



COLLEGE SOCCER RECRUITING

This guide is to help players and their parents with the many questions about how the College Soccer Recruiting process works.

It is very important to note that no one course of action is correct for everyone. Each school and coach may handle the process differently for their prospective student-athletes.

When looking at schools, try to find a campus you love and where you can see yourself attending for four years. Look for a school that has your area of study (major). Try to find a school that has a soccer program where you'll play and enjoy yourself. Be honest with yourself about where you might fit in academically and athletically and be honest with yourself and the coach you are communicating with. Schools and coaches also look for good students. Maintaining your grades and getting good scores on your ACT/SAT will improve the number of colleges that have an interest in you.

It is also our hope that you will check with the school and their national association to make sure of their policies, scholarship availability, rules and programs. There are rules differences between each association. For example, the NCAA Division I and II, NCAA Division III and NAIA have different rules for what coaches may do during the recruitment process.

It is our goal that the information provided in this guide will help you to answer some of these questions and point you to the right sources for additional information. There are some guidelines that will help you as you prepare for this process.

Kat Nichols

Justus Griffin

Girls College Liaison

Boys College Liaison



Here are the most common recruiting questions and their answers:

1. How do I make college coaches aware of me? How do I market myself?

- A) Become the best player you can be. What type of player you are is more important than how you market yourself.
- B) Don't wait for coaches to contact you. Start the process by sending an email to colleges you might be interested in attending.
- C) Send your resume or profile along with a Highlight Video. If you have video of a full match you can include that too. (Make sure to indicate your jersey color and number!)
- D) You can call a coach after sending an email to follow up. Be prepared to leave a voicemail.

2. When does the recruiting process begin?

- A) This varies by school and by division. Division I colleges start to look at Boys during their Sophomore year of HS. The summer after Sophomore year through the summer after Junior year is the biggest recruiting window for most colleges.

3. What is the difference between NCAA Division I or Division II etc.?

- A) Division I schools have a bigger athletic department and usually offer more scholarships. Division II schools may offer athletic scholarships, but they are more limited in how many. Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarship. NAIA schools follow different rules and may offer more scholarships than Division I. They tend to be smaller schools, but this varies.

4. How do I get a scholarship and how many are available?

- A) Division I men's soccer teams are allowed up to 9.9 soccer scholarships. These are based on performance. Division II men's soccer teams are allowed up to 9.0 scholarships. NAIA men's soccer teams are allowed up to 14 scholarships.
- B) Most colleges provide much more money for Academic or Need based scholarship. Most colleges will also bundle Academic, Need, and Athletic scholarships together.

5. How can I tell if a school is a good fit for me?

- A) Do some research online. Read about the school and the soccer program. Then contact the coach and ask questions. Visiting a college campus is the best way to see if it feels good for you. Every campus looks beautiful in their pictures. Walking around campus and walking in the main buildings will give you a much better perspective.

9th Grade Key Action Items:

- Research schools and soccer programs online, and update your list of Schools, be sure schools align with your academic and soccer level
- Determine strategy to get exposure to your target schools (i.e. club team tournaments, ID camps, identification program, etc.)
- Go over your target schools and strategy with your parents and club college liaison at least once per semester
- Email coaches at target schools before and after tournaments
- Visit 3+ college campuses
- Attend ID clinics or camps at some schools from your list (optional)
- Review/look into AP course path to help gain college credit when you graduate high school. Making sure that the courses will satisfy NCAA Rules

10th Grade Key Action Items:

- Continue following all of the 9th grade key action items
 - Register for and take the PSAT (test is in October)
 - Research best ACT or SAT prep for you and create study plan
 - Build and send resume and cover letter to send out to college coaches
 - Summer before Junior year, make sure you are registered with the NCAA Clearinghouse
 - Begin to email coaches game/tournament schedules
- Making sure to follow up with them after big game/tournament weekends
 - They cannot email you back, but you want to stay on their radar
 - Compile highlight video and upload to NCSA

11th Grade Key Action Items:

- Continue following all of the 10th grade key action items
- Take the ACT and/or SAT and continue taking until satisfied with scores

12th Grade Key Action Items:

- If not committed, continue 11th grade key action items
- If committed, continue building the relationship with your school - i.e. take official visit, watch your team's games, email coaches with your tournament schedules, etc.

FOLLOW UP WITH ALL YOUR COLLEGES EVEN IF YOU SIGN ELSEWHERE!



WHAT IS THE RECRUITING TIMELINE?

Many players commit in their junior year of high school. However, we urge players to focus on doing their due diligence rather than worrying about what year in school they commit.

Everyone's recruiting process is different. Make the recruiting process a priority; focus on completing the above items, and everything else will fall into place!

All divisions are on a slightly different recruiting timetable. The majority of Division I colleges and universities will fill their recruiting class needs by spring of that class's Junior year. This means that if you are a Division I soccer player, you have already visited that campus, sat down with the coach and know where you stand on their recruiting list by your first day of class senior year. The early commitment trend is becoming increasingly prevalent at the Division I level. This only increases the amount of time and research that must be put into recruiting on the student-athlete's end.

Division II colleges and universities are typically the next to finish up their recruiting classes. Some Division II colleges and universities will have prospects verbally commit during the summer, but most will finish during the fall of their senior class. Division III, NAIA and Junior Colleges recruiting typically continues into the winter and spring of a student-athlete's senior year of high school. If you are not on track with this timeline, do not panic, these are general guidelines and every college and university has a different situation.

MAKE A LIST OF COLLEGES

Draft a tentative list of colleges that interest you. Your list may include schools in your area, schools that have a particular major of interest to you, or schools you know very little about. Your list may be long but in the early stages you don't want to eliminate any school you are curious about. It is very important that you look at the school for its academic programs as well as its athletic programs. Your academic experience in college is what will provide an important foundation for your chosen career path after college. Here are some questions that may aid you in your college selection:

- Would I choose this college even if I am not playing on the team?
- Would I be happy sitting on the bench and not playing much?
- Would I still select this college if there is a different coach?
- Was I comfortable there both academically and athletically?
- Did the staff and team seem to get along and care about each other?
- How does the coach motivate the team?
- Were the coaching staff and team friendly? Enthusiastic? Honest? Supportive? Sincere?

Educate yourself about the Colleges on your List and after you have created your list of schools, research the schools. Read everything you can find on the school. Look at their school web page, athletics page, specifically the team page as well as their social media.



NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Students who plan to compete in athletics at the Division I or Division II college level must complete the NCAA Eligibility Center form in order to be eligible. Division III does not use the Eligibility Center. There is a \$30 registration fee. To pay online you will need to use a credit card. The steps for registering online are as follows:

- Go to the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) website and create an account.

You can learn more about NCAA rules by reading [this guide](#).

Follow directions as listed and make sure to ask your High School to send an official copy of your High School transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

WHAT IF YOU ARE HOME-SCHOOLED:

Home schooled students who want to play DI or II college sports must register with the Eligibility Center and meet the same requirements as all other students. After registering, the homeschooled student must send the following information to the eligibility center:

- Standardized test scores must be on an official transcript from a traditional high school or be sent directly from the testing agency.
- Transcript listing credits earned and grades.
- Proof of high school graduation.
- Evidence that home schooling was conducted in accordance with state law.
- List of texts used throughout home schooling (including text titles, publisher and in which courses it was used).

For more information, refer to the NCAA website at www.ncaa.org. It is important for you to check with the colleges you are interested in to verify your courses and any other requirements.



WHEN AND HOW A COLLEGE COACH CAN TALK TO A PROSPECT

	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3/NAIA
Phone	June 15 before your Jr. Year	June 15th of Jr. Year	No Restriction
Email/Text	June 15 before your Jr. Year	June 15th of Jr. Year	No Restriction
Off Campus	August 1 of your Jr. Year	June 15th of Jr. Year	June 15th of Jr. Year
Tryout	None allowed	1 on Campus (Sr. Year)	None (D3) Yes (NAIA)
Official Visit	1 visit per school (Total of 5) August 1 of Jr. Year	No Limit Anytime	No Limit
Un-Official	No Limit August 1 of Jr. Year	No Limit June 15 before Jr. Year	No Limit

A college coach can only call you after June 15 before your junior year in high school. That means a coach cannot place an outbound call to you specifically to talk to you about playing a sport at their college, until June 15 before your Jr. year. You can call a coach at any point in your high school career. The key here is that you are the one initiating contact with the coach and not the other way around. If you want to call a coach, you may do so as often as you wish.

CALLING A COLLEGE COACH

When you call a coach, one of two things will happen:

1. The coach will answer the phone
2. You will get coach's voicemail

You need to be prepared for both. How you prepare for a phone call will vary based on how many times you've talked to the coach. Assuming you have never connected with the coach before, or the coach has asked you to call them for the first time, you need to do your homework! Prior to the call:

- Go on the team's website to read the recent news, look at recent results, etc
- Go on the school's website to get a feel for and basic information on the school
- Prepare for questions the coach may ask you (common questions include, where you're at in your recruiting process, how your grades are, what your goals are, what positions you play, etc.)
- Write down any questions you have

Coaches are very busy people, so it is common to get their voicemail. You definitely want to have a few notes written down so that you leave a well-spoken voicemail. It wouldn't hurt to even write out what you would say. Something like this is standard:

Hi Coach _____, hope you are doing well! This is _____, I play for Hoover-Vestavia Soccer in Birmingham, Alabama. I have a 3.9 GPA and 1310 PSAT score. I'm really

interested in playing at _____. I will follow up this voicemail with an email with more information. It would be great if we could arrange to meet in the near future or if you could come see me play. Thanks for your time!

Remember, coaches understand how difficult it can be for a youth player to call a college coach. Their main advice is typically “don’t be nervous, just be yourself”. That’s it, just be yourself and you will do great!

Why responding to all College Coaches is Important?

Most prospective student-athletes will receive some contact from colleges, in the form of general admissions information, questionnaires, and emails from college coaches. Many student-athletes make the mistake of disregarding correspondence from colleges and coaches they are not initially interested in. The following is a list of reasons why you should respond to EVERYONE:

You never know if your interests will change. Don’t close any doors that you might later regret. If you do not respond to a coach, or return their questionnaire, they will stop recruiting you. The more coaches you communicate with, the more familiar you will become with the types of questions college coaches ask. This practice will prepare you for email exchanges and conversation with coaches at your favorite colleges and universities. College coaches change jobs! You might ignore a coach because you are not interested their program, only to have them get hired at one of your top choices. You never want to give anyone something bad to say about you!

EMAILING COLLEGE COACHES

Your emails should contain some or all of the information below:

- Introduction, where you are from
- Purpose for the email
- High school graduation year
- Academic info - GPA, PSAT, ACT/SAT if taken
- Top 2-3 accomplishments
- Club team full name and the positions you play
- Jersey # along with a link to your highlight video
- Upcoming schedule
- Club coach and college liaison contact information

Emailing College Coaches “DO’s”

- DO include personalization so it doesn’t look like a mass email to 20 schools
- DO keep it concise, organized, and easy to read quickly on any device
- DO send your email to all the coaches, not just the head coach; it is common for an assistant coach to lead recruiting
- DO address the email to the head coach, all the coaches, or the school’s soccer coaches.
- I.e. “Dear Coach Burleigh”, “Dear Coach Burleigh, Coach Campbell, and Coach Kirkup” or Dear UF Women’s Soccer Coaches”

Emailing College Coaches “DON’Ts”

- DON’T write a long and wordy email
- DON’T address the email with, “Dear Coach” use their name, “Dear Coach Griffin”

HIGHLIGHT VIDEO

College coaches are eager to see you in action and a highlight video is an essential tool. Coaches cannot always get to events or sessions and rely on referrals and video to prioritize who they go evaluate. Video can help showcase your skills, talents, game play and determination on the field and in training.

- No longer than 6 minutes
- An optimal time would be 3 minutes.
- Post online so you can easily send the link to College Coaches
- Highlight clips using game film when possible

Find clips that show the skills you want the college coach to see. 50 clips of passing, is not as good as 5 clips passing, 5 clips finishing, 5 clips receiving the ball, 5 clips tackling or defending.

If you don't have any video from games, a skills tape for field players, may consist of:

- Passing and receiving, both in the air and on the ground - Shooting, both power and finesse (Include Goals)
- Dribbling, moves, 1v1 defending and attacking
- Speed and agility with and without the ball

For a goalkeeper it should consist of:

- Agility and footwork
- Crosses and shot stopping
- Verbal communication in a game situation

- Participation in different goalie exercises



HOW TO PLAN A COLLEGE RECRUIT VISIT?

The best way to learn about a college or university is to visit it. While on campus you can get a feel for the school. Try to visit while school is in session. If you visit over the summer, keep in mind many colleges do offer summer programs, therefore the students you see on campus may not be full-time students.

While on campus, why not schedule a little time to visit with the soccer coach?

Meeting with a coach is a great opportunity to ask questions about the school and the soccer program. It may also help you decide if you like the coach. It is also a great time to market yourself to the coach. You should plan to take a photocopy of your transcript so the coach can see what kind of student you are. Also bring your athletic resume if the coach does not have it on file. Bring a parent — they may ask questions you won't. Most importantly, try to establish an open dialogue with the coach. It is also important for college coaches to be honest with you.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL VISIT?

Although you are always welcome to visit college campuses at your own expense (an unofficial visit), you are limited to five official visits in which the college pays for part or all of your expenses.

Completion of the SAT and ACT and a high school transcript are required for an official visit, and you may only go on an official visit after the first day of your junior classes in high school. Usually an official visit consists of an overnight stay where you will have a member of the soccer team as your host. You will meet the coach and the team, learn more about the program, attend a class and possibly attend a sporting event. You may also meet other recruited athletes there for a visit. While there, talk to people and learn as much as you can.

Here are some things you should do in advance of a visit:

- Decide where to meet the coach.
 - Get their cell phone number to avoid a mix-up.
 - Get the time schedule for your visit.
 - Find out who is paying for any tickets or meals.
 - Ask what to bring and take notes regarding your visit
 - Ask to meet with an academic advisor who can help you learn about requirement and support.
 - Try to see the campus on a regular school day while class is in session.
 - Visit with players. Talk with the freshmen and sophomores to get their perspective on first-year experiences.
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- Always write a thank-you email to the coach after your visit.



QUESTIONS TO ASK PROSPECTIVE COLLEGE COACHES

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ATHLETICS

- What is your coaching style?
- How long do you plan to remain as the coach?
- How many students receive scholarships?
- What positions will I play on your team?
- What other players may be competing?
- Where do you see me fitting in with the team in my first year at school?
- What are your training and conditioning expectations?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ACADEMICS

- Ask about the major program you are most interested in.
- Do you have academic programs that support your athletes?
- Is tutoring available? How do I arrange for it?
- Are there restrictions in scheduling classes around practice?
- How many credit hours can you take in season and out of season?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT COLLEGE LIFE

- What is a typical day for a student-athlete?
- What are the dorms or housing options? What are the residence halls like?
- How many students are there in a room?
- Will I room with another soccer player or is my roommate a non-athlete?
- Do student-athletes have to/get to live on campus?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- How much financial aid is available for both the academic year and summer school?
- What does the scholarship cover? What is not covered by the scholarship?
- How long will the scholarship last?
- Am I eligible for financial aid? Are there any restrictions?
- Do I have to maintain a certain GPA to keep my academic scholarship?

QUESTIONS TO ASK PLAYERS ON COLLEGE TEAM

- How many hours a day do you spend on soccer activities?
- What percentage of athletes will graduate in four years? Five years?
- Is tutoring available? How do I arrange for it?
- What is the coach like?
- What is the composition of the team?
- How much does the team travel?
- How many hours a day do you study?



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If your child is eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics and is accepted as a full-time student at a Division I or II school, they may receive athletics-based financial aid from the school. That aid could include tuition and fees, room and board, books and cost of living expenses. Division III schools do not award financial aid based on athletic ability. A Division III college may award aid based on need or academics. Do not think that just because a college costs \$40,000 or more per year that you cannot afford to attend. The cost of college all comes down to your ultimate out of pocket cost, which is not necessarily the tuition price inside the college catalogue. Although Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships, most offer a great deal of financial aid.

Here are some important things to know about athletic scholarships from Division I and II schools:

- Athletics scholarships are awarded in a variety of amounts.
- Athletic scholarships can be awarded for 1 year or multiple years.

WHAT IS THE FAFSA?

The first step for obtaining financial aid is to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.org. The biggest mistake a lot of families make is not filling the FAFSA out because they think their family won't qualify. This could not be further from the truth. Every family, regardless of income, has an EFC (estimated family contribution) number and the LOWER your EFC, the more aid you will receive.

Even if you may not receive a significant amount of financial aid, you should still complete the FAFSA because it can act as an insurance policy for your son and daughter's education. If there is a change or loss of income or an emergency in your family; you will not be eligible for college funds if you do not complete the FAFSA on an annual basis.

The first date you may submit the FAFSA is October 1 of your senior year. Submit the FAFSA on this date or as soon after as possible! University financial aid budgets are limited and are awarded on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you submit your FAFSA, the better your chances of receiving aid. Each college or university has a specific deadline and at a certain point, the money does run out.

NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT (NLI) The National Letter of Intent is a voluntary program administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center. When you sign a NLI, your child agrees to attend the institution for one academic year. In exchange, that institution must provide athletics financial aid for one academic year.



SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Coach's Name University Name Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Coach (ENTER NAME HERE),

My name is (ENTER YOUR NAME HERE) and I am currently a senior at (ENTER HIGH SCHOOL NAME HERE) in Birmingham, Alabama.

During the last few weeks, I have spent time researching which colleges would be a good match for me both academically and athletically. I am very interested in your college and would appreciate receiving information about your school and the soccer program.

I play my Club soccer at Hoover-Vestavia Soccer (HVS) for the (ENTER TEAM NAME HERE). Our team plays in the National Premier League. I play center forward in club but love to play in midfield and in the back. Traditionally, I am a forward but open to playing all positions. My club coach, (ENTER COACH NAME HERE), would be happy to talk with you. You can reach (ENTER COACH NAME HERE) at (111-111-1111) or via email at email@email.com

I have played varsity soccer for (ENTER HIGH SCHOOL NAME HERE) since the 9th grade. I have been the starting left forward for the past three years and have played in every game. Over the past three years I have scored 30 goals. My high school has a very strong soccer tradition and has contended for the State Championship the past three years. Please see my attached soccer resume for my number, schedule, and Coaches' contact information. I will also be sending you my highlight video link in the near future.

Academically, I am a strong student with a 4.0 GPA and have no trouble balancing school and athletics! I plan to take the ACT this fall.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,
(ENTER YOUR NAME HERE)

(CELL PHONE) (EMAIL)
(MAILING ADDRESS)

SAMPLE RESUME

ETHAN GETMAN

E-mail: MyName@gmail.com, (205) 205-2055 cell
123 Main Street, Birmingham, AL 352??

PERSONAL PROFILE		
	First name	Ethan
	Family name	Getman
	Address	123 Main Street Birmingham, AL 352??
	Country	United States
	Birth date	1/1/2222
	Height	5'10"
	Weight	140 lbs
	ACT	36
	GPA	4.0
	ATHLETIC PROFILE	
Position	Right Mid./Right Back	
Club Soccer	2020 - HOOVER VESTAVIA SOCCER, NPL 2000 2017 - 2019 RM/LM • HOOVER PHANTOMS • 2019 State Cup Champions 2019 Disney Showcase Champions 2018 USYSA Regional Champions 2018 State Cup Champions	
High School	RW/LW • INDIAN SPRINGS SCHOOL • 2017 - PRESENT 2017 Top Freshman Goal Scorer (12) AHSAA Final 4 2018 Scored 15 goals. AHSAA Quarterfinals 2019 Scored 13 goals. Started every game. 2019 State Champions	
Academics	INDIAN SPRINGS SCHOOL • 2017 - PRESENT 4.0 GPA, 36 ACT	
Coaches	Hoover-Vestavia Soccer: Justus Griffin, JustusGriffinHVS@gmail.com , (205) 790-0435 Indian Springs School: Coach Rik Tozzi coach@gmail.com , (205) 205-2056	