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How to Get Recruited by a College Soccer Team

There are over a half million men and women high school soccer players in the US. Of those only about forty-thousand will play at the college level. Competitions for these spots can be intense, but scholarships which pay for the child's education are available.

The life of a college athlete is very regimented. That is you get up early, go to work out, go to class, go to practice, go to study hall, go to bed, and then start over. There is time for "college life" but not nearly so much as a normal student.

College ball will be a big transition and many kids are not able to handle it. College soccer is not for everybody, but those who choose that route; it can be a very rewarding experience.

I thought I might offer some words of advice to those of you seeking wisdom on how to make yourself more presentable to college coaches, and how to help yourself get recruited by a college soccer team.

- **Plan as soon as possible.** Do not wait until the athletes' senior year to start looking for recruiting opportunities. Start as early as their first year in high school. Recruiting is about building relationships on both sides.
- **Work at your grades and test scores.** Believe it or not, college coaches will usually look at your GPA, class rank, and SAT/ACT scores before they watch you play. The better your grades, and the better your test scores, the more attractive you are to most college coaches. This doesn't mean you need to be on the Dean's list to get into your school (usually) but it means that the college coach will have to spend less money on your scholarship which greatly increases your chances of getting to play where you'd like to play.
- **Choose a school and not a coach.** Job security in the coaching profession is not stable at all, so while a coach may leave, the school will always be there.
- **Make a list of potential schools of interest.** Make sure the schools match the talent level of the athlete. The list should also include positives and negatives for each. There should also be a secondary list of schools in case the first list does not work out.
- **Compile a video of the athlete playing the sport.** To be recruited by a college team takes a marketing effort on the athletes' part. Production values are not that important to recruiters, so unless money is no object, do not pay for professionally made videos. The recruiter just wants a visual of the athlete playing soccer.
- **Attend as many soccer camps as possible.** These camps are a great way to get exposure and judge the athlete's talent against other good competition at the camp. Recruiters do not have time to spend going to each individual soccer game so a camp provides an ideal opportunity to view a plethora of athletes in one place.
- **Make a personal connection with each school's coaching staff.** Even if it is just a phone call, a recruiter will be more likely to open recruiting information sent to them if they recognize the name. So

go to the school's web site and get the coach's direct number. Always call ahead of the information sent to a recruiter.

Recruiting Calendar

Note: Not very long ago junior year was considered the most important year and was usually the year that college coaches got commitments from players. However in the past ten years the process has accelerated - especially on the girl's side where many of the top Division I colleges have their scholarships wrapped up years in advance. **It may be beneficial to start some of the steps suggested in the junior year as early as sophomore year.**

Freshman/Sophomore Years

1. Get your grades up. They must be 2.0 or better, on the 4.0 scale, in a solid college prep curriculum (3.0 or better if your school uses the 5.0 scale). Do some academic planning, making sure you take all of the right college prep courses and get prepared for the SAT or ACT test. Take any Advanced Placement (AP) courses you can handle.
2. Find a good club team & play year-round.
3. Try out for ODP - the Olympic Development Program ... but, don't worry if you don't make it.
4. **Develop a list of 30-40 schools which serve your educational needs** - where you could play.

Junior Years

1. **Make sure your grades are good.** Grades above a 2.5 will get you in most schools.
2. **Take the PSAT** as soon as possible. **Take the SAT and ACT** also.
3. Make the best club/travel team you can - one where other NCAA D1 - (Division 1) prospects are playing is preferred. Inquire about the number of "college showcase" tournaments the team will play AND the cost. You can only prepare for college ball by playing against the best competition you can find. A very fast speed of play and a very physical style of play are the hallmarks of college soccer. You won't generally find that in local competition. Seek out the best competition you can find.
4. **Play year-round** on as many teams as you have time for.
5. **Begin studying colleges** for educational interests and soccer program.
6. **Develop a list of 15-25 schools which serve your educational needs** – where you could play.
7. Send your package to each head soccer coach on your list.
8. For a club, I suggest that you collect all the packages prepared by the players (their resumes and educational summaries) and put them into book which you can have available at tournaments and showcase events in case a college coach scouts your team.

Spring of Junior Year and the Summer Before Senior Year

1. **Take the SAT and ACT** if you have not already done so. When you sign up for the ACT or SAT use code 9999 to have your scores sent directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse. If your score was not what you wanted, take the test again. Taking an ACT or SAT prep course has shown to increase scores.
2. **Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.** You must pass certain high school core courses and score a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT test in order to be certified to participate in NCAA Division I or II athletics as a college freshman. This must be done in the month of May in their Junior year. The fee to register is \$27 and the booklets with the form inside are available in most high school guidance offices. Your counselors can obtain registration materials, at no cost, by calling the clearinghouse at 319/337-1492. A list of instructions, questions and answers and approved core courses is on-line at [NCAA Clearinghouse](#).
3. Keep a list of all the college soccer coaches who respond to your package.
4. Keep notes on your conversations with coaches, if any.
5. No response from a top choice? Resend your material.
6. **Make unofficial, unannounced visits to 10-15 schools you are most interested in.**
7. Keep playing on as many good teams as you can.
8. Find out your high school schedule; send it and test results to college coaches.
9. Narrow list of top choices down to maximum of 10-15 schools.

During Your Senior Year Season

1. **Set a goal to improve your GPA.**
2. **Pick 5-7 schools, send applications.**
3. Revisit or make formal visits to 4 schools you are most interested in.
4. **See as many of the college teams you like play as you can** - meet coaches. Decide if there are coaches you like ... and coaches you don't like. It is important that you get a feel for the coaching techniques of the coaching staff. The coach is going to be a different person from the one you see when she/he is recruiting you and you need to know that you can handle her/his coaching methods. Talk to players, watch games, and try to read between the lines. Remember, college ball is going to be different from high school - they have to win to keep their jobs so there is going to be a lot of pressure on them (and correspondingly you) to perform.
5. Analyze the style of play of the college teams - **where would you fit in?**
6. **Decide if there are coaches you like ... and coaches you don't like.**
7. **Which type of schools do you like?** big, little, rural, city, etc. which programs?
8. Pick the school with the best combination: education, financial aid, right soccer program for you.

After Senior Season

1. Keep in touch with admissions departments and college soccer coaches.
2. After January 1st, fill out all financial aid documents.
3. Continue to follow up with admissions offices, financial office & coaches until decisions are made.
4. Review all offers of admission and financial aid.
5. The most important question you can ask yourself is, **"Will I be happy at this college if I am no longer playing soccer?"**

NCAA Eligibility Center

You must meet certain academic requirements before you can become eligible to receive an athletic scholarship.

For athletes who receive a scholarship from a Division I university on or after August 1, 2008, their initial eligibility will be evaluated under the 16 core course rule. (2004-2005 ninth grade) you will need 16 core courses as outlined below:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of natural/physical science (one must be a lab science)
- 1 year of additional science, math or English
- 2 years of social studies
- 4 years of additional core courses (they can be from any listed above or from non doctrinal religion or philosophy or foreign language)

For athletes who receive a scholarship from a Division II university, as of August 1, 2013 the new 16 core course rule will identical to Division I will apply:

The "sliding scale" used by the NCAA now allows a higher core GPA to reduce the SAT component. A 2.5 core GPA will still need a 820 SAT score, a higher core GPA of 2.75 will need a 720 SAT score, a 3.0 core GPA will only require a 620 SAT score and a 3.55 core GPA will just need a 400 SAT score. The NCAA has stated that their research now indicates that core class grades were the best indicators of academic success during a student-athlete's freshman year

Cover Letter – Sample

Mary Ling
6010 Mountain Place
Humble, TX 77456
(281) 765-3134
iluvsoccer_321@yahoo.com

Dear Coach Van Linder,

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Mary Ling and I am going to be a junior (05) in high school. I've been looking around at colleges and I noticed that your school not only has a soccer program but also a major that suits my interest, which is Forensic Science.

I will be playing in the Challenge Shootout on June 4-5. I would greatly appreciate it if you came and checked out one of my games. My team's name is IMG Academy and I have attached a resume of myself.

If your schedule allows, I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to see me play. I will send you my games schedule as soon as they are posted.

Thank you,
Mary Ling #6

Resume - Sample

Shannon Van Matre #7
1151 Boland Drive
St. Louis, MO 62337
(314) 504-4599
SS:645-21-3452 DOB 2/01/86
Email: Pat@shannonsteak.com

IM: Sanny@yahoo.com

Academics: St. Joseph Academy
Graduation: Class of 2005
GPA: 3.30
SAT/ACT: Act 23

Athletics:
Club Soccer: Busch SC
Position: Sweeper/Forward #7

High School Soccer: St. Joseph
Position: Forward #10

References

Coaches:

Maureen McVey - St. Joseph High School
(354)358-9035
Mcvey@yahoo.com

Bill Hopfinger – Busch SC
(315) 955-1234
Hop_soc@hotmail.com

Upcoming Tournaments: Houston Shootout – Score at the Shore - WAGS -
Orange Classic

Follow up Letter –Sample

Hi Coach Van Linder,

My name is Lindsey Kay. I have previously written to you regarding my interest in attending and playing soccer at Baylor University. I'm a member of the Challenge 89 soccer team and will be playing in the Texas Shootout in June. It would be great if you could watch one of my games. I have listed my schedule below, my number is #15 and I hope you can make it.

Challenge 89 vs. Slammers 87 – 6/4/04 9:15am MP4
Challenge 89 vs. SoCal Blues – 6/5/04 9:15am MP4
Challenge 89 vs. Surf White U16 – 6/6/04 9:15am MP4

See you in Houston

Thanks
Lindsey

Questions you may want to ask college coaches:

- 1) How long do you train each day?
- 2) How often do you train each week?
- 3) What does a typical training week entail?
- 4) How many games do you normally play during a week?
- 5) How much class do you normally miss due to games (home and away)

- 6) How do you travel to your away games?
- 7) Does the faculty work with student-athletes to make up missed work from games?
- 8) What are the overnight arrangements when you travel to away games?
- 9) What is the travel dress code for away games?
- 10) What is the schedule like for a typical home game?
- 11) What is your preseason like?
- 12) What type of conditioning do you prefer or coach?
- 13) What system of play does your team mainly use?
- 14) Who are the key players on your team and what year are they?
- 15) What attributes make them key players?
- 16) What attributes are you looking for in players in this recruiting class?
- 17) What are your expectations of an incoming freshman?
- 18) How many graduating seniors will you have this season?
- 19) What positions do those graduating players play?
- 20) How many underclassmen do you think you will be losing this year?
- 21) What are their reasons for leaving?
- 22) What is your philosophy on dealing with players who you would like to leave or want to leave on their own?
- 23) How many recruits have you had visit that play in those available positions?
- 24) What characteristics are you looking for in players who will fill those positions?
- 25) Where do you see me fitting in with your program?
- 26) What tournaments do you recruit at?
- 27) How many tournaments do you normally make per year?
- 28) Do you come to high school games or tournaments for recruiting?
- 29) Would you be interested in seeing a video tape or a DVD of my playing ability?
- 30) What type of information would you like the video/DVD to contain? (Full game footage, highlights, drills, etc.)
- 31) How many players have transferred from the program?
- 32) What were their reasons for transferring?
- 33) Does the program have strength and conditioning program?
- 34) Does the program have strength and conditioning coach?
- 35) Does the program consist mainly of free weights, plyometrics or other ideas?
- 36) Does your program have mandatory study hall?
- 37) If so, how many days/hours a week is the study hall program?
- 38) What other types of educational assistance is available for student-athletes?
- 39) What is your spring season like?
- 40) Do you play mostly single games or tournament play during the spring?
- 41) Does the program have a curfew during the season? Off-season?
- 42) What time is curfew and what are the penalties for breaking the rule?
- 43) Do you have a written set of rules for the team? Can I see them?
- 44) If not, what are the main rules that you enforce for the program?
- 45) Why did you choose to coach at this college?
- 46) How long have you been here?
- 47) How much longer do you see yourself at this school?
- 48) How many assistant coaches or goalkeeping coaches does your program have?
- 49) How many scholarships does your program have?
- 50) How does that compare to other schools in the conference?
- 51) What is the typical scholarship amount for a player in the program?
- 52) I know that the scholarship amount is a one year award, but, what is your policy on raising or lowering of scholarships?
- 53) If I am injured during the season is my scholarship in jeopardy?
- 54) If I am injured during soccer what provisions does the school make for student-athletes?
- 55) Do you have a full time trainer with your program? At training? At games?
- 56) What other resources does the school or program have available for injured student-athletes?
- 57) If my playing eligibility is up before I am able to graduate does the program or athletic department maintain my scholarship?

- 58) Does the program have a set of defined goals?
- 59) What are the goals and did you accomplish them this year?
- 60) What are the long term goals for the program or the expectations the school has for the program?
- 61) Are any of your players around that I could meet or talk to?
- 62) According to your rules would it be possible for me to train or play with your players?
- 63) Where is your field located?
- 64) Do you have separate training and playing fields?
- 65) Do you share your fields with any other sports?
- 66) How does your facility compare with other facilities in the conference?
- 67) What is your team GPA?
- 68) What types of majors are your girls studying?
- 69) Can I speak with any of them about a particular subject and how hard they find playing soccer and working to complete that major?
- 70) Is there an area where freshman must room?
- 71) Will I have a soccer player as a roommate or would I need to choose my own roommate?
- 72) How accessible to the soccer and training facilities are the dorms/apartments/etc.
- 73) How accessible to the class rooms and faculty offices are the dorms?
- 74) Can I see a dorm or take a tour of the dorm facilities?
- 75) Do you have any advice for student-athletes interested in your program?