

## **NCAA/College-Bound Athlete Guide**

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So, you want to be a college athlete. That's great! Now, you have to learn the process to actually be a college athlete. The National College Athletic Association (NCAA) has developed a process that ensures that all participating colleges and universities and their student-athletes are competing on a "level playing field," and that all prospective athletes are academically eligible to participate.

### **WHAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RECRUITING**

When a high school athlete daydreams about playing sports at college, does he/she see themselves sitting humbly on the bench waiting for the coach to send him/her in? Probably not. Instead they see themselves acknowledging the cheers of the fans, granting an interview in the locker room after the game, and weighing the merits of an attractive offer to go professional. In short, he/she has the same fantasies that thousands of other young men and women have: that college will be the springboard to fortune and the big leagues.

Here are some things to consider:

Only two out of every 100 college basketball players make it to the pros.

The professionals for any major sport are usually drawn from big institutions, which are treasure troves of first-rate athletes playing on outstanding teams.

The average pro football career lasts only three years.

These realities indicate that the college-bound athlete must think ahead to when the cheering stops. Careers in sports can end abruptly. Starting spots can evaporate after only one year. More often, college athletes have problems with eligibility. Practice schedules are hard on grades. Some players spend more than four years trying to graduate and eventually their eligibility expires.

If you are a high school athlete who wants to play college-level sports, keep two priorities in mind: **COLLEGE FIRST, SPORTS SECOND**. Avoid situations that might leave you without a degree or even a team to play on.

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE'S HIGH SCHOOL PLAN**

### **Freshman Year**

- Talk to your counselor about NCAA core class requirements
- Keep your grades high and work on your study habits
- Get to know all the coaches in your sport
- Attend sports camps
- Realistically analyze your ability
- Start thinking about academic and career goals

### **Sophomore Year**

- Keep up your grades
- Take the PLAN and/or PSAT test
- Talk to your coaches about your ability and ambitions
- Make preliminary inquiries to colleges that interest you (a brief letter to the college coach might be appropriate)

### **Junior Year**

- Talk with your counselor about career goals and, again, about the NCAA core course requirements
- Talk with your coach about a realistic assessment of which college level you can play
- Take the PSAT, ACT, and SAT
- Refine your list of possible college choices. Know their admission requirements
- Create a sports resume

- Write letters to college coaches expressing your interest
- Obtain letters of recommendation from teachers
- Apply for eligibility to the NCAA Clearinghouse at the end of junior year
- Attend sports camps in the summer, if appropriate

### Senior Year

- Meet again with your counselor to ensure that you are meeting all graduation and NCAA requirements
- Attend college fairs, College Night for Seniors at CB, and financial aid workshops
- Retake the ACT and/or SAT, if appropriate
- Refine your college list and apply for admission
- Be aware of recruiting rules regarding campus visits
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after January 1
- Sit down with your parents and coach to list the pros and cons of each school you are considering
- Be sure of your final choice before signing any papers
- Let coaches know when their school is no longer in the running. Thank them!
- Make your final college decision based on a meaningful education, excellent career preparation, and a satisfying athletic experience—IN THAT ORDER!

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR RECRUITER**

What is the recruiter's relationship to the school? Is he or she the head coach, assistant coach, an alumnus, or an admission representative? (Assurances carry different weight depending on who they come from.)

Keep your education foremost in your mind by asking about academic programs that interest you. A good recruiter is as informed about programs as an admissions person is. Fire away with specific questions about majors and courses in your field.

At what level does your sport compete? NCAA Division I schools offer athletic scholarships; most Division II schools offer scholarships; no Division III schools offer scholarships.

Ask for details about athletic scholarships—any strings? Typically, athletic scholarships (or grants, as they are sometimes called) are for one year, renewable at the coach's discretion. If you get benched, do you start paying your own way from then on?

How many athletes were kept on scholarship after their eligibility had expired? What is the college's graduation rate for athletes? Because of heavy demands on their time, some college athletes take five years to graduate. By their final year, they are usually ineligible to play.

Is tutoring or counseling available? Beware of remarks like, "Don't worry. We haven't lost a player yet because of academics," which could imply that your education will be allowed to suffer before your value to the team will.

What will happen if you are placed on academic probation? Do you lose part or all of your benefits?

Ask the coach what he expects of his players: time commitment, behavior, appearance, etc., and decide whether you can work with her or him.

What is expected of players during the off-season?

Has drug use been an issue at your school or in your athletic program?

Most importantly, ask yourself if the school would be right for you even if you weren't competing in athletics.

### **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?

Approximately how many hours a night do you study?

How do you like the living arrangements?

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?

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK SCHOOL OFFICIALS/ADMISSION OFFICERS:**

What are the different graduation rates for athletes? In your sport?

How long does it take someone in your sport to earn a degree from this school?

What is the placement rate and average starting salary for graduates in your field of study?

What financial aid is available?

### **CHECKLIST FOR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES MAKING INITIAL CONTACTS WITH COLLEGE COACHES**

**STEP 1** Research the colleges that fit your academic and athletic needs. College reference books and search engines on the Internet can assist you. Establish a tentative list of colleges that you'd like to contact. Make sure you are academically eligible for admission to each school on the list. Also make sure that your grades, ACT/SAT scores, and class rank will allow you to be eligible athletically, as well. Your high school counselor or the worksheet in this booklet can help you if you are not sure.

**STEP 2** Show your list to your coach and ask for feedback on how realistic your chances would be for each school. Ask if he/she would be willing to make/receive contacts on your behalf. If the answer is yes, provide your coach with the following information:

A list of the colleges you plan to contact with each college's coach, phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address

Copies of the documents you're sending to each college

A copy of your current high school transcript and resume

Optional:

A copy of your college/career goal statement

Copies of your letters of recommendation from other adults

These documents will allow your high school coach to advocate for you knowledgeably. It is important to have his/her support.

**STEP 3** Send an introduction letter—either from yourself or your coach—and your athletic resume to each college coach. (The samples that follow are designed to serve as guides. You will need to provide statistics that are appropriate to your sport.) Spring of junior year or fall of senior year can be good times to send these. You can also send a skills tape and game tape with this initial information, or you can offer to send them "upon request."

**STEP 4** Make sure to take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring of your junior year. Most college coaches will insist on knowing your scores before considering you.

**STEP 5** 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](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

**STEP 6** Colleges will often respond by asking you or your coach to complete an athletic questionnaire. If you receive a questionnaire from a random school, take the time to fill it out! You never know when an unexpected opportunity might come your way.

**STEP 7** 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. Your coaches or counselors can provide information booklets from the various athletic associations to assist you. Not knowing the rules will not be an excuse for a recruiting violation.

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**SAMPLE LETTER FROM HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE  
TO COLLEGE COACH**

Date  
Coach's Name  
College/University  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Coach So & So:

I would like to introduce myself. I am currently a senior at Christian Brothers High School. I have played high school volleyball for four years, starting as a setter for the last three. I am 5'8" and weigh 145 pounds. I have been All-Conference for the past two years and All-State this year. I was also selected for the North All Star Team this year.

My coach's name is Mary Jones. Her contact information is included on the attached information page. She has indicated to me that she would welcome your calls. E-mail is a reliable way to reach her as well. I rank 78 in my class of 799 students. My cumulative GPA is a 3.7 on a 4.0 scale. My ACT composite was a 24. I intend to retake it in October. I am interested in pursuing a four-year degree in biology. I also hope to continue playing volleyball on the college level. Your program especially interests me. I have followed your team's season in the *Rocky Mountain News* and have attended two games.

I have included a skills tape and a game tape. My jersey number is #1 in the light-colored uniforms. Also included is a schedule of our 2007-08 volleyball season. Please let me know if there is additional information that my coach or I can provide.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Athlete's Name

**SAMPLE STUDENT-ATHLETE RESUME**

**AMY ATHLETE**

**Volleyball Information**

*1225 Any Street Any Town, Any State 81234*

*Telephone: (500) 111-1111 or (500) 222-2222*

*Aathlete@aol.com*

**Coach:** Mary Jones

1010 Training Avenue

Any Town, Any State 81234

Telephone: (500) 111-1212

E-mail: [mjones@cbhs-sacramento.org](mailto:mjones@cbhs-sacramento.org)

**High School:** Christian Brothers High School

4315 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Sacramento, CA 95820

916.733.3680

**Volleyball Division:** Class 4A (Highest level within the State)

**Position:** Setter

**Jersey:** #1 Dark/#10 Light

**Offense Used:** 5-1 Offense

**Years Starting Varsity:** 3 years

**Awards/Honors:** Best Setter (2006, 2007, 2008)

Most Valuable Player (2007)

All Conference (2006, 2007)

All State (2006)

North All Star Team (2007)

**Experience:** AAU Volleyball (2007, 2008)

Coed Power Outdoor & Indoor Tournaments (2007-08)

Aspen Volleyball Camp (2007, 2008)

Any University Summer Camp (2005)

**Height:** 5'8"

**Weight:** 145 lbs.

**Vertical:** 23"

**GPA & Rank:** 3.74 on 4.0 scale

Decile: 1<sup>st</sup> (top 10%)

**Graduation Date:** May 2009

## ***NCAA WEBSITE GUIDE***

### **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](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)**
2. Click on "General Information"
3. Click on "Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete" in left-hand column
4. Click on "View Online"
5. Click on "Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete" PDF 488KB (requires Adobe Acrobat Reader, which you can download from web page)
6. We recommend that you print out the Guide for future reference.

For the most up-to-date list of CB High School's Approved Core Courses:

Go to **[www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)**

Click on "General Information"

Click on "List of Approved Core Courses (formerly 48H)" in left-hand column

Enter CBHS's 6-digit code of "052697" in box and click on "Submit" below

You may select a specific core area or "All Subject Areas" and click on "Submit" below. (Courses are listed by subject area: English, Social Science, Mathematics, Natural/Physical Science, and Additional Core Courses, which includes Foreign Language, Computer Science, and select Social Studies courses.)

To find information on what schools sponsor your sport, as well as access athletic contacts at individual schools:

1. Go to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)
2. Click on "Schools Sponsoring NCAA Sports" in left-hand column
3. You may choose from the following four options:

Schools sponsoring each sport sorted by institution name

Schools sponsoring each sport sorted by division

Schools sponsoring each sport sorted by conference

Schools sponsoring each sport sorted by region

4. You may also choose "Number of schools that sponsor each sport"
5. You may also access a database of names, addresses, and phone numbers for athletic contacts at colleges and universities by clicking on "College and University Athletic Contacts".

#### **TO APPLY FOR NCAA ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:**

1. Go to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)
2. Click on "Prospective Student-Athletes"
3. Click on "Domestic Student Release Form"
4. Complete the online form. Be prepared for the following:

You must have a Social Security Number.

You will need to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Our school code is "052697".

You have the option to receive communication from the NCAA Clearinghouse either by the email/web option, which requires a valid email address, or the paper option, which can delay notification up to two weeks.

You will need a MasterCard or Visa debit or credit card or check to pay the processing fee. Do not send cash.

If you qualify for a fee waiver, please see your counselor on how to send the necessary form to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

Both student and parent (if student is less than 18 years old) must check box certifying that they have read and understood NCAA agreement.

**IMPORTANT! After you have submitted your form, be sure to print out the Release: Copy 1 and Release: Copy 2 forms. Sign and bring these forms to the CBHS Registrar and complete a**

**Transcript Request Form. We will send your transcript to the NCAA Clearinghouse upon receipt of the release.**

## **RECENT CHANGES TO NCAA ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Students who wish to participate in collegiate athletics at the Division I or II level must apply for certification with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearinghouse after their junior year in high school. Christian Brothers High School counselors can assist students in completing the paperwork necessary in this process.

**To be certified by the Clearinghouse, you must:**

### **Graduate from high school.**

You should apply for certification after your junior year in high school if you are sure you wish to participate in intercollegiate athletics as a freshman at a Division I or II institution. The Clearinghouse will issue a preliminary certification report after you have had all your materials submitted. After you graduate, if your eligibility status is requested by a member institution, the Clearinghouse will review your final transcript to make a final certification decision according to NCAA standards.

**Complete the 16 core courses listed below.**

### **Division I**

#### **2008 and Later**

If you enroll in a Division I college on or after August 1, 2008, and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, you must:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete these **16** core courses:
  - 4 years of English
  - **3** years of math (algebra 1 or higher)
  - 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)
  - 1 extra year of English, math or natural or physical science
  - 2 years of social science
  - **4** years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, non-doctrinal religion or philosophy);
- Earn a minimum required grade-point average in your core courses; and
- Earn a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches your core course grade-point average and test score sliding scale (for example, a 2.400 core-course grade-point average needs an 860 SAT).

*Note: Computer science courses can be used as core courses only if your high school grants graduation credit in math or natural or physical science for them, and if the courses appear on your high school's core-course list as math or science courses.*

## **One Core Course after High School Graduation**

Beginning in 2007 and thereafter, if you graduate from high school on schedule (in eight semesters) with your incoming ninth grade class, you may use **one** core course completed in the year after graduation (summer or academic year). You may complete the core course at a location other than the high school from which you graduated and may initially enroll full time at a collegiate institution at any time after completion of the core course.

## **Division II**

### **2005 and Later**

If you enroll in a Division II college in 2005 or later and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, you must:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete these 14 core courses:
  - 3 years of English
  - 2 years of math (algebra 1 or higher)
  - 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)
  - 2 extra years of English, math or natural or physical science
  - 2 years of social science
  - 3 years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, non-doctrinal religion or philosophy);
- Earn a 2.000 grade-point average or better in your core courses;

And

- Earn a combined SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

There is no sliding scale in Division II.

*Note: Computer science courses can be used as core courses only if your high school grants graduation credit in math or natural or physical science for them, and if the courses appear on your high school's core-course list as math or science courses.*

**You will be a qualifier** if you meet the academic requirements listed above. As a qualifier, you:

- Can practice or compete for your college or university during your first year of college;
- Can receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of college; and
- Can play four seasons in your sport if you maintain your eligibility from year to year.

**You will be a partial qualifier** if you do not meet all of the academic requirements listed above, but you have graduated from high school **and** meet one of the following:

- The combined SAT score of 820 or ACT sum score of 68; or
- Completion of the 14 core courses with a 2.000 core-course grade-point average.

As a partial qualifier, you:

- Can practice with your team at its home facility during your first year of college;
- Can receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of college;
- Cannot compete during your first year of college; and
- Can play four seasons in your sport if you maintain your eligibility from year to year.

**Present a minimum required grade point average in your core courses.** Only courses that are on Christian Brothers High School's "List of NCAA Approved Core Courses" can be used to calculate your NCAA GPA. No special values are allowed for "+" or "-" grades.

Achieve a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches your core-course grade point average in the index listed below.

**New Core GPA/Test Score Index  
(to be used with 16 core courses)  
See NCAA Clearinghouse website for chart**