

BE A KNOWLEDGEABLE RESOURCE FOR YOUR ATHLETES:

I would like each of you as a student-athlete to ask yourself the following questions when evaluating a college and/or university:

How do I evaluate a college based on quality of academics and student satisfaction?

As a student-athlete you want to receive a quality education at a school that you love attending. How then can we judge the education and student satisfaction? Rankings do not tell the whole story. Therefore several different pieces of data can be used to make an educated judgment.

First, I recommend that you look at the school's freshmen to sophomore retention rate. The national average is 66%, meaning that 1/3 of college freshmen do not return to their college for sophomore year. This is a staggering statistic! This can be attributed to a number of different factors: 1) they don't like it, 2) they failed out, 3) it does not offer their intended major, 4) loss of scholarships and/or financial aid makes it financially unattainable, 5) they transfer, etc. Therefore, as a general rule of thumb, colleges that have higher freshmen to sophomore retention rates are by the most part, doing something right. If a school has over 90% of students returning for sophomore year, this is GREAT! 80% is good. And 70% is acceptable. A retention rate under 70% should raise a red flag. Use this link www.collegedata.com and search by school name.

Second, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey that asks current students to rate their satisfaction with their universities in the following areas: level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. Over 1500 colleges administer the NSEE, and disclosure of the results is determined by each college. Therefore, you will need to ask representatives about the results. Colleges that care about self-improvement and accountability know these numbers and promote their NSEE results.

Is this school a good academic fit for me? Would I be happy at this school if I were to become injured and unable to play?

College admissions have changed dramatically over the past ten years; please seek the advice of your college guidance office. For a general idea of a school's acceptance rate, average GPA and average test scores please use www.collegedata.com. To view academic standards for each Division, please view: <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/ncaa/academics/index.html>.

Eligibility standards can be viewed at:

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Eligibility/Becoming+Eligible/>

Is this school a good athletic fit for me?

Your coaches may be the best people to answer this question. Attending college camps at the schools you are interested in also gives you an opportunity to ask the coach what they look for in an athlete for their program. So often athletes overlook great schools and programs because they do not have a proper assessment of their abilities.

Is this school a good social fit for me?

This will depend on your college criteria. You and no one else should develop this. What size school do you want to attend? Do you prefer lecture classes (found at most larger universities) or seminar-style classes (found at most smaller colleges)? Do you want to eat, breathe and sleep sports (often the case at many DI universities)? Or do you want a well-rounded college career (more likely found at DII and DIII schools)? Are you interested in Greek Life? Are you going to be entering a particularly demanding course of study (like pre-med)? Do you want certain other sports like football to be part of the school? All of these questions help point to what your social life is going to be on campus, and this is important! If you are not socially happy at an institution, you most likely will not stay at that school. You should be of the mindset to choose schools where you will thrive and ultimately look back on your college years as times of great development, fun, hard work and friendship.

KNOWING THE QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Next, it is important that you and your parents know the right questions to ask of coaches, players and admissions officers. Below are some suggestions:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR RECRUITER

- ◆ What is the recruiter's relationship to the school? Is he or she the head coach or assistant coach? (Assurances carry different weight depending on from whom they come.)
- ◆ Keep your education foremost in your mind by asking about academic programs that interest you.
- ◆ Understand the level of competition? NCAA Division I schools offer athletic scholarships; most Division II schools offer scholarships; no Division III schools offer scholarships.
- ◆ Ask for details about athletic scholarships—any strings? Typically, athletic scholarships (or grants, as they are sometimes called) are for one year, renewable at the coach's discretion. If you get benched, do you start paying your own way from that point forward?
- ◆ How many athletes were kept on scholarship after their eligibility had expired? What is the college's graduation rate for athletes? Because of heavy demands on their time, some college athletes take five years to graduate. Unless they are redshirted, by their final year, they are usually ineligible to play.
- ◆ Is tutoring or counseling available? Beware of remarks like, "Don't worry. We haven't lost a player yet because of academics," which could imply that your education will be allowed to suffer before your value to the team will.
- ◆ What will happen if you are placed on academic probation? Do you lose part or all of your benefits?
- ◆ Ask the coach what he expects of his players: time commitment, behavior, appearance, etc., and decide whether you can work with her or him.
- ◆ What is expected of players during the off-season?
- ◆ Has drug use been an issue at your school or in your athletic program?
- ◆ **Most importantly, ask yourself if the school would be right for you even if you weren't competing in athletics.**

QUESTIONS TO ASK OF OTHER PLAYERS AT THE SCHOOL:

- ◆ What does your typical daily schedule look like? In-season? Off-season?
- ◆ What are the expectations when school is not in session – (holidays and summer)?
- ◆ How rigorous is your travel schedule?
- ◆ Approximately how many hours a night do you study?

- ◆ How do you like the living arrangements?
- ◆ What assistance is available if you have academic problems?
- ◆ Were changes made to any promises once you committed/enrolled? Is the program what you expected based on your recruiting experience?

QUESTIONS TO ASK SCHOOL OFFICIALS & ADMISSION OFFICERS:

- ◆ What are the different graduation rates for athletes? In your sport?
- ◆ How long does it take someone in your sport to earn a degree from this school?
- ◆ What is the placement rate and average starting salary for graduates in your field of study?
- ◆ What financial aid is available?

HOW DO ATHLETES GET EVALUATED AND RECRUITED BY COLLEGES:

For a lucky few athletes, this process is very simple---they play, and the college coaches come out of the woodwork. However, the vast majority of student athletes need to advocate for themselves in the evaluation and recruitment processes. Here's what you can do to gain attention from college coaches.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- First understand the difference between being “evaluated” and “recruited.” When a student-athlete receives snail-mail, mass texts, emails from coaches, invitations to camps or initiations for unofficial visits, the student is being “evaluated.” “Recruiting” starts once a verbal offer has been made.
- Relationships are everything. Do you know some college coaches? Then invite them to some of your games. When your team travels, invite the local college coaches to your game.
- Know the silent periods (see Appendix I, *The NCAA Recruiting Calendar*) DO NOT jeopardize your athletic eligibility by not abiding by these.
- Create an athletic resume (see Appendix II, *Sample Athletic Resume*).
- Athletes need film! Ask a coach to film you hitting front toss, fielding ground balls, throwing and running from Home to 1B and Home to Home. Have highlights *prior* to junior year and it should be updated *prior* to senior year.
- Create a list of colleges that meet your academic, athletic and social expectations.
 - List should include each college's coach, phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address
- Once you have a list of schools, you should first, fill out the prospective student athlete form on each college's website (this is most often found under the athletic page). Second, you should send the coach an email or letter detailing your interest (Appendix III, *Sample Letter to Coaches*), and attach your athletic resume. Third, you should update the coaches on awards, championships and tournament schedules. Forth, when visiting colleges, the student should request to meet with the college coach if appropriate.
- College coaches want to hear from you. By far and large, college coaches have very little interest in talking to parents. Keep the following in a file:
 - Copies of the documents you send to each college (Do not send mass emails – every email should be written and sent to individual institutions.)

- A copy of your current high school transcript, test scores and resume
- A copy of your college/career goal statement
- A list of additional references

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

STEP 1: Research the colleges that fit your academic and athletic needs. College reference books and search engines on the Internet can assist you. Establish a tentative list of colleges that you would like to contact. Make sure you are academically eligible for admission to each school on the list. Also make sure that your grades and ACT/SAT scores will allow you to be eligible athletically, as well. Your high school counselor or the worksheet on the NCAA website can help you if you are not sure.

STEP 2: Show your list to your coach and ask for feedback on how realistic your chances would be for each school. Understand that it is your coach's duty to be honest with you when it comes to college placement. Ask if he/she would be willing to make/receive contacts on your behalf. If the answer is yes, provide your coach with the following information:

- ◆ A list of the colleges you plan to contact with each college's coach, phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address
- ◆ Copies of the documents you're sending to each college
- ◆ A copy of your current high school transcript and resume

Optional:

- ◆ A copy of your college/career goal statement
- ◆ A list of additional references (discuss this with the College Counselor)

These documents will allow your high school coach to advocate for you knowledgeably. It is important to have his/her support.

STEP 3: Send an introduction letter and your athletic resume to each college coach. (The sample that follows is designed to serve as a guide. You will need to provide stats. Spring of junior year or fall of senior year can be good times to send these. You can also send a skills tape and game tape with this initial information, or you can offer to send them "upon request.")

STEP 4: Make sure to take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring of your junior year. Most college coaches will insist on knowing your scores before considering you.

STEP 5: If you are pursuing NCAA Division I or II programs, file a completed NCAA Clearinghouse release form at the end of your junior year or beginning of senior year. You can find the release form at http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp.

STEP 6: Colleges will often respond by asking you or your coach to complete an athletic questionnaire. If you receive a questionnaire from a random school, take the time to fill it out! You never know when an unexpected opportunity might come your way.

STEP 7: Keep in mind that summer sports camps and tournaments provide excellent opportunities for networking with college coaches. Just be sure that you are familiar with the rules that regulate such

contact. Your coaches or counselors can provide information booklets from the various athletic associations to assist you. Not knowing the rules is not an excuse for a recruiting violation.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION:

A student's NCAA Registration is a straight-forward and easy process. However, what makes this difficult is when students register too early or too late. Please note that all student athletes should register the summer *after* junior year---- this is the recommendation of the NCAA. If the student registers earlier than this, the student will be found temporarily ineligible. If the student registers late, this can affect his or her recruitment.. A Copy of the NCAA transcript release form can be found in Appendix VII.

At the end of your Junior year:

If you are a prospective college athlete, it is now time to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (instructions below). Once you have done so, please let your college counseling office know by submitting the transcript release to the Director of College Counseling (details below) so that your transcript can be mailed to the NCAA. ***IF YOU HAVE ATTENDED ANOTHER HIGH SCHOOL, you must also request a transcript from that institution to be sent directly to the NCAA.***

TO APPLY FOR NCAA ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:

1. Go to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
2. Click on "Prospective Student-Athletes"
3. Click on "Domestic Student Release Form"
4. Complete the online form. Be prepared for the following:
 - ◆ You must have a Social Security Number.
 - ◆ You will need to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN).
 - ◆ Your school code _____
 - ◆ You have the option to receive communication from the NCAA Clearinghouse either by the email option, which requires a valid email address, or the paper option, which can delay notification up to two weeks.
 - ◆ You will need a MasterCard or Visa debit or credit card or check to pay the processing fee. Do not send cash.
 - ◆ If you qualify for a fee waiver, please see your Director of College Counseling about how to send the necessary form to the NCAA Clearinghouse.
 - ◆ Both student and parent (if student is less than 18 years old) must check box certifying that they have read and understood NCAA agreement.
 - ◆ **IMPORTANT! After you have submitted your form, be sure to print out the Release: Copy 1 and Release: Copy 2 forms. Sign and bring these forms to the Director of College Counseling and your transcript will be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse upon receipt of the release.**

***The following Appendixes have been listed for you as a reference:**

Appendix I

NCAA Recruiting Chart

Please refer to this website:

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Eligibility/Becoming+Eligible/Recruiting>

Appendix II

SAMPLE STUDENT-ATHLETE RESUME

AMY ATHLETE

Volleyball Information

1225 Any Street Any Town, Any State 38036

Telephone: (500) 111-1111 or (500) 222-2222

Aathlete@davidsonday.org

Coach: Mary Jones
1010 Training Avenue
Any Town, Any State 81234
Telephone: (500) 111-1212
E-mail: mjones@davidsonday.org

High School: High School
Street
City, State Zip
Main Phone Number

Softball Division: Class 2A
Position: 3rd Base
Jersey: #1 Dark/#10 Light
Years Starting Varsity: 3 years
Awards/Honors: Golden Glove(2010, 2011, 2012)
Most Valuable Player (2011)
All-District (2011, 2012)
All-Region (2012)
All-Tournament Team (2012)

Experience: Selected for NC State Games Team (2011-12)
Magic Elite Travel Team (2010, 2011, 2012)
Summer Heat Showcase All Tournament Team (2012)
_____ University Summer Team Camp (2012)

Height: 5'8"
Weight: 160 lbs.
Vertical: 23"
GPA & Rank: 3.74 on 4.0 scale; unranked; ACT of 24
Graduation Date: May 2014

Appendix III

SAMPLE LETTER FROM HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE

TO COLLEGE COACH

Date
Coach's Name
College/University
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Coach:

I would like to introduce myself. I am currently a senior at _____. I have played high school softball for four years, starting as a catcher for the last three. I am 5'8" and weigh 160 pounds. I have been All-Conference for the past two years and All-Region this year.

My coach's name is Mary Jones. Her contact information is included on the attached information page. She has indicated to me that she would welcome your calls. E-mail is a reliable way to reach her as well.

My cumulative GPA is a 3.7 on a 4.0 scale. My ACT composite was a 24. I intend to retake it in October. My SAT score was 1690. I am interested in pursuing a four-year degree in biology. I also hope to continue playing softball at the college level. Your program especially interests me. I have followed your team's season on the Tarheels Official Athletic Site and have attended two games.

I have included a skills tape and a game tape. My jersey number is #10 in the light-colored uniforms. Also included is a schedule of our 2013 tournament season. Please let me know if there is additional information that my coach or I can provide.

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

Sincerely,

Athlete's Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone number
Email

Note*

Middle School Players (Don't email coaches prior to high school)

Freshman – A lot of things will change in the next couple years for you as far as your abilities, college majors, etc. so be very broad in this process early on. You will chip away at your college list and add to and eliminate schools as you change. As you are just starting your high school career, you will not have a meaty resume or feel like you have a lot to say, but give the coach a glimpse of who you are as you write your letters.

Appendix IV

STUDENT-ATHLETE'S HIGH SCHOOL PLAN

Freshman Year

- Keep your grades high and work on your study habits
- Talk to your counselor about NCAA core class requirements
- Take the PSAT and use these scores to identify areas of weakness
- Get to know all the coaches in your sport
- Attend sports camps during the summer and over winter break
- Realistically analyze your ability
- Start thinking about academic and career goals

Sophomore Year

- Keep up your grades
- Talk to your coaches about your ability and ambitions
- Make preliminary inquiries to colleges that interest you – investigate colleges on the internet. Look at their opponents, the league in which they play, and where most of their players come from.

Junior Year

- Keep up your grades
- Talk with your counselor about career goals and, again, look at the NCAA core course requirements
- Talk with your coach about a realistic assessment of the level at which you can play
- Take the PSAT, ACT, and SAT
- Be sure to discuss your athletic aspirations with the college counselor
- Refine your list of possible college choices. Know their admission requirements
- Create an athletic resume
- Write letters or emails to college coaches expressing your interest
- Obtain letters of recommendation from your coaches
- Apply for eligibility to the NCAA Clearinghouse at the completion of your junior year
- Attend sports camps in the summer, if appropriate

Senior Year

- Keep up your grades
- Meet again with the college counselor to ensure that you are meeting all graduation and NCAA requirements
- Attend college fairs and financial aid workshops
- Retake the ACT and/or SAT, if appropriate
- Refine your college list and apply for admission
- Be aware of recruiting rules regarding campus visits
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after January 1
- Sit down with your parents and coach to list the pros and cons of each school you are considering
- Be sure of your final choice before signing any papers
- Make your final college decision based on a meaningful education, excellent career preparation, and a satisfying athletic experience—IN THAT ORDER!
- After you officially chose the college you will attend, let coaches know their college is no longer in the running. Thank them!

Appendix V
Sample Coach Recommendation for Amy Athlete

(Date _____)

(Dear _____)

I am honored to recommend Amy Athlete to you for the Doug Hall Scholarship Award. As her high school softball coach for the past four years, I have been amazed by the countless examples of her talent, heart for service and commitment to excellence on and off the playing field. This extraordinary young woman exhibits qualities of leadership, dedication, and perseverance, coupled with a strong love for others; and she has been an invaluable member of our team.

Amy has excelled in athletics, contributing to both the volleyball and softball teams in remarkable ways. She has led her team to three conference championships and a softball state championship. Amy is an exceptional leader who encourages her teammates by teaching them to strive for excellence. She possesses a contagious can-do attitude, which is invaluable to those she influences; and with this winning attitude, Amy has been a huge part of the successes in *Your High School* athletics.

Amy's commitment to excellence is also displayed in her academics, school and community service activities. She currently has a grade point average of 3.9 and is an officer for the National Honor Society. Amy also serves on the yearbook staff, as the editor of academics, and as a leader in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Possessing an empathetic spirit, Amy volunteers as a youth group leader at her local church. These are only a few of the honorable organizations of which she is a part, but they exhibit her heart, character, and commitment while also revealing how dynamic and well-rounded Amy has been in her high school career.

If by awarding this scholarship you are seeking a student leader with a proven record of achievement in both academics and athletics, as well as a commitment to service, Amy Athlete epitomizes these qualities. She has consistently demonstrated a standard of excellence in all areas of her life, and I would highly recommend her for the Doug Hall Scholarship. If you have any further questions regarding Amy's accomplishments or value to our *Your High School* family, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mary Jones

Softball Coach
P.E./Health Instructor
(500) 111-1212

Appendix VI

NCAA Transcript Release Form
(Scan into document)

Transcript Release Form

Student's Name: _____

NCAA ID: _____

This form can be used to send an official transcript through grade 11 and/or the final transcript after graduation from high school. Faxed or emailed transcripts will not be accepted.

The above student has requested academic records be sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center from your high school. Your school may use this release as authority to transmit academic records to the address listed below.

Authorization Signatures

I understand and agree to abide by the procedures in the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete. I authorize the high schools listed to release to the NCAA Eligibility Center my transcripts, proof of graduation, and any other academic or school-related information or records, as requested by the NCAA Eligibility Center for the purpose of determining my athletics eligibility. I further authorize the NCAA Eligibility Center to release personally identifiable information from my education records obtained by the NCAA Eligibility Center (including this release form and resulting certification decisions) to the NCAA, to any testing service whose test scores are included in my records (e.g., ACT or ETS), to my high school(s) or to all NCAA member institutions requesting my eligibility information, to the extent that such information is necessary to report, verify or review my athletics eligibility. I also authorize the NCAA to disclose personally identifiable information from my education records to a third party (including but not limited to the media) as necessary to correct any inaccuracies reported by the media or related to my preliminary or final certification decisions, without such disclosure constituting a violation of my rights, including my rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. I understand and agree that the information provided to the NCAA Eligibility Center for the purpose of determining my athletics eligibility may be used for NCAA and NCAA Eligibility Center research concerning athletics eligibility, the academic preparation and performance of student-athletes, and related issues. I also understand and agree that such research may be published or distributed to third parties, but that I will not be identified in any such published or distributed data. I also understand that the NCAA Eligibility Center will send my eligibility status to any NCAA Division I or II college that requests it. Further, I realize that the NCAA Eligibility Center will not send my eligibility information at my request; rather, the college must make the request for that information. Finally, I am aware that if no member institution requests my eligibility status, a final certification may not be processed. By submitting this form I understand it is my responsibility to provide accurate and true information to the NCAA Eligibility Center and to provide accurate and truthful updated information as necessary.

Student: Read and Sign Below

I certify that I am the person whose name appears on this form and that I have read and agree to the authorization statement outlined above.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____
(if student is under 18 years of age)

HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR ONLY

Please provide this form along with the above student's high school transcript to the following address:

NCAA Eligibility Center
Certification Processing
P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN 46207