



## **Preparing for a Potential College Student-Athlete Career**

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### **OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this checklist is to guide you thru the college soccer recruitment process. This process can be overwhelming. The FSCI College Assistance Program Director can guide you in this process. Matter of fact, you should have an ongoing dialog with the Technical Director on this process.

We strongly urge each player to take at least a 1 month break during the winter and summer offseason. It will make a big difference in your performance and motivation level going into your next travel soccer season. The worst thing that you can do as a player is play soccer year round without a break. It's the quickest way to burnout physically and mentally.

### **SOPHOMORE YEAR**

In our experience, this is the year that schools start to pay attention to players.

\_\_\_ Focus on your grades. If you are not serious about academics now, you will dig yourself in a hole that may prove difficult to overcome.

\_\_\_ Create a specific list of soccer goals you want to accomplish between now and end of your sophomore year. Ask for a player evaluation from the FSCI Technical Director. Discuss this player evaluation against your soccer goals.

\_\_\_ During your off times from practices and games, make sure to train on your own with a soccer ball. What are you doing "extra" that will set you apart from others? Challenge yourself to meet the goals you set for yourself. We encourage you to take advantage of our FSCI's additional training programs.

\_\_\_ Work with the FSCI College Assistance Program Director to create your player profile. Be prepared to submit academic information, extracurricular activities, and other academic related items.

### **SUMMER BETWEEN SOPHOMORE AND JUNIOR YEAR:**

\_\_\_ Attend at least 1 college camp over the summer, preferably at a school that has your interest. Contact the coach expressing your interest in possibly playing at that school. Attending a camp is a great idea because the coaching staff of the school is a captive audience.

\_\_\_ Take at least a 1 month break from soccer in the summer. Playing soccer year round without a decent break is the quickest way to burnout physically and mentally. If you take the break, you will be re-energized for the upcoming season.

### **JUNIOR YEAR**

NCAA schools can start approaching players on September 1 of their junior year. Players that perform well may receive communication from schools. Some letters are “feelers” and are sent to gauge your interest. Feeler letters are characterized by the generic wording in the letter. The wording of non-feeler letters is very specific such as stating the player’s name, where they saw the player, etc. If you receive a non-feeler letter, then the school is expressing a genuine interest in you.

In any event, make sure to follow up with any school that contacts you and maintain an active dialog with the coaching staff of the school.

\_\_\_ Focus on your grades. If it comes down to you and the next player, the college coach will select the player with the better grades.

\_\_\_ Compile a list of extracurricular and community service activities. Colleges look for the “well-rounded” student in addition to grades. If you have not participated much in these activities, find a way to increase your involvement.

\_\_\_ Think about what might interest you in college. What areas of study interest you? Do you like math, science, engineering, or computers? You don’t need to make any decisions now. Just start thinking about this topic.

\_\_\_ Visit your school’s guidance department periodically during your junior year in order to gather information on potential schools, potential majors, and potential non-athletic scholarships. Most scholarship money is non-athletic money.

\_\_\_ Create a specific list of soccer goals you want to accomplish between now and end of your junior year. Ask for a player evaluation from the FSCI Technical Director. Discuss this player evaluation against your soccer goals.

\_\_\_ During your off times from practices and games, continue to train on your own and touch a soccer ball. What you put into something is what you will get out of something. Challenge yourself to meet the goals you set for yourself. We encourage you to take advantage of FSCI’s additional training programs.

\_\_\_ Purchase the book entitled “The Sport Source: College Soccer Guide”. This book contains information on every college soccer program in the country. Specifically, it contains detailed academic requirements, scholarship information, what positions the coach is looking for, school history, coach’s credentials, etc.

\_\_\_ Register for the SAT or ACT. Do this during the second semester of your junior year.

\_\_\_ Develop a list of ten schools that meet your academic and soccer requirements during the second semester of your junior year.

\_\_\_ Plan a campus visit at one of the schools on your list during the second semester of your junior year.

\_\_\_ Get your academic transcript from your school’s guidance department. Do this by the second semester of your junior year.

\_\_\_ Create a “package” to send college coaches. The “package” consists of a letter expressing your interest, your transcript, and your player profile. We can provide you with letter templates and your player profile. We strongly encourage you to work with FSCI College Assistance Program Director on this step.

\_\_\_ Maintain a dialog with the coaches at prospective schools. Send the coaches with your updated game schedule, updated academic information, and continue to express your interest. Most of the time, schools will not respond to your communications. This can be frustrating but they are listening. Be persistent. Remember, recruitment is selling yourself and persistence is the key.

\_\_\_ Work with the FSCI College Assistance Program Director to keep your player profile current and accurate. Please provide updated SAT scores, revised GPAs, updated extracurricular activities, or other updated academic information.

\_\_\_ If any college coaches contact you, respond promptly. If you choose not to respond, the coach will quickly lose interest in you and focus their energy on the next player they are recruiting.

\_\_\_ Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Google search the word “ncaa clearinghouse” or visit [www.NCAA.org](http://www.NCAA.org)

\_\_\_ During your junior year, maintain an ongoing dialog with the FSCI College Assistance Program Director on schools that have contacted you and prospective schools you want to attend. Remember, this is a two-step process. We as a club will contact a school on your behalf and you must also contact the school.

## **SUMMER BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEAR:**

\_\_\_ Start narrowing down the list of potential schools. Maintain an open line of communication with the coaches at prospective schools. Again, they may not respond immediately but they are reading what you write them.

\_\_\_ Attend a school's camp or college identification day. Attending a camp or a college ID event is one of the best things that you can do for yourself. We recommend attending at least 2-3 college camps or college identification events because it allows you to:

- Get solid training from the coaching staff of that school. This gives you an opportunity to sell yourself to that coach
- Get a feel for the coaches, the campus, the program, and the school

\_\_\_ To get the most out of a camp or college identification day, you must plan and prepare as follows:

- Arrive fit and sharp. Ideally, you want to attend a camp while you're in season. If not, make sure to work out and figure out a way to play soccer in the weeks ahead of your arrival.
- Research the school before you arrive. Contact the coach well in advance too.
- Get a good feel on the coach. What's his or her coaching style like? Is he or she somebody you can live with for the next four years? Ask the coach questions especially their needs in certain positions like the one you play. The coach should encourage you to contact him or her after the camp as well for feedback.
- At most ID camps, current players will work the camp. Ask them questions - What's the traditional (fall) season like? What's the nontraditional (spring) season like? How does the team travel? What's it like socially?
- Walk around the school to get a good sense of the campus. If you're attending an ID camp when class is out of session, make sure to make another visit when the campus is full of students to see what the atmosphere is really like.
- After the camp, update your "pros and cons" list for the college.
- Relax. Enjoy yourself. Do what you've always been doing. Do what you do best and play within yourself during the course of the day. Don't try to show too much too quickly. With all the staff on hand, you'll have your chance to stand out. Just go have fun.

\_\_\_ If your SAT score needs improvement, take an SAT prep course and schedule another SAT early in your senior year.

\_\_\_ Consider potential areas of study in more detail in college. Visit the two links below to help you explore careers as well as look at the job outlook in your field of study

- Occupational Outlook Handbook - <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
- Explore Careers - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers>

\_\_\_ Continue to train on your own and touch a soccer ball. What you put into something is what you will get out of something. Challenge yourself to meet the goals you set for yourself. We encourage you to take advantage of our club's additional training programs.

\_\_\_ Take one month off from soccer in the summer. Again, playing soccer year round without a decent break is the quickest way to burnout physically and mentally. If you take the break, you will start your fall travel season more energized.

### **SENIOR YEAR:**

The recruitment window during your senior year typically happens during the before early August. Another window opens from mid-November thru mid-February. Little recruitment occurs in late August thru early November because the college season is ongoing. These windows are really your last opportunities to be recruited. We have seen players drag out their decisions until early May of their senior year but we recommend that you don't do that for a variety of reasons.

\_\_\_ Address any items on this checklist that were not addressed during your junior year. Continue any dialog with prospective schools; create "packages" for schools, and follow-up on any opportunities.

\_\_\_ Do not develop a case of "senioritis". Maintaining your grades is extremely important. Opportunities can disappear if you choose to stop focusing on your grades.

\_\_\_ Do not take it personally if the school you want to attend shows no interest in you. This happens. For example, if you are a goalkeeper and the school has no need for a goalkeeper, the college coach will probably not spend much energy responding to you. Please keep an open mind and a list of multiple prospective schools.

\_\_\_ Narrow down your list of prospective schools. Make an “official” or “unofficial” visit. This is important. You may end up liking the school when you see it in person rather than in a brochure or on a website.

\_\_\_ When visiting a school, talk to the coaches and players. Attend a training session to get a feel for the coach and watch the school play. It is important to find out more about the coach by talking to the players at that school. The coach will make or break the experience.

- Is the coach perceived as fair, knowledgeable, caring, and passionate?
- How does the coach treat his players?
- Ask yourself this very important question - If I get injured or stop playing for whatever reason; is this a school I am happy to attend and meets my academic needs?

Prospective college student-athletes should try to get honest answers on how the players feel about the coach and look for red flags.

\_\_\_ If there are any schools that express interest in you, promptly communicate with them. If any school develops a late sudden interest in you, then consider this possibility carefully. Believe it or not, this does happen.

\_\_\_ Start sending out applications to schools.

\_\_\_ Fill out the FAFSA no later than January of your senior year

\_\_\_ Research and apply to any academic scholarships that may exist. Most scholarship money is in the form of academic money instead of athletic money.

\_\_\_ Work with the FSCI College Assistance Program Director to keep your player profile current and accurate.

\_\_\_ During your senior year, keep the FSCI College Assistance Program Director informed on the schools that have contacted you and prospective schools you want to attend. We as a club will contact a school on your behalf but you must take the lead in communicating with that school.

\_\_\_ Do not be afraid to ask for advice. Talk to your family. Talk to the FSCI coaches as many of them have played soccer in college. Arm yourself with information so that you can make a well informed decision.