

REALITIES OF RECRUITING

- ✓ “Of the over 1100 colleges fielding fastpitch softball teams, only about HALF offer any form of softball scholarships. This means that the majority of girls playing softball in college right now aren’t receiving athletic-based aid.”
- ✓ “Even at the “fully funded” programs (meaning 12 full scholarships for Division I and 7.2 for Division II) most players on the team will get only partial scholarships and some may have to make the team as walk-ons.”
- ✓ “Without a doubt, every college-bound softball player would love to be offered a full athletic scholarship. But unfortunately, the competition for athletic aid is getting tougher each year. In case you’re not lucky enough to get a scholarship offer, be prepared. Look at all of your financial aid options.”

Important References

“PREPARING TO PLAY SOFTBALL AT THE COLLEGIATE LEVEL” BY CATHI ARADI

This is the most comprehensive guide available on how to get recruited. All quotes included in the pamphlet are taken from this wonderful student guide. Available for purchase online from the NFCA: <<http://www.nfca.org>>.

“NCAA GUIDE FOR THE COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETE”

Published by the NCAA, this brochure can be found at: <http://www.ncaastudent.org/NCAA_Guide.pdf>. You may also call the NCAA at 317/917-6008.

THE NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION

The NFCA is the largest organization of softball coaches in the country. Please encourage your coach to join. Players, parents and umpires also can become affiliate members of the NFCA! See more at <<http://www.nfca.org>>!

NCAA Recruiting Timeline

Prior to Junior Year in High School

At the beginning of your ninth grade year, you become a prospective student-athlete. All rules regarding recruiting go into effect at this time. You may visit an institution at your own expense as often as you wish, and all contacts with a coach must be on the college campus. The athlete can call the coach, but the coach cannot return the phone call or e-mail (except Division III where the coach may call or write starting with the athlete’s first year of high school).

Junior Year of High School

September 1: Coaches may send athletes recruiting letters, e-mails and information about the athletic program. Coaches may not call prospects, however, until after July 1 for Division I and June 15 for Division II. (See Division III exception above.)

Early in the Junior Year:

- Register with the Eligibility Center <<https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common>>.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT and request scores be sent to the Eligibility Center.
- Begin your amateurism questionnaire.
- After completing your junior year, request your high school to send your transcript to the Eligibility Center.

Upon Completion of Junior Year: College coaches may initiate in-person, off-campus contacts for Division I schools as of July 1; for Division II, as of June 15; for Division III, as of the end of the junior year. Division I and II coaches are allowed three total contacts with a prospect or her family members during her senior year in high school.

Coaches may only call prospects once a week, and these calls include conversations with any family members.

Senior Year of High School

First Day of Classes: On-campus official visits may begin. Before a college may invite you on an official visit, you will have to provide them with a copy of your high school transcript (Division I only) and SAT or ACT score. You are limited to one official visit at five different institutions.

National Letter of Intent Signing: Early Signing begins the second Wednesday in November of your senior year. The late signing period begins the second Wednesday in April of your senior year.

Near or at the End of your Senior Year: Complete amateurism questionnaire. Guidance counselor must send final transcript with proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.

THE COLLEGIATE SOFTBALL RECRUITING PROCESS

The National Fastpitch Coaches Association presents this Educational Pamphlet to help you understand the NCAA Softball Recruiting Process

What’s Inside?

- ✓ NCAA Rules Timeline
- ✓ Frequent Questions
- ✓ Do’s & Don’ts
- ✓ The Realities of Recruiting

Special Thank You To:

Cathi Aradi

*“Preparing to Play Softball at the Collegiate Level”
& The NFCA Recruiting Subcommittee*

The Do's & Don'ts

DON'T APPROACH A COLLEGE COACH WHILE PLAYING IN A TOURNAMENT

A college coach cannot speak to you until after your team has completed play in the tournament for the weekend, and only after June 15 for Division II or July 1st for Division I after your junior year. A college coach may speak to your parent or guardian before the completion of the tournament. However, doing so will count as one of the three allowed face-to-face contacts between you and the coach. Even if you are not playing in the tournament, but are there watching, a college coach cannot talk to you or your parents before July 1st after your junior year in high school. Just to be safe, let the coach approach you when he or she is allowed to do so.

It's generally not a good idea to try to hand your video or resume to a college coach at a tournament. If you can't mail this information, ask your summer ball or high school coach to give it to the college coach.

DO STAY ON TOP OF YOUR GRADES!

First and foremost, you are attending college to receive an education. Coaches will look to see if you are working hard in the classroom as you are on the field. Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are taking the right core courses (16 core courses for Division I, 14 core courses for Division II) and that your GPA is where it needs to be. Refer to <http://www.ncaa.org> for core course descriptions and required GPA, or you can call the NCAA Eligibility Center at 877/262-1492. Be sure to enter "9999" code when registering for the ACT or SAT. This requests for your official test scores to be sent directly to the Eligibility Center.

WHY ALL THE RULES?

The rules are designed to make the recruiting process as fair for everyone as possible. We as coaches must follow these rules to protect ourselves and our programs. If the rules are not followed, both the coach and the prospect will suffer consequences and the violations may affect your eligibility. Let us help you make the recruiting process as simple as possible, by following the rules.

Frequently Asked Questions

WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT COLLEGES?

The winter of your sophomore year. It is never too early to start the recruiting process.

HOW DO I START THE PROCESS?

Begin by making a list of colleges you are interested in attending; make a broad list. There are many opportunities to play softball in college, so don't limit yourself!! Do your homework and send an introductory letter to those colleges. Make sure to include:

Your return address, your graduation year, a brief introduction about yourself, your summer team's name and your high school.

Make sure each letter is personalized (e.g., goes to the current head coach, and that you have proofread it carefully). Additional items to include are your resume, transcript, game schedule and skills video DVD or internet video link. Make sure you register with the NCAA Eligibility Center; see your guidance counselor for assistance. Make sure you take the SAT and or ACT early in your junior year.

WHAT SHOULD BE IN MY SKILLS VIDEO?

Your video should be five to 10 minutes long; it should include an introduction that says who you are and:

- ✓ Hitting off a tee, machine, front toss or pitcher; video from the side, and behind.
- ✓ Field your position from the front and the side. Make sure to show both fielding and throwing.
- ✓ Pitchers should throw all of their pitches, and the video should include shots from behind the catcher, behind the pitcher and from the side.
- ✓ No need to get fancy or include game footage; keep it short and simple. Remember coaches have a lot of videos to watch.
- ✓ Make sure your graduation year is clearly marked on the video.

**For more recruiting information, visit
[WWW.NFCA.ORG!](http://WWW.NFCA.ORG)**

SHOULD I ATTEND COLLEGE CAMPS? YES!

This is a great way to be seen and to figure out if you will fit in with a certain team or coaching philosophy. This also provides you with an opportunity to learn and develop as a player. Many colleges have both summer and winter clinic and camp opportunities.

WHAT SUMMER TOURNAMENTS SHOULD I ATTEND?

Keep in mind that college coaches have limited time and budgets to recruit with and thus will try to find tournaments in which they can see a lot of quality teams at once. There are exceptions to this rule, but it is recommended to find the most competitive tournaments that you can. You can often check on tournament web sites to see what colleges will be represented at that tournament. If your team does not compete in the competitive tournaments, all is not lost. You can still be seen, but it is going to take you being more proactive; camps and videos will help in this process.

Key Points

- ✓ *Start early*
- ✓ *Keep it simple*
- ✓ *Put name & graduation year on everything*
- ✓ *Attending camps is beneficial*
- ✓ *Play in the best tournaments you can*