

# TIMELINE OF PREPARATIONS

## Freshman Year - Academics

- **Good Grades are important** – There are not that many scholarships! Your grades and test scores can make the difference. Maintain YOUR highest grades throughout high school and show admissions officers and potential coaches that you are able to handle the demands of college life. Keep your grades up starting in your freshman year and you will benefit! Meet with your counselor to plan your year.
- If you hope to go to a top academic institution, it would be helpful to take honors courses if you can handle the load. Admission officers generally agree that getting a B in a tough course is often more significant than an A in a frivolous course. Take PSAT and Practice ACT tests as they are offered to ensure that you are prepared for the actual test in future years.
- Be sure that you begin to take courses that will ultimately fulfill the requirements of the NCAA. Speak with your counselor about classes meeting NCAA requirements. Visit the NCAA website to learn what courses are required for Division I Division II and Division III schools. Consider NAIA schools as well. Start to plan your classes accordingly. The NCAA website is: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org). Call 800-638-3731 for **free current copy** of NCAA Guide for the College-bound Student Athlete.”
- Begin a resume of community service activities, achievements, awards and academic results. Update it periodically.
- Select an e-mail address that you will use to communicate with the coaches. This e-mail should be consistent throughout your recruiting process. If you change services, you will need to communicate that change to all schools you might have interest in. Select an e-mail address that is fitting.

## **Sophomore Year – Athletic Exposure and Academic Emphasis**

- Continue emphasis on best grades possible. If pursuing a top academic school, take honors and AP courses if manageable. Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on track to take the 14-16 core courses (based on graduation date) that are consistent with NCAA requirements for Division I and Division II schools. Many universities accept the NCAA academic requirements (see NCAA guide)
- Take PSAT and Practice Act, and possibly some actual SAT II tests following the completion for certain courses (i.e. biology, language, and math). Do not wait until senior year to take SAT II tests on courses you had as a sophomore. Take them as you complete the course.
- Realistically consider your talent and the school that you might like to attend. Be honest in your personal assessment. Research colleges to determine which school fit your academic and athletic abilities by asking for literature and visiting campuses.
- Create introduction letter (see sample). You may begin to establish relationships with colleges of interest by visiting games and expressing interest through letters and emails sent to coaches.
- You can call coaches, but coaches cannot call or approach you according to NCAA regulations. Review NCAA regulations regarding contact with coaches. The regulations have changed.
- Be visible to college coaches. Do not miss the opportunity to play at tournaments, especially College Showcase tournaments.
- Attend College Soccer camps of interest over the summer. This will allow you to check out the campus.
- Ask current players what they think of the program and coaching staff.
- Remind your targeted College coaches of your attendance at tournaments or ODP regional/national camps through the use of email. Send them your schedule.
- At the end of your Sophomore Year, set up an individual meeting with SRU College Recruiting staff.

## **Junior Year – Taking Tests, Contacting Coaches and Visiting Campuses**

- Continue emphasis on grades and begin to take SAT, ACT and AP/IB tests offered throughout the year. Be prepared to take SAT twice or more. Remember that your grades are the foundation for your ultimate success. Maintain YOUR highest academic standards. Meet with your counselor to plan school year.
- Understand the academic requirements of your targeted schools. Determine where your soccer and academic abilities stand and approach schools that are consistent with your level of achievement.
- Make a list of favorite colleges and visit them on your own or with your family. Trim the list; gather applications to schools of choice. You may begin receiving recruiting materials on September 1 of the Junior year.
- Send emails or letters of introduction with Soccer Profiles to the coaches of schools which interest you. (Sample letters and Profile attached). Inform them of your games/matches/tournaments. Some coaches like to see videos of you playing especially east coast or mid-west schools where it is difficult for you to be seen. Ask and send if desired. Establish positive relationships with potential coaches following NCAA guidelines regarding contacting coaches visitations. Beginning March of Junior year you can receive one phone call from the coach. During April, you can have one visit on HS campus. Starting July after Junior year, off-campus contact and coach initiated call once per week is allowed.
- Keep your club coach updated as to which schools and coaches you are interested in. Continue to work with the club coach throughout the process until you have verbally committed.

## **Senior Year – Maintaining Grades, Submitting Applications and Finalizing Acceptance**

- In Fall, Meet with your counselor to review your transcript and to assure compliance with NCAA requirements. Apply for Student-Athlete status with NCAA Clearinghouse. 877-262-1492.
- All forms are available online - <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/>
- Retake SATs if necessary (MAKE SURE you do not have scheduling conflicts!)
- After July following your Junior year, you can receive a weekly phone call. After Senior year begins, you can start to take those 5 official visits you are allowed for Division I schools. You will tour the campus, meet the team, see a game, and stay overnight. Get to know the school and coach and the team's style of play.
- Remember, the coach may not be employed at any particular institution for all your time at the school. It is important that you settle on school that "fits" your academic, athletic and personal needs. The coach may be gone tomorrow!
- Submit applications for the schools of your choice. Keep grades up throughout senior year. Some colleges withdraw enrollment invitation and/or scholarship if student's academic levels decline in senior year. No time for "senioritis"!
- If you are accepted, finalize paperwork and letters of intent following NCAA regulations. The Letter of Intent is sent to the player in February.
- If you are not getting much attention from your list of schools by January, you need to focus on a smaller number of schools and get after the coaches. You also may need to re-evaluate your school choices and make sure your expectations are not too high.

## Sample Introduction Letter from Student-Athlete to Coach

August 10, 2006

John Jones  
University of San Diego  
1234 Any Street  
San Diego, CA 12345

Dear Coach Jones:

I am writing to introduce myself to you and to express my interest in your soccer and academic programs at University of San Diego.

I will be a junior at White Plains High School. White Plains, NY and will graduate in June, 2010. I have had considerable success in soccer with my high school team along with the Soccer Elite Club soccer program. I would like to play college soccer and I am committed to maintaining my best grades and highest athletic levels. I would like to play at a Division I school; however, if that opportunity is not available I will consider Division II or Division III programs.

( this paragraph should be changed to meet the needs of the situation).

I am confident that White Plains High School has prepared me for the rigors of college academics. I am also confident in the preparation that the Elite Soccer program has prepared me for the next step and I am excited about the possibility of playing soccer and pursuing an academic credential.

I have enclosed a copy of my Athletic Profile from Soccer Elite along with my upcoming tournament schedule. It highlights my achievements on and off the field

Thank you for taking the time to review my profile. I will contact you again as follow-up to this letter. Good Luck to you and your team in the upcoming season.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lee  
222 Whatever Drive.  
What Ever State.  
Phone

## Sample Follow-up Letter from Student Athlete to Coach

March 17, 2007

John Jones  
University of San Diego  
1234 Any Street  
San Diego, CA 12345

Dear Coach Jones:

I am enclosing some news clippings concerning my achievements in soccer this year. I am still very interested in the University of San Diego as my college choice.

In August, I will be playing the in Surf Cup tournament. I will also play at the Nomads tournament at Thanksgiving and the NCAA Final four College Showcase in December. I will send you my schedules, in case you are attending these events and you want to catch some of my games. I also hope to attend your soccer camp over Spring break.

My grades have been very good this year. I have chosen the most difficult program that I can handle, and I have managed to get almost all A's. I will keep up my effort in athletics and academics. I have scheduled my SAT and ACT tests and will let you know my results.

Again, I thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lee  
222 Whatever Drive.  
What Ever State.  
Phone

## Sample Letter of Response from the Coach

August 25, 2009

Sarah Lee  
222 Whatever Drive.  
What Ever State.  
Phone

Dear Sarah:

I am writing you to express our sincere interest in you as a prospective student here at University of Utah. You are a fine young athlete and one that I feel would blend well with our academic and athletic environment. We have a wonderful tradition and I am hopeful you will consider us as one of your top choices

Even though you are only a junior, it is important to keep close contact with you. Once your junior year ends, we will then make contact with you in person. I am sure you are getting anxious for your soccer season to get underway. We want to wish you a most successful year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us at any time. Please send us a copy of your high school soccer and academic schedules to update your file.

We hope to hear from you again soon.

Sincerely,

John Jones  
Head Coach  
University of San Diego

## **What's the difference between Division I, Division II, and Division III**

**There are some exceptions to the following but here are the general guidelines.**

### **Division 1**

Division 1 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% of the minimum number of contests against other Division I institutions. 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.

### **Division II**

Division II institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four 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 maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Div. II school must not exceed. Division II teams usually feature a number of local or in-state student-athletes. May Division II student-athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans and wages from employment. 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.

### **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.