



ACES Softball
Recruitment Guide
for
Parents and Players

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Introduction

Many times parents and players are seeking information on the college softball and recruitment process. They are not sure where to turn for information. There are so many questions to ask. When do I apply to College? How important are test scores? How do I contact a college coach? Do I need a video? What is the NCAA Clearinghouse? How do I begin the recruitment process?

It is very important to know that no one course is correct for everyone. Each school and coach may handle the process differently for their prospective student-athletes. But there are many things you need to know about the process before you begin.

When looking at schools, try to find a campus you love and where you can see yourself attending for four to five years. Look for a school that has your major area of concentration. Try to find a school that has a softball program where you'll play and enjoy yourself. Be honest with yourself about where you might fit in academically and athletically and be honest with yourself and the coach you are communicating with.

Schools and coaches also look for good students. One of the most important things to remember is to work hard and keep your grades up. You should be a student first and an athlete second.

It is also our hope that you will check with the school and their umbrella organization to make sure of their policies, scholarship availability, rules and programs. There are differences between those umbrella organizations rules. For example, the NCAA Division I and II, NCAA Division III and NAIA have different rules for what coaches may do during the recruitment process. So do your homework and remember to ask questions.

It is our hope that the information provided in this guide will help you to answer some of those questions and point you to the right sources for additional information. There are some guidelines that will help you as you prepare for this exciting, yet sometimes intimidating, process.

Getting Started/A Suggested/Timeline

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

Sophomore Year

(Coaches cannot call or write you yet, only send general information and camp information, so don't be disappointed if you write a coach and they do not write you back

- **Keep your grades up!**
- Begin compiling a list of possible colleges or universities that meet your interests and research their academic and athletic programs
- Take the PSAT test.
- Write a cover letter and softball resume and send it out to possible schools.
- Review NCAA Clearinghouse eligibility requirements. The summer before your junior year, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Select junior year courses to fulfill these requirements.
- Play at the highest level possible. Keep a record of athletic achievements.

Junior Year

(As of September 1, coaches can return correspondence and write letters, but cannot call until on or after July 1 before your senior year).

- **Keep your grades up!**
- Send coaches updated resume and player profile, send dates of tournaments and league games.
- Organize a filing system on colleges that respond to your inquiry and indicate interest. You will need names and phone numbers of coaches and also when they indicated interest.
- Make a list of all the colleges/universities you have been in contact with and rank them in order starting with your favorite school (based on what you know at this point) down to your least favorite school. Start by calling the coach at your least favorite school. You will probably be nervous when you talk to this coach however, by talking to a coach at your least favorite college/university, you will gain confidence for when you contact the coaches who are higher on your priority list.
- Most likely, if you are calling a coach, you will get his or her voicemail. Practice leaving a message beforehand. You can even call yourself and leave a practice voicemail on your cell phone. If you do get in touch with a coach, make sure you take notes on the conversation. Also, keep a list of your top five questions to ask and make sure that these questions cannot be answered by looking on the Web site.
- Play in College Showcase tournaments, summer tournaments or participate in ODP events.
- Attend any recruitment seminars at these tournaments. Also attend College Fairs and register your sport with each college.
- Consider attending the summer camp of a school of interest, or one which has a lot of college coaches on staff.
- Narrow your search to 10 or so schools and engage in regular correspondence with the coach.

- Make unofficial visits (at your expense) to selected schools. Meet with the coach and see the team play, if possible.
- Take the SAT or ACT tests. Make sure scores are sent to your schools of interest.
- Check your status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Select senior year courses to complete Clearinghouse requirements.
- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.
- Obtain financial form (FAFSA).

Senior Year

(As of July 1, you can now talk on the phone with a coach. If you are a top level player, expect some phone calls. If not, call the coach yourself. A letter followed by a call shows interest in the program. Only one call per week is allowed).

- **Don't let down in your class work. Finish strong.**
- Check status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Narrow your search to 5 schools.
- Complete FAFSA form again with recent tax information.
- Respond immediately to any interest shown by colleges
- Schedule and complete official visits (at schools expense). Meet with the coach and the team and stay overnight if possible, see the team play.
- Stay in touch with your high school counselor.
- Narrow down your choices and get your applications done early.
- Keep coaches updated on your achievements by sending them your resume through the fall and play in high level events in November and December.
- Provide your coach and counselor with your interest college list. Discuss college interest with your coach and counselor.
- Make a decision!

Make a List of Colleges

Draft a tentative list of colleges that interest you. Your list may include schools in your area, schools that have a particular major of interest to you, or schools you know very little about. Your list may be long but in the early stages you don't want to eliminate any school you are curious about. It is very important that you look at the school for its academic programs as well as its athletic programs.

Your academic experience in college is what will provide an important foundation for your chosen career path after college. Not many players plan to be professional athletes. In addition, it's not uncommon for an injury to happen that could end your college softball career. You want to end up at a place that you will enjoy attending even if you never play athletics there.

Here are some questions that may aid you in your college selection.

- Would I choose this college even if I am not playing on the team?
- Would I be happy sitting on the bench and not playing much?
- Would I still select this college if there is a different coach?
- Was I comfortable there both academically and athletically?
- Did the staff and team seem to get along and care about each other?
- How does the coach motivate the team?
- Were the coaching team and staff friendly? Enthusiastic? Honest? Supportive? Sincere? Caring? Or hospitable?

Educate yourself about the Colleges on your List

After you have created your list of schools, research the schools. Read everything you can find on the school. Look at their Web page, read their press releases on their Web page, check college resource books, talk to your school counselor, read the teams homepage as well.

Guides you may want to look at include: Peterson's Four-Year Colleges, The Big Book of Colleges, Fiske Guide to Colleges, The Best 366 Colleges, The College Board College Handbook, Official Athletic Guide to Softball, or the Women's Softball Guide: The Official Athletic College Guide, Over 1,100 Women's Scholarship Programs Listed (Official Athletic College Guide Softball Women). Make sure and talk to your Club and High School Coaches about various college programs. The University of Florida also maintains a Web page that lists links to US colleges and universities that offer bachelors and master's degrees. That link is: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/au/>

Educate yourself about the Various Associations'

NCAA Guidelines

Students that plan to compete in athletics at the college level must meet certain eligibility requirements set forth by the NCAA. Students who have not met the NCAA eligibility requirements will not be allowed to participate in college athletics.

We have including the following link to assist you in this process. For information go to: <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/>

NCAA Initial-eligibility Clearinghouse

Students who plan to compete in athletics at the Division I or Division II college level must complete the NCAA Clearinghouse form in order to be eligible. Division III does not use the eligibility Center. There is a \$75 registration fee. To pay online you will need to use a credit card. The steps for registering on line are as follows:

1. Go to the NCAA Clearinghouse web site at <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>
2. Once there, click on PROSPECTIVE STUDENT-ATHLETE
3. Once on the Welcome to student information page, click on DOMESTIC STUDENT RELEASE FORM
4. Once on the Student release form (U.S.) page, complete this page accurately
5. Print an extra copy of your student release form for your counselor.
6. You will still need to notify your counselor that you registered on line so that your transcript will be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

What are the Divisions of the NCAA?

Division I

Division I member institutions have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season has to be represented by each gender as well. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball, Division I schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents -- anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50 percent Division I. Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed. For a list of member schools/sports link: <http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=1>

Division II

Division II institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, (or four for men and six for women), with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season represented by each gender. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball there are no scheduling requirements. There are not attendance requirements for football, or arena game requirements for basketball. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division II school must not exceed. Division II teams usually feature a number of local or in-state student-athletes. Many Division II student/athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans and employment earnings. Division II athletics programs are financed in the

institution's budget like other academic departments on campus. Traditional rivalries with regional institutions dominate schedules of many Division II athletics programs. For a list of member schools/sports link: <http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=2>

Division III

Division III institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season represented by each gender. There are minimum contest and participant minimums for each sport. Division III athletics features student/athletes who receive no financial aid related to their athletic ability and athletic departments are staffed and funded like any other department in the university. Division III athletics departments place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators. The student-athlete's experience is of paramount concern. Division III athletics encourages participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities available to students, placing primary emphasis on regional in-season and conference competition.

For a list of member schools/sports link: <http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=3>

What is the NAIA?

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has different eligibility requirements for student-athletes. To be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics as an incoming freshman, two of the following three requirements must be met:

1. Have a 2.0 (C) or higher cumulative final grade point average in high school.
2. Have a composite score of 18 or higher on the ACT Assessment or an 860 total score or higher on the SAT I on a single test administered on a national test date.
3. Have a top-half final class rank in his or her high school graduating class.

Student-athletes must also have on file at the college an official ACT Assessment or SAT I score report from the appropriate national testing center. Results reported on the student's high school transcript are not acceptable. Students must request that their test scores be forwarded to the college's admission office. If you have additional questions about NAIA eligibility, contact them at: NAIA, 23500 W. 105 Street, P.O. Box 1325, Olathe, Kansas 66051-1325 or by phone at 413-971-0044 or on-line at: <http://www.naia.org>.

For a list of member schools: <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/about/members.htm>

For rules on financial aid, campus visits, etc. refer to Article II:

[http://graphics.fansonlv.com/schools/naia/member-services/pubs/handbook/2007-08 Official Handbook.pdf](http://graphics.fansonlv.com/schools/naia/member-services/pubs/handbook/2007-08%20Official%20Handbook.pdf)

What is the NJCAA?

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is the governing body of intercollegiate athletics for two-year colleges. As such, its programs are designed to meet the unique needs of a diverse group of student-athletes who come from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds and whose purpose in selecting a junior college may be as varied as their experiences before attending college. For information on schools and eligibility requirements go

to: <http://www.njcaa.org/> For a list of member schools by gender and sport: <http://www.njcaa.org/members-sport.cfm>

What is the NCCAA?

The National Christian College Athletic Association was incorporated to provide a Christian-based organization that functions uniquely as a national and international agency for the promotion of outreach and ministry, and for the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of intercollegiate athletic competition with a Christian perspective. For information on schools and eligibility requirements go to: <http://www.thenccaa.org/> For a list of member schools by region: http://www.thenccaa.org/member_schools.html

What if you a Home-Schooled?

Home schooled students who want to play DI or II college sports must register with the clearinghouse and meet the same requirements as all other students. After registering, the home-schooled student must send the following information to the eligibility center:

- Standardized test scores must be on an official transcript from a traditional high school or be sent directly from the testing agency.
- Transcript listing credits earned and grades.
- Proof of high school graduation.
- Evidence that home schooling was conducted in accordance with state law.
- List of texts used throughout home schooling (including text titles, publisher and in which courses it was used).

For more information refer to the NCAA website at www.ncaa.org. It is important for you to check with the colleges you are interested in to verify your courses and any other requirements.

When Can a College Coach Talk to a High School Prospect?

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

There can be a lot of confusion about contacting college coaches, especially if you are new to the recruiting game. This is the time of year when athletes start thinking a lot about getting calls from a college coach and there are usually a lot of questions surrounding the topic.

Is it okay for an athlete to call a coach? When can a coach call an athlete? Are there any rules to be aware of when you are hoping to be recruited by a college coach? To help simplify this, here are a few simple tips to guide your future interaction with college coaches:

- A college coach can only call or visit you after July of your junior year in high school. That means a coach cannot place an outbound call to you, nor can he initiate a visit to your home or school specifically to talk to you about playing a sport at his or her college, until the summer before your senior year. Remember, this deals only with outbound communication from a coach.
- You can call or meet with a coach at any point in your high school career. That's right; you can call a coach whenever you want. The key here is that you are the one initiating contact with the coach and not the other way around. If you want to call a coach or visit a campus and set up a meeting with the coach, you may do so as often as you wish.
- You can take as many campus visits as you would like when considering a sports scholarship offer. Again, the key here is that you are the one initiating the visit. What about those five "official" visits that you often hear about big-time athletes making to schools when they are seniors? Those are visits that the school pays for. A prospective student-athlete can only take five official visits that are paid for by schools during his or her high school career.
- ***Be proactive about the process! Take control!***

What does it mean if a College Coach sends a questionnaire?

Colleges may ask you to complete an on-line questionnaire or mail you one to complete. It is a way for them to get initial information on you.

Why responding to all College Coaches is Important?

Most prospective student-athletes will receive some contact from colleges, in the form of general admissions information, questionnaires, and/or emails from college coaches. Many student-athletes make the mistake of disregarding correspondence from colleges and coaches they are not initially interested in. No college contact should be neglected!

The following is a list of reasons why you should respond to EVERYONE:

- If you are receiving general admissions information, especially if you are an underclassman – respond anyway! A lot of coaches put underclassmen's names on admissions lists to see if they will respond.

- If you do not respond to a coach, or return their questionnaire, they will stop recruiting you.
- Your opinion may change. Once you research a college and talk to a coach, you are bound to learn something new. You never know which college or program might be the perfect fit for you.
- The more coaches you communicate with, the more familiar you will become with the types of questions college coaches ask. This practice will prepare you for email exchanges and conversation with coaches at your favorite colleges/universities.
- By investigating many different types of colleges, you will have a better idea of your likes and dislikes in a college/university.
- College coaches change jobs! You might ignore a coach because you are not interested their program, only to have them get hired at one of your top choices.
- College coaches are friends with one another, and they do not appreciate it when a student-athlete ignores a contact. You never want to give anyone something bad to say about you!
- It is just common courtesy. If a coach takes the time to send you some information, you owe them a response.
- Responding to a college coach will demonstrate that you are mature and responsible. For example, most of the information asked on the questionnaire is to test your responsibility and ability to follow directions, and to see if you are interested in the college/university.

Remember, it will only take a little bit of your time, and will definitely be worth it if you are keeping in touch with every college/university that you hear from. Who knows – it may even be the one you decide upon!

How to Contact a Coach

Initial Interest Letter/Cover Letters

The letter you compose should be short and direct. The letter is a way to request information and introduce you to the coach as a prospective student-athlete. Here are some things to include:

- You name, high school, current grade level.
- Your home address, email address, phone number. (It is suggested that you give them a home number instead of or in addition to your cell, since it may not always be convenient for you to talk to them on your cell phone).
- High school softball experience, years of varsity experience, team accomplishments, and personal awards.
- Current club team, recent team accomplishments
- Academic interests

Sample Letter 1

Date

Coach's Name
University Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Coach_____,

My name is Helen Smith and I am currently a senior at All Star High School in Lexington, Kentucky.

I am also the starting catcher on my high school team and have led them in runs scored for the past three years. My team won the state championship in 2007 and was the runner-up in 2008. We are currently ranked third in the state. I was named honorable mention all-state in 2005, second team in 2006 and 2007.

I play for the LFC 18U Premier Girls Team. I have played at the premier level since 12U. My team won the Kentucky State Championship for the past three years. In 2007, we advanced to the semifinals at the Midwest Regional. I also play catcher for my select team. My coach, Parviz Zartoshty, said he would be glad to speak with you on my behalf.

I have spent time doing research on what colleges would be a good match for me academically and athletically. I am interested in majoring in psychology with a minor in English. I am very interested in your College and your program and would appreciate receiving information from you. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Helen Smith
(Include your mailing address)

Sample Letter 2

Date

Coach's Name
University Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Coach _____,

May I take a moment of your time to introduce myself? My name is Helen Smith and I am currently a senior at All Star High School in Lexington, Kentucky.

During the last few weeks, I have spent time with my counselor doing research on which colleges would be a good match for me both academically and athletically. I am very interested in your college and would appreciate receiving information about your school, and the softball program.

I have played varsity softball for All Star High School since the 9th grade. I have been the starting SS for the past three years and have played in every game. I had the second highest batting average my freshman year and the most runs batted in the past two years. Over the past three years I have hit 19 HRs. My high school plays a very strong schedule and has contended for the Kentucky state championship the past three years. My coach, Joan Jett, would be happy to talk with you or provide you with a game film. My number is 3.

I play for the 18U Premier Girls Team. Our team has won the Kentucky State Championship three times. I also play forward on my club team but have some experience in the outfield. We will be playing at the Cincinnati Cup in December and my club number is 3. My coach, Parviz Zartoshty, would be happy to talk with you.

Academically, I am a strong student with an A average and have no trouble balancing school and athletics.

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

Sincerely,

Helen Smith
123 Anywhere Lane
Lexington, KY 40503

Athletic Resume/Profile

You should put together a resume that includes your basic personal information, athletic accomplishments and provides information about your past teams, camps, tournaments and other softball experiences. Don't forget to include athletic accomplishments in other sports as well. Coaches like to see athletic versatility and talent. Then list your scholastic accomplishments, include standardized test scores if available, and any extracurricular activities, such as school clubs or volunteer activities. Let the Coach know of any showcase tournaments you will be attending with your club team. That is a great way to be seen by a prospective coach.

Sample Resume

Profile of Helen Smith
123 Anywhere Lane
Lexington, KY 40503
Phone: 859 123-4567 (h)
Cell: 859-123-6789 (cell)
E-mail Address:
Parents Name:

Graduation Date: June 2009

Personal Information:

Height: 5'8" Weight: 146 DOB: 1/30/89

High School Information:

Name:
Address:
Phone Number High
School Coach: Coach
Home Number:
Guidance Counselor:
School Fax Number:

Academic Achievements:

Athletic Achievements:

Club Softball:
High School Softball:
Other Sports:

Extracurricular Activities:

ODP Experience:

Academic Achievements:

Educational Goals:
Comments:

Do You Need a Video?

College coaches are eager to see you in action. Videotapes are not always necessary, but if a coach requests one, you should try to provide it. It does not need to be an elaborate, state-of-the-art video. Use a tripod when filming to avoid jostling or shaking. A good videotape will include:

- 10 to 15 minutes of unedited game film. It should be no longer than 15 minutes.
- Some highlight clips. Show different skills. Use game film when possible.
- A skills tape. For field players, that consists of:
 - Fielding balls in the infield and outfield.
 - Record multiple positions.
 - Display hitting fundamentals from multiple angles.
 - Be vocal and show off your hustle.
 - Run the bases to show your athleticism and quickness. Explode off the bases.
- For a pitcher and catcher it can consist of:
 - Pitcher - different pitches.
 - Pitcher - show movement on your pitches.
 - Catcher - show off your blocking skills.
 - Catcher - show off throw downs and your pop time to 2B.

How to plan a Campus Recruiting Visit

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

The best way to learn about a college or university is to visit it. While on campus you can get a feel for the school. Try to visit while school is in session. If you visit over the summer, keep in mind many colleges do offer summer programs, therefore the students you see on campus may not be full-time students. At many D-III schools no summer classes are offered.

While on campus, why not schedule a little time to visit with the softball coach? Meeting with a coach is a great opportunity to ask questions about the school and the softball program. It may also help you decide if you like the coach. It is also a great time to market yourself to the coach. You should plan to take a photocopy of your transcript so the coach can see what kind of student you are. Also bring your athletic resume if the coach does not have it on file. Bring a parent—they may ask questions you won't. Most importantly, try to establish an open dialogue with the coach. It is also important for college coaches to be honest with you.

What is An Official Visit?

Although you are always welcome to visit college campuses at your own expense, you are limited to five official visits in which the college pays for part of all of your expenses. Completion of the SAT and ACT and a high school transcript are prerequisites to an official visit, and you may only go on an official visit after the first day of your senior classes in high school. Usually an official visit consists of an overnight stay where you will have a member of the softball team as your host. You will meet the coach and the team, learn more about the program, attend a class and possibly attend a sporting event. You may also meet other recruited athletes there for a visit. While there, talk to people and learn as much as you can.

Here are some things you should do in advance of a visit:

- Decide where to meet the coach.
- Get their number to avoid a mix-up.
- Get the time schedule for your visit.
- Ask for the names of your contacts on campus.
- Find out who is paying for any tickets or meals.
- Ask what to bring.
- Ask to meet with department chair in your area of interest.
- Ask to meet with admissions to understand procedure and ask questions.
- Try to see the campus on a regular school day while class is in session.
- Visit with players. Talk with the freshmen and sophomores to get their perspective on first-year experiences.
- Take notes regarding your visit.
- Always write a thank-you letter to the coach after your visit.

What is the Recruiting Timeline?

Division I programs are on a timetable that is a little slower and longer. The majority of all Division I colleges/universities will fill their recruiting class needs by early fall of that class's senior year. This means that if you are a Division I softball player, you have already visited that campus, sat down with the coach and know where you stand on their recruiting list by your first day of class senior year. The early commitment trend is becoming increasingly prevalent at the Division I level. This only increases the amount of time and research that must be put into recruiting on the student-athlete's end.

Division II colleges/universities are typically the next to finish up their recruiting classes. Some Division II colleges/universities will have prospects verbally commit during the summer, but most will finish during the fall and into the winter of their senior class.

Division III, NAIA and Junior Colleges recruiting typically continues into the winter and spring of a student-athlete's senior year of high school. If you are not on track with this timeline, do not panic, these are general guidelines and every college/university has a different situation.

Questions to Ask Prospective College Coaches

(From the 2008 NCAA College-Bound Student-Athlete publication, pages 23-28)

About Athletics?

- What positions will I play on your team?
- What other players may be competing at the same position?
- Will I be redshirted my freshman year?
- What are your training and conditioning expectations?
- What is your coaching style?
- How long do you plan to remain as the coach?
- What are preferred, invited and uninvited walk-on situations?
- How many students receive scholarships?
- Who else are you recruiting for my position?
- Is medical insurance required for participation?
- Does the college provide the insurance or must I purchase it?
- What is the cost of the insurance?
- If I am injured while competing, who is responsible for my medical expenses?
- What happens if I transfer to another school?

About Academics?

- Ask about the major program you are interested in? How good is the Department?
- What percentage of players on scholarship graduate?
- Do you have academic programs that support your athletes?
- If you have a diagnosed and documented disability (i.e. ADHD, ADD, etc), what kind of academic services are available?
- Are there restrictions in scheduling classes around practice?
- How many credit hours can you take in season and out of season?
- Is summer school available? If I need to take summer school, will it be paid for by the College?

About College Life?

- What is a typical day for a student-athlete?
- What are the dorms or housing options?
- What are they residence halls like?
- How many students are there in a room?
- Do I have to room with another softball player or is my roommate a non-athlete?
- Can I pick my roommate?
- Do student-athletes have to live on campus? Are there any exceptions?

About Financial Aid?

- How much financial aid is available for both the academic year and summer school?
- What does your scholarship cover?
- How long will the scholarship last?
- Can I work while playing sports?

- What kinds of employment opportunities are available to me?
- Can I be employed in-season, out-of-season or during vacation periods?
- What is not covered by the scholarship?
- Am I eligible for financial aid? Are there any restrictions?
- Do I have to maintain a certain GPA to keep my academic scholarship?
- Under what circumstances can my scholarship be canceled or reduced?
- Does the school have a policy governing the renewal of athletics aid?
- What scholarship money is available after eligibility is exhausted to help complete your degree?
- What scholarship money is available if you suffer an athletic career-ending injury?
- Will my scholarship be maintained if there is a change in coaches?

What questions should you ask teammates?

- How many hours a day will athletics keep me from my studies?
- Does the coach discourage you from taking classes in your major that may conflict with practice?
- What percentage of athletes will graduate in four years? Five years?
- Is free tutoring available? How do I arrange for it?
- Do you like the coach?
- Do you like the size of the town?
- Is the town affordable?
- What is the composition of the team?
- Does the coach have a “B” team?
- Does the coach take all players that show up or do they also cut players?
- How many classes will I miss due to athletic commitments? Can I make up tests or work before absences?
- How much does the team travel?
- How many hours a day do you study?
- How many players are on the roster?

Information for parents and Guardians

(Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It's always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules).

Amateurism and Academic Eligibility

If your child plans to compete, practice or receive an athletic scholarship at a NCAA Division I or II college or university, you must meet the NCAA eligibility requirements. It is best for your son or daughter to register with the eligibility center at the beginning or end of their junior year. Once registered, they must ask their high school counselor or register to have their academic transcript sent to the eligibility center. Test scores must also be submitted. The eligibility center must be listed as a separate recipient of the test scores. The eligibility center will not accept test scores submitted on the academic transcript. They will review the records and send a preliminary report. A final report is issued once a final transcript showing high school graduation is submitted. Have questions call: 877-262-1492. You can check their eligibility at the clearinghouse Web site: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

Financial Aid

If your child is eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics and is accepted as a full-time student at a Division I or II school, they may receive athletics-based financial aid from the school. That aid could include tuition and fees, room and board, and books. Division III schools do not award financial aid based on athletic ability. A Division III college may award aid based on need or academics. Some parents are uncomfortable pursuing private out-of-state Division III institutions because of the sticker price. Do not think that just because a college costs \$40,000 or more per year that you cannot afford to attend. The cost of college all comes down to your ultimate out of pocket cost, which is not necessarily the tuition price inside the college catalogue. Although Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships, there are definite avenues to receive financial assistance. A non-qualifier may receive only need-based financial aid (aid not related to athletics). A non-qualifier also may receive non-athletics aid from private sources or government programs (such as Pell grants). For more information contact the college's financial aid office. Here are some important things to know about athletic scholarships from Division I and II schools:

- All athletics scholarships are limited to one year. There are no four-year athletic scholarships.
- Athletics scholarships may be renewed annually for a maximum of five years within a six-year period of continuous college attendance. Athletics aid may be canceled or reduced at the end of each year for any reason.
- Athletics scholarships are awarded in a variety of amounts, ranging from full-scholarships (tuition, room and board, etc.) to small scholarships (books).
- The total amount of financial aid a student-athlete may receive and the total amount of athletics a team may receive can be limited. These limits can affect whether a student-athlete may accept additional financial aid from other sources. You must inform the college financial aid office about scholarships received from all sources, such as civic or booster clubs.
- The athletics scholarship can be a benefit to your family, but is always best to have a plan to pay for college if an athletic scholarship is canceled or reduced.

For information on financial aid at NAIA schools:

[http://graphics.fansonlv.com/schools/naia/member-services/pubs/legislative/Institutional Financial Aid Policy.pdf](http://graphics.fansonlv.com/schools/naia/member-services/pubs/legislative/Institutional_Financial_Aid_Policy.pdf)

What is the FAFSA?

The first step for obtaining financial aid is to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.org. The biggest mistake a lot of families make is not filling the FAFSA out because they think their family income is too high. This could not be further from the truth. Every family, regardless of income, has an EFC (estimated family contribution) number and the LOWER your EFC, the more aid you will receive. Even if you may not receive a significant amount of financial aid, you should still complete the FAFSA because it can act as an insurance policy for your son/daughter's education. If there is a change or loss of income or an emergency in your family; you will not be eligible for college funds if you do not complete the FAFSA on an annual basis.

The first date you may submit the FAFSA is January 1 of senior year. Submit the FAFSAs on this date or as soon after as possible! University financial aid budgets are limited and are awarded on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you submit your FAFSA, the better your chances of receiving aid. Each college/university has a specific deadline and at a certain point, the money does run out.

National Letter of Intent

The National Letter of Intent is a voluntary program administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center. When you sign NLI, your child agrees to attend the institution for one academic year. In exchange, that institution must provide athletics financial aid for one academic year. If you have questions about the NLI call 317-223-0706 or visit the NLI Web site at www.national-letter.org

Agents

During high school, agents may contact your child and show interest in representing them. NCAA rules do not prevent meeting or discussions with an agent. However, your child may jeopardize their eligibility in a sport if they agree, verbally or in writing, to be represented by an agent while attending high school or college, regardless of whether the agreement becomes effective immediately or after their last season of college eligibility. Accepting gifts, either the athlete or parent, can also jeopardize college eligibility.

Scouting/Recruiting Services

During high school, you might be contacted by a scouting/recruiting service. The NCAA does not sanction or endorse any of these services. Remember, a scouting/recruiting service cannot base its fee on the amount of the student's scholarship. There cannot be any money back guarantee.

Questions and Answers

Q- *When does a student become a prospective athlete (prospect)?*

A- A student becomes a prospect starting in the 9th grade.

Q- *When can a student athlete receive phone calls from a college recruit?*

A- On or after July 1st of the student's senior year.

Q- *What is considered contact with a collegiate recruiter?*

A- Any face-to-face contact with a collegiate recruiter is considered contact.

Q- *When can a student/athlete receive recruiting material?*

A- The day of and after September 1st of the student's junior year.

Q- *How many unofficial visits is a student athlete allowed?*

A- A student athlete can take unlimited unofficial visits to any institution prior to his or her senior year. An Unofficial visit is when a student does not make an appointment prior to visiting an institution and pays the normal institutional fee's that come along with a visit, such as meals, staying overnight at the dorms, going to an event, etc.

Q- *How many official visits can a student/athlete make during their senior year?*

A- A student/athlete can take a maximum of five and another 5 after you graduate. An Official visit is an appointment made by the student/athlete to visit a particular institution.

Q- *Does a student/athlete have to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse?*

A- Yes, if you want to play for an NCAA school. They must receive your ACT/SAT test scores, high school transcripts. For information go to: www.NCAA.org

Q- *In Division I or II are facsimiles and other electronically transmitted correspondence considered telephone calls?*

A- No, they are not considered to be phone calls. (NCAA Rule: 12.02.13). In Division I, prearranged electronically transmitted correspondence between an authorized institutional staff member and one or more prospects is considered a telephone call.

Q- *Does the NCAA have restrictions on scheduling classes around practice?*

A- NCAA rules prevent you from missing class for practice.

Q- *Does a full-ride last for four years?*

A- Athletics financial aid is available on a one-year, renewable basis.

Q- *If I suffer a career-ending injury is scholarship money available to help me complete my college career?*

A- Not every institution continues to provide an athletic scholarship to a student-athlete who can no longer compete because of a career-ending injury.

Q- *What is a contact?*

A- A contact occurs any time a coach has any face-to-face contact with you or your parents off the college campus and says more than hello. A contact also occurs if a coach has any contact with you or your parents at your high school or any location where you are competing or practicing.

Q- *What is a contact period?*

A- During this time, a college coach may have in-person contact with you/and or your parents on or off the college's campus. The coach may watch you play or visit your high school. You and your parents may visit a college campus and the coach may write and telephone you during this period.

Q- *What is the Dead Period?*

A- The college coach may not have any in-person contact with you or parents at any time during the dead period. They can write or all you or your parents during this time.

Q- *How many scholarships are available to NCAA Division 1 softball programs?*

A- Not all athletic scholarships are full ride scholarships like football and basketball, so called "head count sports"; most are classed as "equivalency sports", like softball. Put simply this means that coaches can "share" their allocation between a larger number of players. The NCAA allows each division 1 softball program 9.9 scholarships for men and 14 for women. In NCAA Division 2 the ratio is 9 for men and 9.9 for women. This number of scholarships available is always subject to change. There are many things that can change the number at a program. So always ask!

Q- *Do all associations (NCAA-Div. 1 & 2, NAIA, etc.) offer the same number of Scholarships? And if not, how can I get this information?*

A- No. They do not offer the same number of scholarships opportunities. For example, JUCO Softball is played at the division 1 and 3 level for both men and women but sports scholarships are only offered for division 1. NAIA college softball scholarships can vary per college for each NAIA softball team. It is always best to refer to the association or check with the school to verify the rules.

Always remember to ask questions. You can contact your Club's Director of Coaching, your high school coach, your club coach, and players you know that have been through the process.