



South Region Soccer League

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GUIDE FOR COLLEGE - BOUND SOCCER PLAYER

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SOUTH REGION SOCCER LEAGUE

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Introduction

Choosing a college/university is not a four-year decision. It's a 40-year decision. The people you meet and the experiences you have in college will affect you for the rest of your life. Trying to find a suitable College or University can be a very stressful time. As a student-athlete, it can be even more stressful, because you may be in the enviable position of having more options. Selecting the best college or university to meet both your academic and athletic needs may seem like an enormous and intimidating task. The prospect of choosing one school from more than 1500 may produce intense feelings of panic, and even fear of making the wrong decision.

Those student-athletes who make a conscious effort to evaluate college programs, and narrow those choices as they progress through their high school career, will have identified five to six solid choices by **September of their Senior Year (Grade 12)**.

Recruitment for sports such as soccer is much different than swimming and track & field, as coaches need to see you play, versus just looking at your best times. You do not need to be a Provincial, or National player in order to be successful at College soccer, or even to receive an athletic scholarship. You must take the initiative to contact the coach at the schools that interest you by sending them your resume. Coaches would prefer to recruit student-athletes, who have shown interest in attending their school.

This comprehensive packet provides information on how to approach researching and applying to schools, as well as contacting college/university coaches. Use it as your guide and resource and share the information with parents, coaches and counselors. The focus will be on U.S. schools, but there will be some information specific to Canadian schools. The plans and details outlined can be used whether your goal is a Canadian or US university or college.

Most players and club coaches are not familiar with the process required in order to maximize player opportunities for obtaining soccer scholarships. It is hoped that this information will help the student-athlete achieve success on the field, in the classroom and in life. It is then up to the players to make this happen. Women's soccer in the U.S. is one of the fastest growing intercollegiate sports mainly due to the application of **TITLE IX** so there are many opportunities out there for women.

Parents--Help your son, or daughter behind the scene, and as it comes down to a final decision, speak with the coach and ask questions you feel are pertinent. After all, most of you are probably paying the bill. It is only fair that you meet the coach, and get a feel for the university. Parents need to ensure that the student-athlete keeps on top of communications and responds to e-mails, or any correspondence promptly and appropriately.

This is the one of the most significant areas for parental contribution, yet it is most often left to the responsibility of the student-athlete. Communication and co-operation between the student-athlete and parents is key to ensure that the plan of action is on track.

Canadian Universities & Colleges

Most Canadians still associate university athletic scholarships with schools in the United States, where campus sports are not only a huge matter of pride, but big business as well. However, the university sports landscape in Canada has changed rapidly in the past 20 years, to the point where a good high-school athlete can find appealing options north of the border.

In fact, better than half of all varsity athletes at Canadian schools are receiving some form of financial aid tied to their participation in sports. That's quite a change from the 1990s, when most schools in Canada offered little or nothing.

While scholarship amounts vary from school to school and from sport to sport, the CIS permits universities to give funds equal to tuition and mandatory fees as long as recipients keep at least a 65-per-cent grade average. Incoming students who achieved an 80-per-cent average in high school are eligible to receive funds at the start of their first year of university.

Summary of Canadian Athletic Financial Awards:

As detailed at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport website: (<http://www.cis-sic.ca/splash/index>)

Is there a limit to what I can receive?

- tuition and compulsory fees is the maximum amount you can receive for athletic-related awards in an academic year, including athletic-related bursaries.
- the value and quantity of athletic-related awards and bursaries available varies from institution to institution.
- specific awards and bursaries may have additional conditions, such as academic success and citizenship, beyond what is stated here.
- many awards, such as academic awards or awards provided by Sport Governing Bodies or the Federal and Provincial Governments, are not included within the tuition and compulsory fees maximum; please consult your Athletic Department.

Who provides athletic-related awards?

- all athletic-related awards provided to CIS student-athletes must be administered through the providing university.
- to receive an award that is not administered by your university, the award must not be conditional on attendance at any particular university, that is, you must be free to attend the university of your choice.

When can I receive athletic-related awards?

- you are eligible to receive an award or bursary at the beginning of your first year at a university (September) if you have a minimum entering average of 80% or equivalent.
- alternatively, you are eligible to receive an award at the end of your first year at a university (spring or summer) if you satisfy CIS academic requirements with at least a 65% average or equivalent.
- thereafter, you are eligible to receive an award at the beginning of any year if you satisfy CIS academic requirements with at least a 65% average or equivalent in the preceding year.

Please note that Regional Associations and institutions may have additional regulations that are of a more stringent nature; please consult your Athletic Department about these rules.

U.S. Universities & Colleges

Junior College	A two-year institution that does not have scholarships. Usually less costly and helps individuals improve their academics before moving on to a 4-year institution. The two years will count against your 4 years of eligibility. The junior college also offers an Associate Degree for those who are seeking to gain employment after only two years of study.
NAIA	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. This organization is separate from the NCAA; offers scholarships.
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association. NCAA Division I offers a maximum of 9.9 scholarships for men and 12 for women; Division II a maximum of 9 scholarships for men and 9.9 for women and Division III does not offer athletic scholarships.

Recruiting Services

Recruiting services are usually individuals, whom you pay to create your resume, then mass mail it to colleges and universities. There are other businesses that will provide you with a mailing list, and others that will help you create an action plan similar to the one included here.

Recent surveys have shown that NCAA Division I coaches do not find letters from recruiting services helpful. Canadian universities and colleges, Division II, Division III and NAIA schools were much more enthusiastic about these services. There are a variety of companies with varying approaches, and varying degree of success, offering these services. If you are a player, who has the ability and interest in NCAA Division I soccer, and the willingness to work to accomplish your goal, then it makes sense to do the work yourself. Division I coaches receive hundreds of letters already, and they will rarely follow-up on a player, who has simply mass mailed their resume to countless institutions. They want to know that you are interested in their school specifically. This can also be said of Canadian universities and colleges, Division II, Division III and NAIA schools.

Check the College Information Resources section for information on how to find a mailing list of schools. There is no need to hire someone to help you with an action plan if you follow the information contained in this package, or use other sources such as *The Sport Source*.

If you decide on a professional service, look for one that is "hands on" in approach that provides: an ongoing evaluation/skill development program with well qualified, credible coaches; SAT/ACT advice and prep courses; an academic focus; an academic "best fit" match-up to select appropriate schools; an athletic match-up to identify appropriate athletic fits; up-to-date information on the Canadian, NCAA/NAIA; personal, knowledgeable contacts in specific sport areas to answer questions and to give advice.

College Information Resources

Canadian Interuniversity Sport

<http://www.cis-sic.ca/splash/index>

The official site of Canadian Interuniversity Sport (formerly called CIAU). Great resource for Canadian university athletics.

Canadian University Rankings – MacCleans

<http://oncampus.macleans.ca/education/rankings/>

Valuable resource for anyone looking for information on Canadian Universities and Colleges in respect to rankings, surveys, available scholarships, etc.

Official Athletic College Soccer Guide

www.thesportsource.com, 1-866-829-2606

Publication is for soccer players interested to play collegiate soccer. It lists men and women's college program by state, providing details on each of the schools listed. Details include: type of institution (4 yr. Private/Public, coed.), enrollment, expenses, Degrees conferred, website, and specific details on the institutions men's and women's soccer program. Also can help match student-athlete with schools that meet their academic and athletic criteria. Offers free practice SAT, ACT and PSAT tests. Charlie Kadupski is the editor.

NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete

www.ncaa.org, (317) 917-6222

Official website of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Go to NCAA Eligibility Center for information on applying for NCAA Division I, II, or III athletics. This information is very important as the recruit, along with the institution is held responsible for the rules. Do not let ignorance come in the way of your future.

NAIA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete

www.naia.org, (816) 595-8000

Official website of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Search for above listed pamphlet which provides information on applying for NAIA athletics.

SAT I & SAT II

www.collegeboard.com Register online with payment of fees in US\$ by credit card. This site provides dates, locations where to write, costs for the SAT tests and prep tests. Most schools use SAT I, while the Ivy League also requires completion of SAT II. A few schools prefer ACT test scores. The athlete must confirm which tests are needed by the institution of interest, and then complete those requirements listed. Offers College Search by various criteria.

US NEWS College Information

<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college> This website allows ranking of colleges by major, or any other criteria. Also allows comparisons of up to four colleges at any one time. Excellent resource to identify colleges that meet your academic, geographical and educational criteria.

University of Illinois – College and University Rankings

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/edx/rankings/rankgen.html> College and University rankings from various sources, including US News.

Soccer Ranking and Variety of information on College Soccer

www.soccerratings.com

National and Regional ranking of NCAA and NAIA schools updated weekly during the season. Most widely accepted ranking website for college soccer.

The U.S. College Game

The NCAA College game varies from Division I to Division III. The College game is played in the fall (although there is legislation in the NCAA trying to make it a split season before and after winter break). The season generally has about 18-24 games depending on whether a team qualifies for post-season play (NCAA tournament).

The season is very intense, no matter what level you play. College teams' travel depends on their division and interest to play outside their division.

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NCAA Division I is the most recognized level of college soccer. Players and coaches put in long hours all year to ensure success and development. These hours (12-20 per week depending on the team) are in addition to college classes, individual study, and social activities. To compete as a NCAA Division I player, a student-athlete must be focused, dedicated and opportunistic; however, to play college soccer, you don't have to do it at the Division I level.

A quality Division I player typically has a clear repertoire of attributes to bring to a college team. Here are the capabilities of a typical Division I player.

FORWARDS

- Possess the physical speed necessary to break away from strong tenacious markers
- Able to hold and shield the ball with head up, while teammates move into support roles
- Show confidence and talent to take on 1,2,3 players en route to goal
- Comfortable and successful with both feet while under pressure
- Have superior physical fitness

MIDFIELDERS

- Have superior fitness level
- Are physically strong and quick to avoid injury due to collision and physical play
- Possess the tactical ability to read, play and adjust to the tempo of the game
- Show the technical ability to play controlled 1 and 2 touch game
- Able to play ball from side to side as well as back to front of the team
- Can and will defend anytime the ball is lost
- Have the personality to play under pressure

DEFENDERS

- Possess the physical speed and strength to keep up with the nation's top strikers
- Have the grit and determination to play within a team's defensive system
- Show the technical ability to accurately play 40 yard passes to teammates and to control long passes from opponents
- Display the ability to win 50/50 challenges consistently
- Have the composure to play and create opportunities (not just destroy)

GOALKEEPERS

- Have the stature and physique that demonstrates confidence to their teammates
- Have the strength and ability to win 50/50 balls and avoid injury
- Display the technical ability to make 100% of the saves in the middle two-thirds of goal and many of the bigger saves in the corners
- Possess the leadership and social skills to get along with players and lead her defense

- Ability to distribute the ball safely in their own half of the field, and penetrate the other team's half with long punts, throws, or drop kicks
- Willingness to work as hard in training as in games
- Display the tactical ability to play within the flow of the game

If you have the technical, tactical and physical tools to play at the Division I level, do you have the time and dedication? If you would sit on the bench for a Division I team, wouldn't you be happier playing for a Division II, III, or NAIA program?

Availability of Financial Aid

Each year, US colleges and universities award millions of dollars in grants-in-aid to student athletes. Each year, a significant percentage of available assistance is not awarded partly because recruiters and coaches with limited budgets are unable to locate qualified student-athletes. Also, qualified students-athletes are either unaware of all the potential opportunities, or uncertain about how to go after them.

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to win an athletic scholarship is to be a star. Top talent is never kept a secret and an outstanding athlete will find his/her mailbox filled with letters from interested coaches. If however, you are not a star, you may never see or hear from a recruiter, despite the fact that you may be scholarship material. The task then is to understand all the rules fully, so you do not inadvertently preclude yourself from financial aid. It is therefore important to learn how to look for an athletic scholarship.

The search for athletic scholarships should be coordinated with the overall process of choosing a school.

No Risk Student-Athlete

Colleges are looking for no risk student-athletes. They want individuals, who work hard on the field, in the classroom, and are good citizens.

College coaches are not fond of parenting a player, who does not go to class, is disrespectful, gets into trouble, or struggles to get along with others. College coaches' jobs depend on their players' performance in all of these areas.

Colleges will go to great lengths to ensure they recruit no risk players. Observing recruits away from the game provides insights into the players social and communication skills. Soccer is a non-revenue sport and thus is treated much differently than revenue generating sports. In other words, soccer usually provides important publicity for the university.

A team's performance in the classroom, and off the field, makes a tremendous difference to the athletic department and the school's reputation. They are recruiting someone to represent their program, and you can be sure that a player's behaviour and work ethics will make a difference.

NCAA Eligibility Rules

You have decided to play college soccer at the NCAA Division I level.

Good for you! Just remember that it takes more than being a good player. You also have to be a good student. Thus, the term student-athlete. Here are some of the keys to make sure you qualify.

First, you have to register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse (see next section). This will help guide you in the transition and to establish your eligibility. There are academic course requirements that you must satisfy when you graduate from high school to play at the Division I level.

If you're first entering a Division I, in order to be classified a "qualifier," you're required to:

- Graduate from high school;
- Successfully complete a core curriculum of at least 13 academic course units as follows:
 - 4 years English
 - 3 years Math (two years of mathematics courses at the level of Algebra I or above)
 - 2 years Social Science
 - 2 years natural or physical science (including at least one laboratory course, if offered by the high school)
 - 1 year of an additional course in English, Math or natural or physical science
 - 4 additional years of academic courses in any of the above areas or foreign language, or non doctrinal religion/philosophy
- Have a core-course grade-point average (GPA -based on a maximum of 4.000) and a combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections, or a sum score on the ACT based on the qualifier index scale. The grade point average requirements are for the 16 core courses, not your overall GPA.

Portion of Division I Qualifier Index

Core GPA	ACT	SAT
	(sum of scores)	
2.500 & above	68	820
2.475	69	830
2.450	70	840-850
2.425	70	860
2.400	71	860
2.375	72	870
2.350	73	880
2.325	74	890
2.300	75	900
2.275	76	910
2.250	77	920
2.225	78	930
2.200	79	940
2.175	80	950
2.150	80	960
2.125	81	960
2.100	82	970
2.075	83	980
2.050	84	990
2.025	85	1000
2.000	86	1010

NCAA Clearinghouse

If you are a senior planning to attend college at the completion of your senior year, and compete in NCAA Division I, or Division II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse uses the previously listed information to decide your eligibility. It is your responsibility to make certain the Clearinghouse has the documents it needs for certification. Clearinghouse forms are available at your high school guidance office. High schools can reach the Clearinghouse at (317) 223-0700.

Recruiting Misconceptions

Talented high school athletes are actively recruited by Division I schools

The majority of high school athletes and parents believe that talented high school/rep athletes are actively recruited by Division I college coaches. The reality is that only about 2% of these athletes are “actively recruited” by leading college coaches, leaving the remaining 98% to “recruit themselves” through self-directed efforts.

Most Division I schools give players full rides

Division I men's soccer has 9.9 scholarships. Division I women's soccer has 12 scholarships. Not all schools provide their soccer programs with the full allotment. The scholarships are usually divided amongst 22 to 30 players. Most schools shy away from full scholarships, because it is a large investment in one player, and it often costs a team potential depth. As well, many schools choose to increase individual player scholarships year by year, based on performance.

Scholarship money can only be found at Division I and Division II schools

While only Division I and Division II NCAA schools offer scholarships, many Division III schools have money available based on need, grants, etc. Many schools take a holistic approach to recruiting students, and being an athlete at Division III might increase your chances of receiving other forms of aid. NAIA schools also offer scholarships and might be a direction to consider. Whichever Division you choose, approach the economic aspects of college from every direction.

Being on the National Team, a Provincial Team or a good club team, is all you need to do to get recruited

Do not leave anything to chance. On a given weekend in the US, college coaches see 300 to 400 players. If your team is going to a US tournament, make yourself seen. Write letters. Give coaches your schedule, your jersey number. Make phone calls. It is much easier for coaches to evaluate you when they know of you ahead of time. This will only increase interest and exposure. The school you want to go to will now make an effort to see you play.

Players need parent agents

Stories of parent agents have received notorious status in the college ranks. A parent agent is considered a red flag, and often means an immature recruit, or an unenthusiastic recruit. To put it simply, college coaches are weary of parents who are the initiators in the recruiting process. Coaches want to hear from the kids. They want to know if kids are well spoken, mature, intelligent and enthusiastic about their university. In other words, coaches do not want to recruit the parent.

Some schools are simply too expensive to consider

"Discounted tuition" is a term used to describe the amount of money you are paying after you receive your financial aid package. Schools will often work with coaches to provide a package for a student-athlete, whom they believe will be a positive addition to their institution.

Division I Is Always The Best

"Some players don't have a good understanding of what Division I is," say some college coaches. They might say, "I want to play Division I," but I could recommend a good DII, or DIII school. In reality, there are some Division I programs that are no better than some Division II, or III programs. A lot of people have a misconception about the level of play at various universities.

All Programs Are The Same

Often, players will contact a college coach about attending their school and know nothing about the soccer team, the players, the coach, or the style of play. If you are a left midfielder, and the team has three sophomore left midfielders, chances are good that is not the school for you. If another school may have a graduating senior and a junior at your position, you're more likely to get playing time earlier. If you are interested in a particular school, I recommend going and watching that team play. Watching one game will answer a lot of your questions. It is recommended that student-athletes make a list of the top schools of interest to them and then find out as much as they can about each school.

I Can't Call The Coach

The NCAA rules regarding recruiting are more difficult to understand than any foreign language class that you are required to take in school. There are rules regarding visits to a university, gifts from a coach, pickup games while you are on recruiting visits and contact with the coach. Many student-athletes are worried they will break the rules and somehow risk their college soccer career. However, most of those rules pertain to the coach and not the player. See detailed information on NCAA Rules below.

High School Stars Automatically Become College Stars

If you are recruited by a major college, chances are you were one of the best players on your rep team. You've been the "go-to player," the one who dictates the pace, the one everybody counts on. It's been a nice ride, but it's over. Some kids assume that since they were the star of their rep team, they will be the star in college, too. They don't fully understand the level of college soccer. They think they do, and their parents think they do, but they don't. The pace of college soccer is like nothing else they've seen before, and even players who come from some of the top club teams aren't used to the demands in college.

Practical Advice on The NCAA Recruiting Process

Know The Rules. The following are the NCAA recruiting rules. Visit www.ncaa.org for more information.

Grade 9 & 10/Freshman and Sophomore Year

Written: College coaches may only send you a questionnaire, a letter explaining the rules, a referral to admissions and a camp brochure. You may write college coaches as often as you like.

Telephone: College coaches may not telephone you. They cannot return your phone calls, or your parents phone calls. You may call coaches for information only (they cannot use this time for recruitment) as often as you wish at your own expense.

Evaluations: College coaches may watch you play a limited number of times during the academic year. They may watch you unlimited times during the summer.

Off-Campus Contact: College coaches may not have off-campus contact with you or your parents other than an exchange of greeting.

On-Campus Contact: You may visit college campuses as often as you like at your own expense. While you are on campus, you may meet with the coach.

E-Mail and Faxes: E-mail and faxes are treated the same way as written correspondence (see Written).

Grade 11/Junior Year

Written: Starting Sept. 1st of your junior year, college coaches may begin to send you recruiting letters and information on the school and soccer program.

Telephone: College coaches may not telephone you. They cannot return your phone calls, or your parents phone calls. You may call coaches as often as you wish at your own expense.

Evaluations: College coaches may watch you play a limited number of times during the academic year. They may watch you unlimited times during the summer.

Off-Campus Contact: College coaches may not have off-campus contact with you, or your parents other than an exchange of greeting.

On-Campus Contact: You may visit college campuses as often as you like at your own expense. While you are on campus, you may meet with the coach.

E-Mail and Faxes: E-mail and faxes are treated the same way as written correspondence (see Written during the junior year).

Grade 12/Senior Year

Written: College coaches may continue to send you recruiting letters and information on the school and soccer program.

Telephone: College coaches may telephone you, or your parents one time per week beginning July 1st prior to your senior year in high school. You may call college coaches as often as you wish. You may call them collect starting July 1st. prior to your senior year.

Evaluations: College coaches may watch you play a limited number of times during the academic year. They may watch you unlimited times during the summer.

Off-Campus Contact: College coaches may have up to 3 off-campus contacts with you, or your parents other than exchanges of greeting.

On-Campus Contact: You may visit college campuses as often as you like at your own expense. While you are on campus, you may meet with the coach.

Official Visits: You may visit 5 institutions officially. The school paying for all, or part of your expenses constitutes an Official Visit. You may only take one official visit per school. You may make official visits beginning the first day of class of your senior year in high school. For more information, see *Official Visits*.

E-Mail and Faxes: E-mail and faxes are treated the same way as written correspondence (see Written during the senior year).

Know Yourself, Know the School

Be honest with yourself about your ability and what you are looking for in a school and a soccer program. Soccer programs of 22 to 30 players have different types of players:

- **Starters**
- **Subs** -players who usually get in games but don't start
- **Project players** -these are players who may not play until they are juniors or seniors
- **Practice players** -these are players who may eventually get a chance, but usually spend most of their four years practicing

Ask yourself if you are capable of taking on one of these roles. Be realistic about your ability to play on a given team in these roles. Know what role the program wants you to play.

Conversations With Coaches and Players

The recruiting process is very similar to a job interview. Both sides are assessing the other. You are not the first, or last recruit the college will be contacting, or assessing. **They have done this many times!** Make certain you are as prepared to be recruited as they are to recruit. Have questions prepared for academic counselors, coaches and players. Some recruits spend the majority of their time listening to what the coach has to say and what the university has to offer. Some recruits spend all of their time trying to assess the university. Find a middle ground. In other words, speak well and listen well.

If a coach contacts you illegally, or performs any violation in recruiting you, inform the coach immediately of the violation. Do not assume that they are deliberately breaking the rules. They may have made an error as to your year in school, or simply made an oversight. There are a lot of NCAA rules. You might be saving them and yourself NCAA violations.

Ethical or Unethical Behavior

Be wary of coaches who bad-mouth other programs. It is not illegal, but it is considered highly unethical to talk poorly about competing programs. Remember, the coach wants you to attend their school and this kind of language is used to persuade, not because you are now close friends and they are confiding in you.

If you have made an oral commitment to a school, it is considered unethical (not illegal) for other schools to attempt to recruit you. If schools call, simply inform them that you have made a commitment. If you are reconsidering your decision for any reason, call the institution you have committed to first, then open yourself to more options.

Note: Unethical behavior by schools does happen. Be aware of these situations. When coaches or schools act in this manner, they may be displaying their true character. An honest coach will probably treat you better in your four years, than one that recruits you in an unethical or illegal manner.

How To Get Noticed By College Coaches

Players can get noticed by a college coach in any number of ways, but most often through one of four methods:

1. The Coach Sees You Play at a Random Game

College coaches attend a number of venues including tournaments and showcases looking for players. Coaches will attend these tournaments with a list of players to watch and an idea of what positions they need to fill in their upcoming recruiting class. By the end of these showcases, coaches often leave with evaluations of the players that they intended to see, and a list of new players to contact. If you impress the coach and they feel that you could be a valuable part of their upcoming recruiting class, then your name will be taken down and you will be added to the coach's list of potential recruits for further evaluation.

2. The Coach Network

As college coaches do not have a significant amount of time and money to devote to their recruiting, they often turn to their colleagues for advice. Coaches will express their recruiting needs such as, "If anyone knows of a goalkeeper graduating next year, tell me" at tournaments and other college coach gatherings. Many players are not initially seen by the coach they are eventually recruited by, but by a friend of that coach. Your name may be passed along during a quick chat, over dinner, or telephone call.

3. Awards and Publications

Regardless of what level of soccer you are looking to play in college, having this on your profile can offer a way to back up your playing experience with credentials. Additionally, Provincial/National coaches can act as references.

4. Making Contact with the Coach

The best way to take control of your recruiting destiny is to make direct contact with college coaches yourself. By sending a coach a package, you are getting the message across that you are interested and they should make a strong effort to find out more about you. Your best bet is to send a "look at me, I'm interested in going to your school and playing soccer" package to between 20 and 30 coaches during your sophomore (Grade 10) and junior year (Grade 11). This package should include a cover letter, soccer resume/profile, list of references, your game schedule, a picture, and possibly a video. After you send the coach a package, make sure to follow up with a phone call to reinforce your interest. A video can be of great significance especially if you will not be involved in many US tournaments. The website <http://www.collegesoccer.com/> has an excellent "how to" video outline- simply do a search for "video" and follow the link. Advice is concise and excellent.

Enjoy The Process

This process can be stressful, but I guarantee it is more stressful when you do not prepare. There will be many schools that are not the right fit for you, and many that meet your personal criteria. Learn about the schools and the programs. Map out your future. This process is a tremendous growth experience as you approach a major crossroad in your life.

Researching Universities

Master Plan

The following is a chronological plan for contacting and researching universities. Much of the information is simply about the recruiting process, and is applicable to all contact with coaches throughout the recruiting process.

Grade 10 / Sophomore Year - Watch collegiate soccer games when you have the opportunity. Identify 20 to 30 colleges, which meet your criteria and interest. Include schools of varying soccer abilities and academic abilities. Do not narrow your search this early in the process.

At the end of your sophomore year send a letter, with a one-page resume (see standard intro letter and standard soccer resume). Your letter should include a request for athletic and academic information on the university. Do not be shocked if you do not receive information back promptly. Coaches may not feel it is necessary to recruit before your junior year.

Follow up letters with a phone call. Coaches cannot call you, or return your call. You can call college coaches as much as you like. If you show genuine interest in a college program, chances are the program will show more interest in you.

Send coaches your season tournament schedule and highlight the US tournaments. Also, send coaches your game times and fields at tournaments. List your jersey number and team colour. In other words, make it easy for them to see you and evaluate you.

Note: When you receive a questionnaire from a university, fill it out and return it promptly. Programs will regard this as definite interest. Also, fill out the questionnaire as accurately and honestly as possible. Colleges sometimes have questionnaires that require players running times. If you do not have quality timed runs, do not list times. If there is information, which you do not yet have, i.e. SAT, or ACT scores, make a note and send the information when it is available.

Note: The correspondence information in the sophomore year is applicable throughout the recruiting process. For example, you will have much more correspondence with coaches in your junior year; increasing dramatically beginning **July 1 of your senior year**.

Grade 11 / Junior Year - continue to narrow down your choices for schools. Select a school based on your criteria:

- Academic interest
- Size of school
- Area of country
- Soccer program
- Cost
- Special programs
- Proximity to home
- Religious affiliation

Your high school guidance counselor should have access to information on Canadian Universities and some US Colleges. Also refer to the information listed under College Information Resources.

- Continue to watch college games when you have the opportunity.
- Get an honest evaluation of your playing ability from more than one source. Coaches have differing opinions of players. Ask several coaches to evaluate your play and the level at which you can strive to play. Include these in your player profile.

- When you have the opportunity, visit campuses. You can visit college campuses at your expense whenever you want. Give the coaches a call prior to your visit, and request a meeting with the coach. Coaches are sure to know you are interested if you go for a visit.
- If you know a college coach has seen or evaluated you, stay in contact. Make sure they know you are interested. Ask if you are a potential fit for their program. Do not be offended if you do not hear from the coach consistently. This does not necessarily mean you are not wanted.
- Continue to send your tournament schedule and game times before each tournament.
- Begin to narrow down your choices during the summer between your junior year and senior year. Other opportunities may present themselves but you should have much of your work done by this time.
- If after numerous attempts, between late in your junior year and early in your senior year, you have not received any interest from the program, the coach probably is not interested in recruiting you. If a coach tells you that he or she is not interested, *move on*.

Note: E-mail is a tremendous way to keep in contact during your junior year. College coaches may have contact with you via e-mail throughout your junior year.

Grade 12 / Senior Year - During this year, coaches can call you via phone once a week. Do not be bashful about calling coaches yourself.

- Continue to provide coaches with your schedule.
- Begin to arrange visits to schools officially, or unofficially. The only way to truly know about a school is to visit the school. (see Official Visits for more information).
- Make a list before your final decision of all the pros and cons of each school. This should help you organize your thoughts.
- Be honest with schools that are contacting you and those that you are contacting. Do not continue to correspond with a coach when you are not interested in the school. It is a waste of everyone's time.
- Many Division I, or Division II schools will put pressure on you to make decisions early during your senior year. They are doing this to protect their money. This is why you need to start the process early.

College Entrance Exams

Master Plan

There are four tests which a future-student athlete needs to consider: the **PSAT** (Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test), the **PACT** (Pre-American College Test), the **SAT** (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and the **ACT** (American College Test). The taking of the tests should go according to the following plan of action

Grade 10 / Sophomore Year - take the PSAT test and/or the PACT test without preparation. These tests will give you an idea of what you need to work on, as well as what types of schools you can begin researching. You can begin to improve on parts of these tests. SAT preparation books are available at most retail bookstores while SAT II and ACT might only be available at University bookstores such as University of Toronto. Many private institutions and on-line websites offer SAT preparation courses.

Grade 11 / Junior Year - in the Fall, you may take the preparatory tests (PSAT or PACT) again to prepare for your ACT or SAT. In the Spring, (preferably April, May or June) of your junior year, take the SAT and ACT tests. Wait until June, because often the math portion of the test is usually not covered until spring of your junior year. It takes 4 to 6 weeks to receive the test results. This will give you enough time to send your scores to collegiate coaches if you are satisfied with your results. If you are not, take the test again. You can take these tests as many times as you wish.

Note: The SAT has been known to improve through multiple tests, while the ACT usually improves on the second testing and stays the same. For a fee, both tests will return your answers, the correct answers and the test.

Grade 12 / Senior Year - If need be, take the tests again. Taking the tests multiple times will not hurt you and may help you. There is a cost for each test.

Note: Once you have taken tests, identify schools that you would like to attend and talk to the coach about the schools admissions policy. Universities have different policies for admission. Some universities make little concession for athletics as an influence for college admission. Some universities consider athletics an important extra-curricular, and this may help your admittance. Some universities will accept a set number of athletes, and this gives you an excellent advantage in being accepted, but does nothing to keep you in school. Ask the coach what your chances are. This is the only way to find out.

Applying For Colleges of Choice

Master Plan

During your junior year the paperwork portion of college choice becomes important. The following list provides you with a simple time frame for applying for financial aid, finding scholarships, registering with NCAA Clearinghouse etc.

Grade 11 / Junior Year - File with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the end of May, or beginning of June, not before. Get applications for academic and/or community scholarships during the summer before your senior year.

Note: Athletic scholarships received by local organizations work against your chosen schools' allotted number of scholarships but this might not be applicable to Canadian (International) students. For example, if the local Rotary Club gives you a financial aid award for being the athlete of the year in your high school, that money is taken out of your college of choice's allotted scholarship money.

Grade 12 / Senior Year - Prepare admission and scholarship applications by Dec.1st. Know application deadlines! Apply early! Arrange to have your final high school transcripts sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

Admissions Application - This step must be completed during the first few months of the senior year. College coaches are not the admissions officials – the final decision for admissions is done through the admissions office. Do not rely on a college coach to ensure you are going to be a student in their college. College coaches are delighted to learn a prospective student-athlete has taken responsibility for completing all the necessary applications and forms to become part of their program. Some applications are “coded” by the athletic department in order to speed the process, or in some cases to aid in the admission process. This is a specific question that should be asked of the coaching staff prior to making application.

Letter of Intent - Once the admission application has been started/completed, and a verbal commitment has been made, a *National Letter of Intent* will then be sent out to the student-athlete in February of their senior year. This is a binding contract and will include *A Tender of Financial Aid* and the *National Letter of Intent*. This offer is time limited and must be signed and dated, and returned by the student-athlete and parent/guardian, within the time-period outlined.

Official Visits

You have **five (5)** Official Visits which you can take beginning the first day of classes your senior year of high school. Before you can go on an official visit, you must have completed your SAT and be registered with the NCAA Clearinghouse. **Choose your visits wisely.** If a school is close to home, you may choose to take an Unofficial Visit. An Unofficial Visit is similar to an Official Visit except you cannot have your entertainment, meals etc. paid. Evaluate the schools on the soccer program and school, not how much was spent on you, or where you were able to stay. Many players take Unofficial Visits and then comment on how great their trips were on their Official Visits. (It's like going to your senior prom and eating out at McDonalds or the KEG, of course you like the KEG better, well most of you would). My suggestion, take Official Visits to the **five (5)** schools you most want to attend, regardless of proximity. Official Visits can last no longer than 48 hours on campus. Try to stay with players if possible. If you stay for two nights, request one night on campus and one night off campus (on an Unofficial Visit you cannot stay on campus). In most instances, Colleges will have several recruits visit at the same time. The coach usually plans Official and Unofficial visit itineraries for you. Make certain that your visit includes a meeting with an academic advisor in your field of interest. It is also good to plan your trip around a game and a practice. This will give you a good feel for the program.

Note: Ask questions on your visit. Know what you are looking for in a university and a soccer program. The coach will certainly ask questions of you.

The following are questions you may want to ask coaches on your visit or via phone or e-mail.

- How is scholarship money allocated?
- What is your policy on renewing athletic aid?
- How are athletic injuries handled (care, cost)?
- What is your coaching philosophy?
- What are the goals of the program?
- What kind of progress have you made toward these goals?
- What is the practice schedule? How many hours a week?
- How are academic conflicts handled?
- Are tutors available to athletes?
- How many players are you graduating?
- How many of your athletes graduate in four years?
- What are my chances of receiving a scholarship in the next four years?
- Where do you house your players? Do they live together? Do they live apart? Why?
- What are my chances of playing my first year?
- What does it mean to “red shirt”? What is your "red shirt" policy?
- What are your commitments during the off-season, or non- traditional season?
- How many practices?
- Will I get help in course selection?
- How many players do you carry on the team?
- How long are training sessions?
- What is the team GPA?
- How long do you, (the coach) plan on being at this university?

Recruiting Tip: Don't Commit Too Soon

An athlete is allowed to make **five (5)** official visits to prospective universities. Most players make up their mind after each visit ... then change it. Each school you visit usually will seem like the greatest university on earth. However, it's important to remember that the next college you visit will be equally as attractive. Be patient. Some coaches will ask you for a decision before you leave their campus. They are hoping to hear that you have decided to come to their school, but they are expecting to hear that you are going to take your other official visits before making up your mind. If the coach really likes you as a player and as a student, he or she will wait.

Remember, a verbal commitment is not binding; a signed National Letter of Intent is. However, it is not fair to the coach, his program, or other players he is recruiting for you to verbally commit, only to change your mind three days later.

SUMMARY

The South Region Soccer League has created a standard of excellence and an atmosphere where our players can reach superior level of play. Many of our players have gone on to play at national and collegiate level. Through training and mentorship, SRSL coaches continue to provide our players with the best possible environment to help improve their game.

SRSL has also created this booklet to provide you with in-depth information. Please look to our website at <http://www.southregionsoccerleagu.com/> for news, additional information and contacts. We wish you success both on the field and in the classroom!

(Example, please do not use this exact wording as it has been used many times)

Standard Introduction Letter / E-mail

April 26, 2010

University Soccer Coach
Any University
4 University Ave.
City, Province/State
Postal/Zip

Dear Coach,

During my initial consideration of various universities, Any University scores high in the areas of interest to me opposite academic studies and athletic programs.

My years of soccer have made me appreciate the benefits associated with higher level of coaching. This along with my academic interest in the field of Kinesiology, has led me to Any University. Your reputation for academics is very strong and is the basis of my consideration in furthering my education.

I am currently a junior with a GPA of 3.8 and will graduate in 2011, and believe I can be a strong contributor to your team, while further developing my skills, talents and understanding of the game. A copy of my profile is enclosed for your review.

Any information that you could provide opposite financial assistance would be appreciated, as my academic performance will hopefully qualify me for scholarship consideration. It would also be appreciated if you would forward any other information that you believe might assist me in my preparation for attendance at Any University in the fall of 2011.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and please contact me if you require additional information or references. I will call you the week of April 30, 2010, as a follow-up to this letter.

Sincerely yours,

My Name

NOTE: Our team (SRSL Galaxy) will be participating in the Columbia Invitational Tournament U-18 division, on May 29-31/2010 and hopefully you will get an opportunity to see me play.

(Example)

Typical Player Profile Form

Jane Snow	#5
Team:	SRSL Galaxy
Address:	1234 Anystreet, My City, Ontario, Canada, P0S 1A1
Telephone:	905 555-5555
Birthdate:	April 29, 1994
Position:	Defender
Prominent Foot:	Right
Height/Weight:	5'8" / 140 lbs.
Graduation Year:	2011
GPA:	4.0
SAT:	600 math, 620 verbal
School:	My High School

Insert your
soccer
picture
here

Note: At times file size is too large with the picture for some schools' computer systems

Video Available Upon Request

2009 – SRSL Galaxy U-18 Rep Team - Coach Fred Jones 905-555-1234

U18 League Indoor Champions

U17 National Capital - Champions

U17 Alliance Cup Finalists – Erie PA

U17 League Cup Finalists – SRSL

2008 – SRSL Galaxy U-17 Rep Team - Fred Jones 905-555-1234

SRSL League Champions

SRSL League Cup Finalist

Ontario Cup semi-finalist

Alliance Cup semi-finalist

National Capital quarter-finalist

2007 – SRSL Galaxy Rep Team - Coach - Fred Jones 905-555-1234

Greece, NY U17/18 Tournament Champions

Finalists – OSCAR

Amherst NY Runner Up

SRSL League Champions

SRSL League Cup Champions

Other Interests/Sports/Accomplishments

2009 Volleyball MVP, Finalists, GHAC finalist, and OFSAA competitor

2009 “Behind the Scenes Award” and school letter recipient

2009 Participated in the Sears Drama Festival

2009 Active member of the Student Council and Yearbook

2008 Participated in student exchange to Germany

2005 – 2009 – Volunteer tutor.

2008 High school basketball – Regional Finalists

2008 Volleyball MVP

2006-2009 – High school Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer

2006-2009 Honour Roll