

Timeline for College Athletic Scholarships

The key to succeeding is exposure. You must let college coaches know that you are out there, but you must not jeopardize the thousands of dollars of scholarship money by violating the current NCAA rules.

Freshman Year

- * Get settled in high school. Concentrate on a solid high school Curriculum.
- * Talk to your coaches or Athletic Director about local /summer teams.
- * Setup a workout schedule allowing comfortable time for academics and sports.

If you think you are interested in attending a college for a sport, send an introduction letter in your freshman year. Send an update at the end of the season, along with your club schedule. Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (it's never too early, but it can be too late). Prepare your athletic resume.

Sophomore Year

- * Continue striving for academic success. Research NCAA academic requirements.
- * Make sure that you are "on target" for all core requirements.
- * Stay active in Summer League Softball and High School Softball.
- * Visit your High School career center or counselor's office and start investigating colleges and their admission requirements.
- * During the summer between the sophomore and Junior years, prepare your athletic resume.
- * Prepare to send out your initial contact letters with resumes. Include high school and summer softball playing schedules, if available. If schedules are not available, mail a follow-up letter and schedule as soon as they become available, but still send out initial letters.

Update academics with Clearinghouse. Monitor the academic requirements of the universities you want to attend... Refine and update your resume. Prepare a skills videotape (10-15 minutes in length of basic skills)

Junior Year

- * Send out athletic resumes now, if you have not already done so.
- * Register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- * Request that ACT/SAT test scores be sent to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- * Keep up with your studies and once again review the NCAA requirements to make sure they have not changed.
- * Keep investigating other colleges and send out additional resumes.

- * Prepare video tape to be sent when requested.
- * Send out update as your season closes. Include your new stats and any special recognition's you may have earned.
- * Visit some of the campuses that you are interested in, if you can.
- * Try to watch some local college games in you sport, especially if one of the schools you are interested in is playing close by.
- * In July, after completion on your junior year, phone contact with college coaches is permissible. Begin heavy contact with the schools you are interested in, even making a few phone calls (but remember that coaches cannot call you back until July 1 after you complete your junior year). Update your academic information with the Clearinghouse. If your top choices of colleges have not panned out send info to your second and third choices...

Senior Year

- * Do not let up on academics
- * Review your core requirements with your high school counselor.
- * Send out your senior team schedule as soon as possible for high school and club softball.
- * Keep college coaches posted on any changes or updates to your team schedules.
- * Send out last of resumes, if new interest in other schools.
- * Find out Letter of Intent dates for Softball from NCAA.
- * Take advantage of, no more than 5, college paid visits, if offered.
- * Ask a lot of questions and weigh all the advantages and disadvantages of the schools you are interested in.
- * Study hard and play hard, but remember you are a student athlete and the student comes first. If you are being seriously recruited by a school, they will invite you to make an official visit (where travel, room and board is paid during one of their home weekends. Continue phone contact with schools. Some schools ask their top recruits to verbally commit to attending during the spring or summer before their senior year. Most school like to be finished recruiting by the end of the softball season. The thing to remember is that a commitment is not binding until a National Letter of Intent (NLI) and Offer of Financial Aid is signed by the recruit. Recruits may change their mind about a school after they've made a verbal commitment, but not after signing the NLI. If they do not attend the school they sign with or transfer before one year is completed, they will lose at least a year of eligibility. Players must also understand that being brought to campus on an official visit does not constitute an offer of a scholarship. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOUR SENIOR YEAR TO MAKE FIRST CONTACT OR REGISTER FOR THE CLEARINGHOUSE.**

There are so many minor details for students to know about the recruiting process that thousands will never know. Recruiting classes are typically 200-300 players per year. Most recruiting is finished by April each year. Coaches still looking at seniors in the spring may have had some lack of continuity in their recruiting (maybe a coach left) or had a player transfer out of school in the spring or may be an NAIA school or lower level NCAA program or some other circumstance.