules

A recruit should know a few basic NCAA rules:

- A college coach may not have off-campus contact with a recruit until July 1st after his/her junior year in high school.
- A recruit may not practice with an NCAA Division I college team on a campus visit.
- A player may not accept payments for playing for any club team.
- A recruit should not accept any financial rewards for attending an institution outside the formal scholarship opportunities.
- Recruitment must be by members of the institution's academic and athletic staff only.

Rules for NAIA and junior college associations are different. Therefore, the recruit should always seek advice directly from the association's governing body if something seems too good to be legal. Also, NCAA Division III rules vary from NCAA rules at other levels. If a recruit has questions, he/she should obtain a current copy of the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete which is published annually by the NCAA.

Choosing a college or university is a big decision and should not be taken lightly. As a student-athlete you need to enhance your opportunities for recruitment by helping in the process. The more knowledgeable and organized you are, the better your chances will be. Obviously, this process doesn't take the place of pure athletic ability and hard work, but if you have the talent and dedication to play at the collegiate level you need to freely communicate this to the coaches. *Below you will find a list of resources you should consult and sites you should visit – it is your obligation to know the recruiting rules and what core courses are required to be eligible to compete in collegiate athletics.*

NCAA RULES

National Collegiate Athletic Association
700 W. Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
Phone: 317/917-6222 Fax: 317/917-6888
<http://www.ncaa.org>

NAIA RULES

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Headquarters
23500 W. 105th St.
P.O. Box 1325
Olathe, KS 66051
Phone (913) 791-0044
<http://www.naia.org>

NJCAA RULES

National Junior College Athletic Association
PO Box 7305
Colorado Spring, Colorado 80933
Phone: 719-590-9788
Fax: 719-590-7324
<http://www.njcaa.org>

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

NCAA Clearinghouse
2255 North Dubuque Rd.
P.O. Box 4044
Iowa City, IA 52243-4044
Customer Service Line: 877/262-1492 (8 am -5 pm CST) or 24-hr voice response:
877/861-3003
<http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>

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Admission steps

Standardized Test Results: (SAT or ACT) These standardized tests represent common admission criteria. It is recommended that as a student-athlete you take the preliminary (PSAT or PACT) exam as a junior for two very important reasons. One, students have a tendency to improve their scores by repeated attempts at the exam, and secondly, the exam is a prerequisite to an official campus visit to NCAA Division I and Division II schools. As you are probably aware the SAT has a new look as of March 2005. There are 3 sections, Math, Critical Reading and Writing. Estimated time to take the test 3 hours and 45 minutes.

Photocopies of unofficial high school transcripts: Once you have established an open dialogue with a coaching staff, you should provide a copy of your academic history. Many athletic departments have access to qualified people who will analyze these transcripts and assess the probability of admission to the school well in advance of the official notification.

The admissions application: This step must be completed during the first few months of the senior year. College coaches are not the admissions officials - the final decision for admission lies with a college official outside of the athletic department. In this regard, the Soccer coaching staff is typically delighted when notified that a student-athlete has been responsible for completing the admission process on his own.

Be aware that in some cases an application may be "coded" by the athletic department in order to speed the process, or in some special cases to aid in the admission process. This is a specific question that should be asked of the coaching staff prior to making application.

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