

2014-2015

THE GUIDE TO COLLEGE ATHLETICS AND RECRUITING



UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF COLLEGIATE VOLLEYBALL

With so many colleges and universities offering athletic programs across the country, it is often very difficult to understand exactly how divisions are separated, what they have to offer, and what their expectations are. Collegiate athletics is broken into three competitive organizations – the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA. Within the NCAA, there are 3 divisions labeled Divisions I, II, and III. The NAIA volleyball programs currently are all considered to be “Division I”, although other sports do offer “Division II” programs. Within the NJCAA, there are also three divisions, each of which can provide students with different scholarship packages and financial support. These divisions have been developed based on the number of athletic programs a college/university has. Below is a description of each of the divisions listed below:

NCAA Division I

Division I programs are comprised of the largest colleges and universities in the country. Division I volleyball players have obligations year-round, with the season lasting from August to December if a team advances to the NCAA Tournament. There are about 118 programs nationwide. Division I programs typically offer 12 scholarships to recruits. NCAA Division I schools are divided into three categories- Major Division One, Mid-Major Division One, and Low Major Division One. Here is a breakdown of each of these categories:

Major Division One – These conferences, often located in the BCS Football conferences, are offered four or more invitations to the NCAA National Tournament each year. Some examples include: UCLA, USC, Penn State, and Texas.

Mid-Major Division One – These conferences typically receiving two to four offers to the NCAA Tournament each year. The top teams in these conferences often will advance past the first weekend of the tournament. Mid-Major institutions have very similar budget structures to those that are considered Major Division I institutions. Examples of Mid-Major universities include George State, Marshall, and Temple.

Low Major Division One – Schools in these conferences usually receive one invitation to the NCAA National Tournament each season. Occasionally, these institutions are unable to utilize all scholarships given due to funding. It is very important, therefore, for Low Major athletes to demonstrate a strong academic performance so the institution can seek additional options for funding athletes. Examples of such teams include Florida A&M and Mercer.

NCAA Division II

Division Two programs are given a total of 8 scholarships per season. Just like Low Major Division I schools, Division II schools look to utilize academic money student-athletes earn to offset costs. The Top 25 programs in Division II are comparative to the level of play seen in Low Major DI teams. Division II also hosts a National Tournament each year in which 64 teams are invited to participate in. Examples of Division II institutions include Lewis, Quincy, and Azusa Pacific.

NCAA Division III

NCAA Division III athletes are not allowed to receive athletic scholarships. Funding may be provided, but it must be based on academic performance and has to be available to the entire student body. Examples of Division III schools include Calvin College, North Park University, and Illinois Wesleyan.

www.ncaa.org

NAIA

The level of play seen amongst the top ranked NAIA schools is comparable to NCAA Division II play. It is not uncommon, in fact, for an NAIA school to grow in size and choose to move to the NCAA II level. NAIA schools are allowed to give athletic scholarships, but range in dollar amount depending on the funding available at the institution. NAIA schools have a very relaxed set of recruiting guidelines in comparison to the NCAA. Examples of NAIA schools include Texas at Brownsville, Grandview University, and Davenport.

www.naia.org

NJCAA (Junior Colleges)

Members of the NJCAA are two-year junior colleges that provide opportunities for players in grow academically and athletically before transitioning to a four-year institution. Athletic scholarships are awarded in Division I and II NJCAA colleges, but similar to an NCAA school, do not provide scholarships to Division III athletes.

www.njcaa.org

A TIMELINE FOR SUCCESS**

Freshman Year

- Settle into the high school environment and develop good classroom and home study habits.
- Learn to prioritize your family, academic, athletic and social obligations.
- Begin listing your academic and athletic goals.
- In addition to your high school sports, get involved in community leadership groups, student government, etc., (highly favored by admission and scholarship review boards).
- Join a club volleyball team that can offer you excellent training
- Attend as many collegiate summer camps as possible.
- Register with University Athlete and Rich Kern Recruiting Registry.com as club begins and update frequently.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (and look into NAIA if considering this option) – your high school guidance counselor should have these forms. It's never too early to register

Sophomore Year

- **THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT YEAR OF CLUB FOR RECRUITMENT - coaches are at 16's tournaments much more than 18's tournaments in search of future athletes.**
- Keep focused on your grades- REMEMBER, every "core" class you take counts toward the core courses the NCAA Clearinghouse uses to determine edibility. It is important to note that only letter grades matter (A, B, C, etc.) so 71 and 79 are the same.
- Stay involved in club volleyball (ideally on a team planning to compete at Nationals at any level-- open or club. This experience will help you gauge where you stand amongst the top players in the country).
- Start videotaping your most competitive matches and make lists of potential colleges you are interested in. As the year progresses, you may be able to eliminate some of your options already based on general internet research about the volleyball program and the institution itself.
- If you have interest in a particular school, introduce yourself to the coach with a friendly email.
- Attend as many collegiate summer camps as possible.
- Keep all recruiting site profiles updated with tournament/match schedules.

Junior Year

- Keep focused on your grades.
- Register for the fall ACT/SAT tests (and plan on re-taking at least one of the tests again in the spring. It is also important to note that schools located in different regions in the U.S. prefer one test over another – i.e. Midwest prefers ACT, West Coast prefers SAT).
- Begin listing what you want in a potential college and volleyball program.
- Research schools and volleyball programs and keep track of your top interests.
- Send an introductory email or written letter to the coaches at all the schools you are interested in.
- Attach your updated academic/athletic profile and a link to your video footage.
- Visit as many college campuses as possible. These "unofficial visits" are done on your own, but you should still contact the coach to arrange a tour of the athletic facilities and if possible, to watch the team practice.
- Stay involved in club volleyball (ask coaches to evaluate your strengths/weaknesses and recommend good fits).
- Attend the summer camps of your top collegiate choices.
- Keep all recruiting site profiles updated with tournament/match schedules.

Senior Year

- Meet with your guidance counselor to ensure you are still on track with NCAA Eligibility Center requirements.
- Stay involved with club volleyball.
- Send coaches your club schedule and links to any new videos. On recruiting sites, be sure to label yourself as an "unsigned senior" if this pertains to you.
- Re-take ACT/SAT to improve scores, if necessary.
- ** Keep focused on your grades -- finish strong!
- ** Complete any items not taken care of in the 11th grade checklist...you likely still have time!
- ** Fill out your FAFSA after January 1st of your senior year (www.fafsa.ed.gov)

**Please note: these are general guidelines. Rules and deadlines differ amongst divisions, so check with your prospective coach(es) and academic advisor(s) for college-specific information.*

MAKING YOURSELF KNOWN

The number one thing you should remember about the college recruiting process is that you (the player) must make yourself known to your prospective coach(es). In rare circumstances does the coach know about you already, so it is up to you to introduce yourself. You should never feel intimidated to approach a coach, whether it is in person or via email/phone. In fact, most coaches appreciate the opportunity to get to know you on a personal level. You are always welcome to initiate conversation--it is the coaches' responsibility to abide by their institution's rules/bylaws and they will respond accordingly.

When you find a school you are interested in, you should compose an email to the Women's Volleyball Head Coach and/or the Director of Recruiting (see sample on the next page). There are three important parts to this email:

Part one- Body of the email

- Personalize your greeting. "Coach Williams," for example, "I have looked into State's biology program and I am impressed with the new state-of-the-art facilities it has to offer." Give the coach reason to believe you are seriously interested in learning about their school.
- Try to capture the coach's attention right away. Share something interesting about you near the beginning of the e-mail. "I have a 40-inch vertical," or "I am the captain of my high school team."
*Include a link to your video footage if you have it prepared.

Part two- Player Bio Attachment

- Your Player Bio is like a resume highlighting your academic and athletic achievements. It should be no more than one-page in length and attached to your email as a separate file .doc or .pdf format).
- You should include the following basic information: your name, position, height, jump touch, club experience, high school, GPA, ACT/SAT scores, graduation year, and contact info—as well as a clear, recent picture of yourself.
- High school statistics are unnecessary-- college coaches need to see you play live.

Part three- Playing Schedule Attachment

- Attach a schedule of where and when you play (in .doc or .pdf format).
- A week before an important event, send the coach a reminder email.

REMEMBER:

- Be sure to put a subject in the subject line of your email! Oftentimes, emails with no subject line are sent straight to junk email so it is very important that you put one in your email!
- Keep your email professional. Although coaches are not your professors, they do want to see thought and care put into the emails they receive from recruits. Review your email carefully and check for spelling/grammar errors. You may also want to consider having a parent review your email before pressing "send".

Start sending e-mails (TODAY!) to every single coach you may be interested in playing for. Coaches all talk to one another and the more your name comes up in conversation the better.

In the meantime....you should be working hard for straight A's to raise your GPA as high as possible. Due to the limited number of athletic scholarships women's volleyball programs can award, coaches are almost always looking for the total package-- a player with athletic and academic promise.

SAMPLE COACH EMAIL

From: Katie Smith <jsmith@email.com>
To: Joe Williams <jwilliams@statecollege.edu>
Date: Monday, December 10, 2012
📎: KSmith13_bio.pdf, KSmith13_schedule.pdf

Dear Coach Williams,

I would like to express my interest in learning more about the State College Women's Volleyball Program. I had the chance to visit your campus this past summer and I really liked its close-proximity to the city and beaches. Also, the brand-new science center caught my attention as I intend to major in biology. With its strong academic reputation and the continued success of the Spartan's Women's Volleyball program, State College is one of my top choices.

I am a 6'3 junior outside hitter for Oakton High School in Anytown, USA. I play club for XYZ Volleyball Club on the 17 Black Team. My approach jump touch is 11'. I am a very physical athlete and I play with a lot of energy on the court. You can read my academic and athletic accomplishments in the attached player bio, but I'd like to highlight the fact I am a high-honors student with a 3.8 GPA. I take my academics as seriously as my volleyball endeavors, which is a promise I will keep in college.

You can find my player bio and remaining club tournament schedule attached. On February 2nd and 3rd, I will be playing in the Anytown National Qualifier and I would be honored if you stopped by to watch me play.

The following is a link to my video footage as well: www.YouTube.com/ksmithvb13

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

Katie Smith
(555) 555-5555

SAMPLE PLAYER BIO

JIMMY SMITH

12345 Main Street
Anytown, USA 65432
(555) 555-5555
jsmith@email.com



Education: Oakton High School, Anytown, USA
Graduation Year: 2013
GPA: 3.83
ACT: Will take in February

Height/Weight: 6'3" / 175 lbs.
Position: OH
Jump Touch: 11'3"

Present Club: XYZ Volleyball Club / 17 Black Team
•2nd place at Big City National Qualifier
•named to All-Tournament Team

Previous Club(s): Super VBC / 16 Select Team
•competed at Nationals in 2006 (club division)

Camp Experience: State College Volleyball Camp
July 7-10, 2012
•Received "Best Outside Hitter" award

State University Boys' Elite Camp
July 18-20, 20

Academic/Athletic

Honors: National Honor Society Member
First Team All-Conference junior year
Second Team All-Conference sophomore year

Reference: Carl Johnson, Head Coach, XYZ Volleyball Club/17 Black Team
(555) 555-5556
cjohnson@email.com

VIDEO FOOTAGE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- Include an introduction at the beginning of your video. This can be done with basic information displayed on the screen (Name, Number, Position, Club, Match Opponent, and Event) or can be a personalized introduction. If choosing the personal introduction option, keep the intro BRIEF (30 seconds max).

Hi Coach. My name is Katie Smith. I am a junior at Oakton High School. I current have a 3.8 GPA... I play libero for XYZ Club... I hope you enjoy my tape.

- Follow with a match highlight segment. Show plays where you execute the following skills effectively in a match as they apply to your position:
 - Attacking
 - Passing
 - Setting
 - Blocking
 - Serving
 - Digging
- Be you. Smile and be enthusiastic. You love this game – show your potential coach that!
- Include unedited footage from a competitive match. This should be a match that displays your best playing skills and character.
- Email coaches a link to your video(s) on YouTube, Vimeo, or another video sharing site. This will make it most convenient for him/her to watch you play.

***** IMPORTANT:** After uploading your video to YouTube, be sure that it is posted as a public video under the "sports" category. You can find this option under the "Advanced Settings" tab in the video manager.

DON'T

- Forget to specify your (1) jersey number and (2) starting position on the court. The coach needs to know who to watch!
- Use music, especially inappropriate or distasteful music.
- Limit the coach's viewing perspective. It is important for him/her to see where each ball is coming from, how you contact it, and the end result.
- Send unnecessary game footage (long delays between games, warm-ups, etc.)
- Send footage of a match where you beat your opponent 25-5. Show coaches your ability to compete against high levels of competition.
- Spend too much time on your best skill. Coaches know there is more to volleyball than just blocking or killing the ball.
- Create a film using poor quality devices. Coaches are likely looking at hundreds of game film videos a day. The more difficult you are to see, the sooner you will be crossed off the list.

1. Who is considered a prospective student-athlete?

You officially become a student-athlete when you

(1) Start 9th grade or

(2) Before your 9th grade year, a college provides you, your family, or your friends with financial aid or other benefits a college does not provide to the general student body

2. What is considered an "official" visit? How many am I allowed?

An "official" visit is one where the visit to the college campus is paid for by the college. An institution is allowed to pay the following expenses:

(1) Transportation to and from the school

(2) Room and meals (3 per day) while you are visiting the institutions

(3) Reasonable entertainment expenses, such as three complimentary admissions into a home athletics event

(4) Before a prospective student-athlete can officially visit a school, he/she must provide the institution with a copy of his/her high school transcripts (Div I only) and SAT or ACT scores.

During your senior year, you are allowed **five (5)** official visits that cannot exceed 48 hours. It is also important to note that a coach **may** accompany you on your official visit only when transportation is by car and all traveling occurs within the allotted 48-hour time period.

3. What is considered an "unofficial" visit?

An "unofficial" visit is one to a college in which none of the expenses are paid for by the institution.

4. What is a recruiting contact?

A recruiting contact occurs whenever a coach has face-to-face contact with you or your parents off college grounds and says more than a friendly 'hello'. A contact can also occur if a college recruiter/coach approaches a prospective student athlete and his/her parents at the high school the athlete is attending.

5. What is a recruiting evaluation?

A recruiting evaluation occurs when a coach evaluates your academic and athletic ability. Examples include visiting the prospective student-athlete's high school or watching a practice or game.

6. When can a college coach first communicate with a prospective student-athlete?

A NCAA member college cannot provide recruiting materials to an athlete (including general emails or messages related to their athletic program) until September 1 at the beginning of the athlete's junior year of high school.

Recruiting material can be receiving starting September 1 of a student-athlete's junior year of high school from coaches, faculty members, and athletic staff members. Acceptable documents include:

- One media guide/recruiting guide
- General correspondence (letters, US Postal Service postcards, institution note cards, etc.)
- NCCA educational information
- Information about drug testing
- Newspaper articles
- One volleyball schedule card
- Coach's business card
- E-mail
- Fax number

A university can send potential players a questionnaire before the junior year guideline, but all other information about the institution must be sent by the Admissions Office. A volleyball program is allowed to send out camp brochures and new NCAA regulations. A college is only allowed to provide a prospective student-athlete with a student-athlete handbook on an official or unofficial college visit. Once a National Letter of Intent is signed or you have been accepted to the university, the college can email you a handbook.

7. What are the rules/regulations about phone calls with coaches?

Telephone calls made to prospective student-athletes or their parents/legal guardians cannot be made before July 1 following the completion of the athlete's junior year. After this point, staff members cannot make telephone calls more than once per week.

Exceptions:

- (1) You can call a coach collect and it will not count towards the one call per week maximum
- (2) If a coach calls and you are not home, they reach your answering machine, or you're on the other line, it does not count towards the one call per week maximum
- (3) Boosters are NOT permitted to call

As a student-athlete, you **ARE** allowed to call a collegiate coach at your own expense at any time during your career. These phone numbers are typically available on the college's website on their program page. Do understand, however, that if a coach does not answer his/her phone, he/she may not be able to return your call if you have been already contacted once that week.

TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

NCAA	The largest governing body of collegiate athletes in the USA.
DIV I	An NCAA classification based on the number of sports the institutions sponsors. Div I schools meet the highest number of sport sponsorship minimums of the three NCAA divisions and can award scholarships for athletic ability.
DIV II	An NCAA classification based on the number of sports the institution sponsors. Div II schools meet the second highest number of sport sponsorship minimums of the three NCAA divisions and can award scholarships for athletic ability
DIV III	An NCAA classification based on the number of sports the institution sponsors. Div III schools meet the same required sport sponsorship minimums as Div II schools, however Div III schools cannot award scholarships for athletic ability.
NAIA	Another prominent governing body of collegiate athletics
NCAA Eligibility Center	Essentially gives your prospective institution the “green-light” to continue the recruiting/application process with you. It confirms your amateur status as an athlete and that you are on-track to completing the required academic course load.
Official visit	The institution may pay for all or part of your visit to the campus/surrounding area
Unofficial visit	The institution may not pay for any part of your visit to the campus/surrounding area
NLI (National Letter of Intent)	An official document serving as an agreement between you and your institution of choice that you will attend their school
“Full-Ride”	A term used to describe a athletic/academic scholarship that covers 100% of your tuition/room and board expenses. ☒
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	The US Government and many collegiate institutions ask you to submit this form to determine your eligibility for financial aid (grants, loans, work-study programs, etc). www.fafsa.ed.gov

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

- Register for eligibility with the NCAA Division I and II programs at:
 - <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>
 - <http://web1.ncaa.org/maps/memberMap.jsp>
- NCAA recruiting rules and information: <http://www.ncaa.org>
- NAIA recruiting rules and information: <http://www.naia.org>
- NJCAA recruiting rules and information: <http://www.njcaa.org>
- University Athlete: www.universityathlete.com
- Rich Kern- Recruiting Registry: <http://www.recruitingregistry.com>
- Apply for financial aid: www.fafsa.gov
- Register for SAT college exam: www.collegeboard.com
- Register for ACT college exam: www.act.org
- NLI website: <http://www.nationalletter.org>
- Link Athletics:
http://www.linkathletics.com/sports/viewlinks.php?sp=Volleyball_W
- ScholarshipStats.com:
 - <http://www.scholarshipstats.com/volleyball.htm>
 - <http://www.scholarshipstats.com/varsityodds.html>

On your GRADES...

I cannot stress the importance of keeping good grades enough.

Grades play a huge role in the financial award equation. Often times only 1/10th of a point of a prospective athlete's GPA will qualify her for several thousands of dollars per year of additional academic money, which adds up to a significant sum over the length of her career. If your grades are less-than-stellar right now, don't stress out or give up, just recognize where you are struggling and begin making changes and seeking help TODAY. Also, take your ACT/SAT testing seriously. These scores play just as important a role as your overall GPA.

On your VOLLEYBALL GOALS...

There are so many schools out there offering women's collegiate volleyball programs. Explore **all** of your options before becoming set on just one. Visit as many campuses and meet as many coaches and players as possible. Be sure you have a realistic understanding of how you fit in each program. At one school, a coach may see you as a second-string or practice player, but at another, you may be expected to fill a starting spot immediately. How might you feel in each scenario? Be honest with yourself and don't be afraid to ask prospective coach for advice.

On your OVERALL HAPPINESS...

When considering a school, think about what your experience would be like if volleyball were taken out of the picture. If the program was to be cut, or you suffered an unfortunate career-ending injury, would you still be happy attending the school? Do you feel "at home away from home" when you're there? Are you comfortable with the distance between you and your family? Does the school offer the degree program you are interested in? Be sure to consider all of the elements that affect your happiness when deciding on a school, as college brings some of the most exciting, memorable years of your life.

Additional Reminders...

- Watch your social media accounts: if you are concerned about a post or comment and wonder whether or not it is appropriate to share, DON'T. There are athletes that have lost scholarships due to inappropriate posts or comments. Once it's on the web, it is there FOREVER.
- Stay focused on school. Poor academic performance can quickly cross you off a coach's list.
- It's important to remember that a volleyball career is only 4-5 years, but your degree establishes you for your life after volleyball. Choose a school that has your program of interest!!! Do not sacrifice your future to play for your dream team. College will be very difficult for you if you do.
- Look beyond Division I volleyball. According to www.ncaa.org, there are 334 Division I Women's Volleyball programs. With 12 scholarships available for each team, that means there are 4,008 available Division I scholarships for over 400,000 high school volleyball players. Be realistic about your abilities and seek feasible options – if this Divisions I volleyball, go for it! If not, talk to coaches about your skills and allow them to help you assess appropriate placement.