

College Primer: Swimming in College

The college recruiting process is a fun and exciting time for any athlete. The more information you have the better prepared you will be to maneuver your way through the process.

Athletes and parents should realize upfront that coaches contact very few students.

You are your own best advocate!

Collegeboard.com has a great search engine for college searches to help you narrow down the schools you are interested in. The search is under the student section on “finding a college.” After you have determined your schools of interest you should send the coaches information on who you are, your accomplishments including your best times and ask for what additional information they may want from you. Check the college website a lot of colleges will have their own recruiting form you can fill out and submit.



In your search process remember you should **pick a college based upon their educational philosophy** not based upon the coach!

Make a list of what is important to you and don't let yourself be persuaded by the glamour of any school or coaches promises.

.Choose the School / Division that is the best fit for you

NCAA Schools:

The most comprehensive source for information can be found on the NCAA Clearinghouse: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net The link to “Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete” is comprehensive and helpful.



1. Juniors should register (there is a fee) with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the end of their junior year after taking a college entrance standardized test. When registering for the ACT or SAT test have your scores sent directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse.
2. Athletes will have to meet the Amateurism-Eligibility requirements and complete an on-line submission regarding their amateur status.
3. You will need to have your guidance counselor submit an official copy of your transcripts to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

The NCAA also has strict rules for recruitment practices for Division 1 and 2 programs. Most of these rules apply to the college, but they affect students, as well. It's in your best interest to find out what rules apply to you.

If you're not sure about NCAA rules--and they can be a bit complicated--talk with your guidance counselor or call NCAA directly. You can also check out the [NCAA Web site for student-athletes](#) for more detailed information about NCAA rules.

NAIA Schools:

There are almost 100 schools affiliated with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, (NAIA). To be eligible to participate in an NAIA college athletic program, an entering freshman must graduate and must meet two of the following requirements:

- Score a minimum composite of 18 on the ACT.
- Achieve an overall high school grade point average of 2.0
- Graduate in the top half of his/her graduating class.



Visit the NAIA Website for additional information, www.naia.org

NJCAA Schools:

NJCAA Division I and II colleges can offer scholarships; Division III colleges CANNOT. There are no academic eligibility requirements for athletes entering junior colleges.



Visit the NJCAA Website for additional information, www.njcaa.org

NCAA Information

One of the most important aspects of assessing your college athletic options is assessing your own skills and interests. Talk to your coach about what NCAA division may fit your abilities and interests. The NCAA has three divisions:

- Division 1 is the most competitive, has the highest profile and offers athletic scholarships.
- Division 2 is the second tier, with an above-average level of competition, a somewhat lower profile and scholarship opportunities.
- Division 3 is made up mostly of smaller colleges, which range from division powerhouses to no-cut teams. Athletes in this division are students first, athletes second; there are no athletic scholarships (but Division 3 schools still have financial aid and academic scholarships).

The tricky part of the NCAA recruiting process is knowing what the terms mean and following the rules and regulations. If you have questions do not jeopardize your eligibility ask your counselor or contact NCAA. One important rule change to remember is there is no text messaging allowed by coaches!!

NCAA Recruiting Terms

Contact	A contact occurs any time a coach has any face-to-face contact with you or your parents off the college's campus and says more than hello. A contact also occurs if a coach has any contact with you or your parents at your high school or any location where you are competing or practicing.
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Contact period	During this time, a college coach may have in person contact with you and/or your parents on or off the college's campus. The coach may also watch you play or visit your high school. You and your parents may visit a college campus and the coach may write and telephone you during this period.
Dead period	The college coach may not have any in-person contact with you or your parents at any time in the dead period. The coach may write and telephone you or your parents during this time.
Evaluation	An evaluation is an activity by a coach to evaluate your academic or athletics ability. This would include visiting your high school or watching you practice or compete.
Evaluation period	The college coach may watch you play or visit your high school, but cannot have any in-person conversations with you or your parents off the college's campus. You and your parents can visit a college campus during this period. A coach may write and telephone you or your parents during this time.
Official visit	Any visit to a college campus by you and your parents paid for by the college. The college may pay the following expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your transportation to and from the college; • Room and meals (three per day) while you are visiting the college; • Reasonable entertainment expenses, including three complimentary admissions to a home athletics contest. Before a college may invite you on an official visit, you will have to provide the college with a copy of your high school transcript (Division I only) and SAT, ACT or PLAN score and register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.
Prospective student-athlete	You become a "prospective student-athlete" when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You start ninth-grade classes; or • Before your ninth-grade year, a college gives you, your relatives or your friends any financial aid or other benefits that the college does not provide to students generally
Quiet period	The college coach may not have any in-person contact with you or your parents off the college's campus. The coach may not watch you play or visit your high school during this period. You and your parents may visit a college campus during this time. A coach may write or telephone you or your parents during this time.
Unofficial visit.	Any visit by you and your parents to a college campus paid for by you or your parents. The only expense you may receive from the college is three complimentary admissions to a home athletics contest. You may make as many unofficial visits as you like and may take those visits at any time. The only time you cannot talk with a coach during an unofficial visit is during a dead period.
Verbal commitment	This phrase is used to describe a collegebound student-athlete's commitment to a school before he or she signs (or is able to sign) a National Letter of Intent. A collegebound student-athlete can announce a verbal commitment at any time. While verbal commitments have

	become very popular for both college-bound student-athletes and coaches, this "commitment" is NOT binding on either the college-bound student-athlete or the school. Only the signing of the National Letter of Intent accompanied by a financial aid agreement is binding on both parties.
National Letter of Intent	The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and an institution in which the institution agrees to provide a prospective student-athlete who is admitted to the institution and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules athletics aid for one academic year in exchange for the prospective student-athlete's agreement to attend the institution for one academic year. All colleges and universities that participate in the NLI program agree to not recruit a prospective student-athlete once he or she signs an NLI with another college or university.

Summary of current (2008) recruiting rules for Swimming —Division I

Recruiting Method	Sophomore Year “Other Sports” including Swimming
Recruiting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may receive brochures for camps and questionnaires.
Telephone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make calls to coach at your expense only. College coach cannot call you.
Off-campus contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None allowed
Official visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None Allowed
Unofficial Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits.
	Junior Year “Other Sports” including Swimming
Recruiting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may begin receiving September 1 of junior year.
Telephone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make calls to coach at your expense only. Once per week starting July 1 after your junior year.
Off-campus contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed starting July 1 after your junior year.
Official visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None Allowed
Unofficial Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits.
	Senior Year “Other Sports” including Swimming
Recruiting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed
Telephone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make calls to coach at your expense only. Once per week beginning July 1.
Off-campus contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed
Official visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed beginning opening day of classes your senior year. You are limited to one official visit per college up to a maximum of five official visits to Divisions I and II colleges.
Unofficial Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits.
Evaluation and contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to seven times during your senior year.
How often can a coach see me or talk to me off the college’s campus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A college coach may contact you or your parents/legal guardians not more than three times during your senior year.

Summary of recruiting rules—Divisions II and III

Recruiting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coach may begin sending you printed recruiting materials September 1 of your junior year in high school. • You may receive printed materials any time.
Telephone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A college coach may call you once per week beginning June 15 between your junior and senior year. • You may make calls to the coach at your expense. • No limit on number of calls or when they can be made by the college coach. • You may make calls to the coach at your expense
Off-campus contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A college coach can have contact with you or your parents/legal guardians off the college's campus beginning June 15 after your junior year. • A college coach is limited to three in person contacts off campus. • A college coach may begin to have contact with you and your parents/legal guardians off the college's campus after your junior year.
Unofficial visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits any time. • You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits any time.
Official visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may make official visits starting the opening day of classes your senior year. • You may make only one official visit per college and up to a maximum of five official visits to Divisions I and II colleges. • You may make official visits starting the opening day of classes your senior year. • You may make only one official visit per college

Recruiting Website - One tool available to athletes to get your information out to potential college coaches is to register yourself at the website BeRecruited.com



List of potential questions to ask the coach:

- How much time will the sport take--in season and out of season?
- What are the requirements for making the travel team? Will I be swimming my first year at school?
- What percentage of athletes graduate, and how long does it take them to graduate?
- Where do academics fit in, from the point of view of the coach?
- Will you be free to major in any subject you wish?



- Will you be able to get extra academic support during the season if you miss classes to travel with the team? Is there a mandatory study hall; are tutors available; is there a dedicated academic advisor?
- What financial assistance is available?
- If you receive an athletic scholarship, will the scholarship continue if you get hurt and cannot play? (REMEMBER scholarships are for one year only)
- What is a typical practice like? Will there be dryland as well as in the water training?
- What is the housing like for student athletes?
- How swimmers left the team and if so why (voluntary / involuntary)?
- What are your plans as a coach?

Other sources of information on College Swimming:

CollegeSwimming.com contains additional information regarding recruiting including ranking of swimmers for each high school class. <http://www.collegeswimming.com/>



Another asset is a publication put out by ASCA (American Swimming Coaches Association), now in its 9th Edition, entitled 'Swimming In College'. The handbook lists colleges alphabetically, with contact and coaches names, team records, and other pertinent information. You can find this book at:

American Swimming Coaches Association
 5101 NW 21st Avenue, Suite 200
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309-2731
 Telephone: 1-800-356-2722
 Fax: (954) 563-9813
<http://www.swimmingcoach.org>

Once you have made your decision it's time to enjoy the rest of your senior year!

Continue to study hard and do not second-guess your college choice.