

REALITY CHECK

- ✓ “Of the over 1,100 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 are not receiving athletic-based aid.”
- ✓ “Even at the “fully funded” programs (meaning 12 full scholarships for Div. I) most players on the team will receive 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. Although, the competition for athletic aid is getting tougher each year. In case you are not fortunate 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

The most comprehensive guide available on how to get recruited. All quotes included in the pamphlet are taken from this wonderful student guide. Available from the NFCA: www.NFCA.org

NCAA GUIDE TO RECRUITING THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

Available online at www.NCAA.org or see your guidance counselor at your high school.

THE NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION

The NFCA is the largest organization of softball coaches in the country. Joining it will provide you with important opportunities and information about softball. For more information, go to: www.NFCA.org

NCAA Recruiting Timeline

Prior to Jr Year in High School:

You may visit an institution at your expense as many times as you wish. At the beginning of your 9th grade year, this is considered an Unofficial Visit. All contacts by a coach with an athlete must be on a collegiate campus--unless during a specified contact period. The athlete can call the coach, but the coach cannot return the phone call, email, instant message or text message or encourage that.

Junior Year of High School

September 1st:

Recruiting letters, emails, instant messages, text messages and information about the athletic program may be sent to prospects. No phone calls can be made unless the junior prospect calls and the coach cannot return the phone call.

March 1st:

One phone call can be made to a prospect.

April 1st:

One in-person, face-to-face contact on the prospect's high school campus can take place.

July 1st After Jr Year:

In person, face to face contacts can begin—a Division I college is allowed three total off-campus contacts with a prospect during their senior year in high school.

One phone call per week can be made by the coach to the prospect—this includes a conversation with anyone at the house.

Senior Year of High School

First day Classes:

On-Campus official visits may begin. You are limited to five official visits—five different institutions. These are expense-paid visits for the prospect. A coach is allowed unlimited telephone calls during the five days before an official visit to a campus. Coaches are also allowed unlimited telephone calls during the day of a home visit.

National Letter of Intent Signing:

Early Signing: Begins the 2nd Wednesday in Nov. of Sr. year
Late Signing: Begins the 2nd Wednesday in April of Sr. year

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
- ✓ Reality Check

Special Thank you to:

Cathi Aradi, author “Preparing to Play Softball at the Collegiate Level,” Lacy Lee Baker and the NFCA Recruiting Committee

The Do's & Don'ts

DO NOT 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 July first of 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 they are allowed to do so.

Also, do not try to give something to the college coach at the tournament or funnel through your summer ball or high school coach.

Once you enter the ninth grade, these NCAA rules apply to you!

DO STAY ON TOP OF YOUR GRADES!

First and foremost, you are attending college to receive an education, so show us what you can do! Coaches will look to see if you are working as 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 and that your core GPA is where it needs to be. Refer to NCAA.org for core courses and required GPA.

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 fall of your junior year—or even earlier. 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—**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 that the correct letter goes to the correct person and that the spelling is correct. Additional items to include are your resume, transcript and softball skills video. Make sure you register with the NCAA Clearinghouse—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?

Length is no more than five to 10 minutes of skill work. Include the following basics:

- ✓ Hitting off a tee, machine, 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—different pitches—video from behind the catcher and a side view.
- ✓ 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.

SHOULD I ATTEND COLLEGE CAMPS/CLINICS?

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 camp/clinic opportunities.

Frequently Asked Questions

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 many 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 you send.*
- ✓ *Attending camps is beneficial*
- ✓ *Play at the best tournaments you can .*