



Starting the College Recruiting Process

Pride Soccer Club

2022



Statement from the Club

Thank you for taking the time to think through whether or not you want to continue your soccer career in college! We know that the process can be overwhelming. Our job is to help give you all the resources you might need to explain the process and guide you through it. Everyone's path will look a little different and that is okay. We are committed to supporting you through it and developing or finding new resources if the need arises.

The process is yours, however. Use the resources, your club coaches and any Pride College Recruiting Seminars to help you along the way, but ultimately it is your responsibility to put in the work to find the right program for you. We would like to emphasize that college soccer is not reserved for players on the top teams – if you want to play in college there is an opportunity for you out there, you just have to find it. We look forward to helping you through the process!

In the following guidebook, you will find some very useful information that will assist you in starting the process of finding a college and soccer program. Pride Soccer Club takes a lot of pride in its long-standing tradition of assisting in the placement of its student-athletes at the collegiate level. We want to continue to do this for all of you!



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Starting the process...

Starting into the college recruitment process can seem daunting. We know. Below are tips that will help you to be successful in the process. We asked Pride staff, current college coaches & players, and former players about what they wish they would have known/done in their own process. Here is what they said...

If you aren't sure if you want to play in college ...

start the process and see if it excites you or deters you from wanting to continue after high school. It is never too late to start the process.

Your grades matter in HS...

While you are not defined by a GPA, good grades and test scores can = \$\$ in scholarships. Good study habits learned in HS will also make the transition to the college workload much easier.

The way you present yourself is being watched...

College coaches watch how you interact with your coaches, parents & teammates. Treat them well because a coach will move on quickly if they don't like what they see. They will also call your club coaches and ask these questions...

Your coaches & DOCs are here to help...

So overuse your resources. Ask questions. Attend the planned college workshops. Download all the materials the DOCs have put together.

Your ability as a soccer player is what gets you recruited...

So do not forget to put a premium on your performance in games & your training/development at home. DO NOT STOP working hard at any time in the process. Coaches love to watch development over time. Your job is also not done the day you commit... keep preparing for preseason.

You get out what you put in...

So make goals, and dedicate a little time each day to working through the process. A spot on a team is never going to be handed to you.



NCAA/NAIA/NJCAA... how do I choose what works for me?

Understanding the difference between the different sanctioned divisions is very important to starting your college search. There is more than just the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 schools; there is also NCAA division 2 & 3, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), & the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). All of them offer a slightly different experience for the college athlete.

	NCAA D1	NCAA D2	NCAA D3	NAIA	NJCAA
Institution years	4 year	4 year	4 year	4 year	2 year
# of soccer programs (M/W)	205/338	210/262	421/441	204/212	240/241
Avg. # on roster (Men/Women)	29/28	32/29	30/26	32/26	25/19
# of players (M/W)	6,044/9,588	6,704/7,468	12,711/11,332	6,535/5,542	5,897/4,640
Avg. amount of athletic scholarship/year (M/W)	\$17,747/\$18,824	\$6,687/\$8,140	None	\$7,726/\$7,648	\$1,969/\$2,405
NLI	yes	yes	No	By institutional discretion	yes
# of in-season contests	20	18	18	18	22
# of out of season contests	5 competition days	5 competition days	1 competition days	3 competition days	4 competition days
Non-traditional season length / # of hours allowed (Spring for Soccer)	Generally around 45 consecutive days – 20 hr weeks (5 games fall in this period)	45 consecutive days – 20 hr week (5 games fall in this period)	16 total allowable days with athletic participation (1 competition day counts as 1)	No restrictions	No restrictions
Additional mandatory Spring training outside of non-traditional season	Yes, will have mandatory 8-hr weeks at before Spring season & a few 8-hr weeks after season	Nothing mandatory outside of 45 day non-traditional season	Nothing mandatory outside of 16 day non-traditional season	Will vary by team, no restrictions like NCAAs	Will vary by team, no restrictions like NCAAs
Summer practices	Not allowed with coaching staff, but can use facilities	Not allowed with coaching staff, but can use facilities	Not allowed with coaching staff, can use facilities	Allowed, but not mandatory with coaches on campus, do not need to be enrolled in classes	Allowed, but not mandatory with coaches on campus, need to be enrolled in classes

The 2019-20 stats show it is HARD to play in college.

Total # of HS Soccer players – Men's – 476,203 Women's – 408,807

Total # of college players (all divisions) – Men's – 37,891 Women's – 38,570

% of HS players who play in college – Men's – 12.6% Women's – 10.6%



Considerations when evaluating schools

When starting the process of selecting schools, remember that soccer is not forever – at some point you will be done playing. Your selection process should begin here. Start selecting schools based on the academics first. Then, think about if you were to get injured while in college & couldn't play for a little while. What type of college environment makes you excited & motivated? Then start to look at the athletic program & see if that schools lines up with the level you want to play at.

Academic Considerations

Preferred major or
area of study

Academic rigor

Affordability

School resources/research
& internship possibilities

Type of academic schedule –
semester, quarter,
block schedule

Environment Considerations

Location/distance from
home & nearest airport

Size of student body/size of campus

Public vs. Private institution &
religious affiliation

Student-faculty ratio (i.e. class size)

Housing / dining facilities & options

Social scene & other
extracurricular options

Athletic Considerations

Preferred division NCAA D1/2/3 or
NAIA/JC

Scholarship availability

Program & coach history

Team culture & dynamics

Style of play

Roster number / # of
players that play each game



Making initial school list

GUIDE FOR MAKING YOUR INITIAL LIST:

- 40-50 schools – evaluated for #1 academics, #2 environment & #3 athletics
- You will narrow this down as you start to decide on major, make financial decisions & start to talk to coaches about your compatibility with their program
- Look at all 3 divisions & NAIA/JC options
- Only ½ should be NCAA D1

List breakdown:

~5 dream schools (low probability but it is good to dream big)

~5 REACH schools ('Plan A' Schools)

~ 20 Very Suitable schools ('Plan B' Schools)

~10 Suitable schools ('Plan C' Schools)

~ 10 Fall back schools ('Plan D' Schools)

[Sample list of schools & key factors used to make initial list](#)

Best resources

- Talk with the program coaches & current team players
- Campus visits – get to know the environment & day-to-day life of a student
- College Fit Finder (Pride's College recruitment platform) - <https://www.collegefitfinder.com/>
- Sport Recruits college finder <https://sportsrecruits.com/athletic-scholarships/womens-soccer>
- Top Drawer Soccer - <https://www.topdrawersoccer.com/search/?area=college>
- Princeton review
- College Board

Other avenues to research schools

- School & program website
- Admissions meetings/campus tours (see if they have virtual tours)
- Talk with alumni (both from athletic teams & regular students)
- Follow social media platforms
- Watch game film on program's & conference's website
- Meet with admissions or incoming student advisor

CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES

[illegible]



Introduction Email - first contact

Whether you are starting your process your freshmen or junior year, your first responsibility is to reach out to your list of schools with an introduction email. Ideally you should do this early in your sophomore year. This email does not have to be overly complicated. College coaches get hundreds of emails a week from potential recruits, they do not have time & will not read a novel.

What to include:

ALL CONTACT INFO (name, phone, email)

'cc club coach on emails (girls: always put Andi & AJ on it / boys: always put Marcus & club coach)

Birth year & year of HS graduation – if you do not include this a coach WILL NOT reach back out to you

Player profile, highlight video, game film links

Team, position(s) & jersey # (DO NOT FORGET THIS!)

Upcoming games/events & schedules if they are within 2 weeks of when you send the email

Can include club/HS coaches contact info, but not needed if it's in the profile

TIPS for writing emails:

Make sure you email the recruiting coordinator, if there isn't one designated then include all the coaches

Personalize the email to coach & school (do not write, "Dear Coach")

Do not mass email

Include MAJOR achievements, but make it brief

PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD (have a coach check your draft before sending)

Do your homework on the school, include a brief detail you were interested in while researching

Always be gracious and thankful for their time

[Sample Introduction Email](#)

[Sample Player Profile](#)



If you have already sent an introduction email to a school, then you can proceed with the below guidelines for event emails. If you have not, then combine the intro email & add your event schedule. [Use this email template.](#)

Pre-event email (~7-10 days before the event)

Include what event you're attending in your subject

Remind the coaches of your previous emails

No need to add more details about yourself

Add your event schedule

Make sure you include times, field, jersey color & #

'cc your coach & add your coaches contact info for the event

[Sample Pre-event email](#)

During-event email

Send a brief update for the day's events

BRAG IF YOU DID SOMETHING WELL!!

Reminder of your upcoming games/or updates of any changes

A thank you if they attended any of your games

[Sample during-event email](#)

Post-event email (within a week of the event)

A thank for you attending the event

BRAG IF YOU DID SOMETHING WELL (also include timestamps in film/highlight video)

Include links to updated highlights/game film (also put down the minutes you played so they aren't searching through game film)

If you don't have film yet, still write a post email and say that you will send when video is available

'cc your coach

[Sample post-event WITH film email](#) | [sample post-event WITHOUT film email](#)



Athletic scholarship availability

The most frequently asked question during the process is... are there a scholarship available & how can I get it? This is understandable because higher education is expensive. What players & parents need to know is, YES, there are lots of athletic scholarships available, but you have to work hard to find them & secure them. However, you should also be educating yourself on other forms of financial aid that can supplement any athletic aid you might receive. Soccer is a 'non-head count' sport meaning that coaches can split their scholarship allotment and spread it however they choose among their roster.

Total number of scholarships allowed by division for men's & women's soccer:

WOMENS SOCCER	# of SCHOLARSHIPS	# of PROGRAMS
NCAA D1	14	333
NCAA D2	9.9	265
NCAA D3	N/A	441
NAIA	12	188
NJCAA	18	181

MENS SOCCER	# of SCHOLARSHIPS	# of PROGRAMS
NCAA D1	9.9	205
NCAA D2	9.9	214
NCAA D3	N/A	415
NAIA	12	188
NJCAA	18	217

**** NOTE that even though a division allows for a certain # of scholarships/team, the school decides how many scholarships that program has access to. A D1, women's program with 14 scholarships is considered a 'fully funded' program****

Things you
CANNOT
control

- A coach's decisions on your fit for the program
- Amount of scholarship available for your incoming class
- Recruiting priorities for your incoming class

Things you CAN control

- Your continued development as a player – this is the #1 way to get coach's attention & earn \$ (put a premium on training!!)
- Keep your GPA high – a lot of merit \$ is available for good grades (also look into the WUE program)
- Proactive & effective communication with coaches
- Do your homework on school's academic & athletic programs, watch as many games as possible

✓ Check out more scholarship stats & published school numbers here:
<https://scholarshipstats.com/soccer>



Supplementing athletic scholarship with financial aid

In addition to athletic scholarship, players & their families should also explore other means to pay for college. Often programs will not give out a full athletic scholarship so some sort of supplemental aid is needed. These include: financial aid (FAFSA), other merit scholarships (like academic scholarship), Pell Grant, WUE, federal work-study, other scholarships not given through the institution, family contribution & loans.

First steps when narrowing down school list:

Determine family financial need & potential for financial aid from possible programs (use the below resources before you're eligible to apply for FAFSA)

- Look into CSS profile <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>
- FinAid - another resource to use to calculate expected family contribution (EFC) before you are able to apply for FAFSA. <https://finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate/>

It is OKAY to be up front with coaches about your family's financial situation & your need for additional aid! Coaches will respect the honesty & that you & your family have done their research

**** New NCAA rules allow players to stack FA & athletic scholarship on top of one another without going against the allotted # of scholarships. Coaches should be very happy to see if there is FA money available through the school because it does not come out of their team scholarship pocket****

Then: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

This is the application for college-bound students to potentially receive Federal and State grant money to attend a public or private college.

- The FAFSA awards are mainly based on financial need and merit
- This calculation will determine Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
- FAFSA determination will also offer LOANS – do your research before accepting <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans>
- Applications open **October 1st of your senior year** for the following academic year (i.e. freshmen year in college). <https://studentaid.gov/>



Other sources for scholarship, financial aid & loans

Merit Scholarships from the institutions you are applying at

- Most institutions have MANY different merit based scholarships that you can either apply to directly, or are automatically considered for when you submit your application. Ask the coaches you are talking to what types of merit they offer & what their requirements/likelihood are of you getting them. Many can equate to A LOT of money, especially for public schools, but also private schools.
- Look at schools websites, many will list merit scholarships on a page like this: <https://scholarship.unm.edu/>

Federal Pell Grant (accepted by about 6,000 institutions)

- Pell Grant is a need-based grant, meaning it does not need to be repaid, and is awarded to those who demonstrate major financial need
 - Eligibility is determined through the FAFSA application
 - Awards vary from about \$650-\$6,800
- <https://cdle.colorado.gov/jobs-training/training/pell-grant>

Federal Work-Study Program

- Program that provides students with part-time work to pay back educational expenses based on financial need
- Ask coaches if school participates in this program
- Many options on and off campuses; paid federal minimum wages

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

- As a Colorado resident, you have access to the WUE – a tuition savings program for colleges in 16 states, with over 160+ participating institutions.
- If accepted, students eligible to pay up to 150% of in-state tuition instead of full out-of-state cost.
- <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue/>

College Scholarship Searches

- www.Fastweb.com
- www.Collegescholarships.com
- <https://www.niche.com/colleges/scholarships/>
- Scholarships for minority students:
<https://www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarships-by-type/minority-scholarships/>
- Scholarships for military children:
<http://www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/children.htm>

Loans – these must be repaid with interest. The goal of this process is to see if you can qualify for the other FA options first before going to loans. It is also important to look at a variety of different schools/financial packages to see where your situation best fits.

- Often included in FAFSA package based on financial need
- For a full breakdown of loans & how they work check out <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans>