

This guide is intended to provide some guidelines for recruiting. We have used some information gathered by Cathi Aradi, probably one of the best known recruiting experts in the country, as a resource on the subject of softball recruiting. There is a link to Cathi Aradi's [Softball Recruiting Web Source](#) on our website.

## How to Win at Recruiting

With each passing recruiting year, we note a definite increase in the number of student-athletes who are dreaming of playing softball in college. Softball talent is just like softball teams – they both tend to fall into a pyramid shape. Just as there will always be more average players than there will be the next Lisa Fernandez, Cat Osterman or Natasha Watley, there will always be fewer college teams at the very top -- and a lot more in the middle and toward the bottom of this pyramid. Players who ten years ago might have walked into many Division I teams and been guaranteed a spot, are now scrambling to get themselves recruited. Because of the pyramid structure of college softball, there will be far fewer spots open at top 10 schools and far more players wanting to go to those schools. Remember, the bigger the talent pool, the more the coaches have to pick from and can afford to be choosier which athletes they want to recruit. The key to being recruited is to find the school where you will make a difference. We do not want to discourage players by telling them they are unlikely to be recruited by a Texas, A&M, Oklahoma, or Florida. It's perfectly fine to contact your "dream" schools. Just do it early in your college search, while at the same time also write twenty or thirty other schools covering a broad spectrum from small and mid-level Division I schools, Division II, and Division III programs. It's a lot easier to hear that a Top 10 Division I team isn't interested in recruiting you, if at the same time you are hearing that a mid-level Division I or outstanding Division II, and Division III school that has a spot just for you.

Consider these statistics: every fall, roughly 3,500 to 4,000 young women will enter four-year colleges as new recruits destined for the softball team. Of this total number, 80% will go to play for Division II, and Division III and NAIA college teams, and 90% will be going to schools that are located east of the state of Colorado! Of this total number, only about 50% will get any softball-based aid. (Players may get lots of other kinds of financial aid, but a lot of students will not be signing a National Letter of Intent.) And, finally, of the above total number only about 75 to 100 athletes will go to Top 20 Division I teams. (This means only three to four kids a year will go to an Arizona or a Texas.)

Too many parents waste time insisting that their player is in the elite pool of recruits, when in reality she's in the much, much larger pool of "very good" athletes. Because of this illusion, these families take too long to realize that their daughter may have to accept a Division II scholarship, or an NAIA talent award, or a Division III financial aid package if she really wants to play softball in college. **We never recommend that a player go to a college just to play softball.** This is always a big mistake. All athletes are students first. We encourage athletes to expand their horizons and consider colleges they might not have never heard about or colleges that are a little farther away from home than they originally desired to get a great education. College coaches "DO" want the best talent they can get and coaches will take a long hard look at the player who most wants to play and who really wants to be part of their program. The more open an athlete is to this concept, the greater are her chances are of being some coach's "ideal" recruit.

## "The Windows of Opportunity"

Some families are very "gung ho," when it comes to recruiting... wanting to write colleges when their player is a freshman or sophomore, while others are more laid back and are pretty sure their athlete will just be discovered, recruited and signed. In any case, the worst thing parents and players can do is wait until her senior year before taking a pro-active approach and rushing to send out letters and tapes.

Is there a right answer to the question of when to start the college search? Technically, there isn't. You can get lots of different input depending whom you talk to.

While it's true that a few college programs may spot young players they want to watch, there's a catch there. They want to identify the next phenom. If they can find that player when she's young and begin to interest her in their school, they will. But most athletes will not be the "greatest athlete of their generation." And, we all know of players who as sophomores are good athletes, but who become outstanding recruits by their senior year.

It's imperative for parents to remember that NCAA college coaches are required to follow all NCAA recruiting guidelines. They are not supposed to write players for recruiting purposes until the start of the junior year, and even then, they cannot talk to players in person about recruiting until July 1st prior to their senior year of high school! Yes, coaches can send out basic questionnaires to sophomores. But that's it.

Not all college coaches are created equal when it comes to recruiting. Some coaches have great support staffs who can be writing letters on a weekly basis to players. Others trudge along struggling to respond to letters and tapes that came in six months ago! Some schools have already identified their rising senior prospects by early summer, have contacted them and set up visits by early September, and have those players signed by November. But other colleges may aim to sign one player in the fall and the rest in the spring; while some sign none in the fall, waiting until after the early signing to get serious. Even those coaches who want to be done by the fall can often find themselves in March, April, May or June still looking for recruits.

## Contact

**FRESHMAN / SOPHOMORE YEAR:** If your athlete is playing on an 18U team that goes to Colorado in the summer, ASA Nationals or other major tournaments, you have the option of sending out emails or letters to coaches with the players name; home address; team name; jersey number; graduation year; position; and which tournaments she'll be at. If you do, be sure to include game schedules and times, fields, etc. Parents: Read the NCAA rule book and memorize the rules on contact. We see parents breaking these rules right and left -- sometimes coaches too -- but you may not realize your daughter's eligibility to play could be jeopardized by what you consider a harmless conversation about a college's football team.

**START OF THE JUNIOR YEAR:** This is a very important "window of opportunity" for your daughter. If your player is on an 18U team or Gold team that goes to major fall exposure

tournaments that coaches attend, you SHOULD BE sending out the emails and letters. **Start thinking about shooting your skills video tape** (we recommend shooting your video during the fall season or just after your fall season is completed). Your daughter should also begin setting her resume up on the computer and working on a letter of introduction. Also look at scheduling the SAT and / or ACT over the upcoming school year, so that if she needs to retake a test she will have time before the fall of her senior year. This is also the time to familiarize yourself with the NCAA Clearinghouse and get her registered there.

**MIDDLE TO END OF THE JUNIOR YEAR:** Have your daughter begin to identify schools she'd like to write to. Encourage her to continue exploring different schools, and look for things that interest her. Remember, the education is what "really matters"... pay attention to making good grades and work hard to maintain a good GPA. This is also when they should begin putting together packets to send to college coaches. They should include the video or you can wait until it's requested. Definitely let coaches know where they'll be playing over the summer. This is a great time to begin organizing any materials the schools may be sending. Be sure to complete any questionnaires as quickly as possible as coaches are interested in learning about you. It is a good idea to keep a large binder where all of this material can be organized.

**START OF THE SENIOR YEAR:** Families need to ensure their player is on track, and they keep the process moving forward. If they haven't heard back from the schools initially contacted, follow-up phone calls may be in order--particularly if you have sent a video. Seniors need to remember that no coach will give them any realistic feedback on their chances of making a college team without either having seen the tape or seen the player compete in person.

The college search tends to be more like a marathon than a sprint for most kids and parents. The key to winning is stamina, persistence and the ability to pace yourself. We recommend that you start early. You may have to repeat, and repeat, and repeat your efforts. Start too late, and you may miss out on some opportunities.

## **Work from the Correct Recruiting "Premise!"**

When it comes to recruiting, many families often make the mistake of assuming certain things are true. Then when their college search gets stalled, they get confused and upset. People assume or take for granted that because they think something should be a certain way, it will be. Unfortunately, that's all too often not the case. You might be lucky and find this out early enough to change your perspective. Or you might not accept it until it's too late. One of our goals as a select fastpitch organization is to help families approach the college search from the perspective that is most likely to get them the results they want. And that means accepting right from the beginning that this process is most likely to be unfair.

While it may be true that their athlete is very talented, has terrific competitive experience, is a good student and a wonderful human being... none of those things guarantees recruitment. These wonderful qualities may factor into her recruitment, but unfortunately, they don't guarantee that things will work out fairly or logically. The simple truth is that there are some important factors in the recruiting equation that parents can control... and some that they can't. If you understand this

and work your tail off to stay of top of the things you can control, then you may be able to lessen the effect of those things you can't control.

For example: Your athlete can control her grades (at least to the extent that she gets the best grades she's capable of getting.) The athlete can determine how hard she works to make the most of her athletic ability -- she can choose to go hang out with her friends rather than putting in extra time at the batting cages or on the mound. She can choose to play the toughest competitive schedule, and she can decide how much she hustles. To some extent, the athlete may be able to control how she performs under pressure; parents or coaches may be able to help by encouraging the practice and drills that build confidence and help her succeed. But if she's only successful when no one is watching or when she's playing against weaker competition, and can't produce when it counts -- e.g., when coaches are there to watch her -- fair or not, she may have trouble convincing those coaches that she can play for them. Families can control how well they market their player, and they can focus on the types of programs where she's most likely to be successful because these are the teams that are most likely to recruit her.

Parents can moan and groan until they're blue in the face but it's not going to change the mind of a coach who just doesn't see what they see when looking at this athlete. Parents can't control whether or not college coaches make recruiting mistakes. But they can help their college-bound player avoid making college search mistakes if they work from the correct premise. Assume that this process may not be fair, that it may be confusing and that you're not going to change the process. All you can change is your approach to it. But changing your attitude may give your athlete an edge that players who are more experienced or even more talented may lack!

## **A Winning Attitude is Key to Being Recruited!**

Many athletes and their parents will use the player's performance in game situations as an indicator of her recruitability. If she goes three for four and makes a great diving play on a ball, they're convinced all college coaches will want to recruit her. If she goes "0" for the day, and boots a couple of balls, they're sure no coach will even look at her. The player's (and her parents') attitude towards the game is often tied to her performance. If she's hitting, fielding or pitching really well, she smiles, she's happy and her parents are ecstatic. If she has an off day, reactions can range from simply "getting down on herself" to "rage and tantrums". We have also seen where a player is doing very well in a game, but other team members are struggling and not "showing" as well as they would like. In this situation, parents (and occasionally the player herself) may get upset, talk about finding another team... complain about the other players or coaches... and create a very unhealthy environment. If you asked the parents why they were acting this way, they would tell you that the team's performance was hurting their player's chances for success. Performance is important... no one would argue that a player who can't hit or field will probably not make it at the college level. And it's equally true that college coaches look for a 'clutch performance' when scouting a prospect, but just as there are many different levels of collegiate competition and many different types of college coaches, there are many levels of success among players and their attitudes.

The "elite" player, the girl in the top 1% of all players, will probably -- even on a bad day -- look better than a very average player does on a good day. But college coaches know that even top

athletes have "off" days now and then. When scouting, how much attention a coach pays to any given athlete may also depend a lot on whether or not the coach has a context for that player. In other words, when a coach just randomly stops at a field for five minutes to watch a team he or she doesn't know, and your daughter is having a really bad game, the coach will probably move on and not pay her any more attention. However, if the coach had gotten a letter from her, seen her video and liked it, and knew your daughter was very interested in his or her college, that coach might still take the time to watch more than one inning. He or she might even come back for another game to see if this poor performance was the result of an 'off day.' It's also good to remember that college coaches don't just look at mechanics or skill level when recruiting athletes. Although these things are very important, most coaches also look closely at a player's attitude, work ethic, sportsmanship, and other qualities that can't be measured by 'statistics.' It's completely normal for young adults to get discouraged, depressed or frustrated when they don't perform up to someone's expectations -- whether it be their own, their parents' or their coaches'.

Learning to deal with frustration is as much a part of being a successful competitor as is learning to hit a change-up or throw a curve. Softball is a team sport and failure is just sometimes part of the game. This is the only sport where the very best players fail two out of three times. When recruiting, many college coaches will specifically try to look at an athlete's performance in challenging situations; and they will definitely be interested in how she deals with adversity.

When the umpire has an inconsistent strike zone, or the team isn't playing up to its potential, coaches want to know how the individual reacts. Does she throw her bat and helmet, stomp around angrily, sit and sulk on the bench, or in other ways fail to adjust to the situation? Or does she rise to the occasion, try to keep her teammate spirits up, try to perform to her best? Loving the game and being competitive enough to hustle even when it's ninety degrees and you're losing will tell a college coach a lot about how you will cope with the demands of college softball. In between innings if you drag out to your position and just lob balls to the first baseman, laughing when you miss a ball, this may give a college coach the impression you lack intensity or that you can't stay focused. If you sit in the dugout and sulk when the coach pulls you for a pinch hitter or when the coach asks you to bunt, you pop up because you really want to hit away, this may tell a college coach you're not a team player and you're only interested in your own performance. Remember, you never know when a college coach is watching you.

From the time you show up at a tournament or game, you should be performing -- in every sense of the word -- to the best of your abilities. Whether you're just hitting soft-toss during pre-game warm-ups or making a leaping catch to save the game, coaches may be watching. When you're carrying gear after the game or sitting on the bench keeping stats for your coach, someone may be watching. And a decision to recruit or not recruit you could be based on how you handle yourself in these situations.

Finally, parents should keep in mind that the same cautions apply to you. While coaches are scouting your player, they may also be scouting you. Although it seems unlikely, there have been situations where coaches have decided not to recruit a good athlete simply because they watched her parents "act out" in the stands. The coaches saw the parents and realized the athlete would probably not fit in with their team -- or at least her parents wouldn't! It may be difficult for some parents to understand, but the reality is when your athlete joins that college team, you have to say

good-bye. Even if you've coached her for ten years, you will not have any input once she's in college. Where she plays, when she plays, what pitches she throws, whether she hits -- these are all decisions the college coach will make without your help. And whether or not you like what the coach is doing, it probably won't matter a bit.

As a family, it's a good idea to talk about the emotional aspects of softball. Look at how you all handle pressure and try to gain some perspective. The more positive you can be during the tough games, the more likely you are to leave a positive impression on a coach! If this sounds easy, believe us -- it is once you get the hang of it!

## Summer Scouting

June and July for the select ball player is on the road, often at major exposure tournaments and in Colorado. This can be an exhilarating (and scary) time for players, particularly those players who will start their senior year in the fall. We'd like to mention or remind you of some of these things that might help keep you focused, motivated and on the right track during your college search.

### Observations from/about College Coaches

College Coaches all go to big tournaments with the best teams in attendance. If you're not on that list, it will be very hard to get noticed unless you're hitting the ball to the fence on a regular basis -- and when the coaches are watching. (Sorry, but that's just the way it is.) Coaches prefer that parents not approach or talk to them unless they (the coaches) have specifically requested a contact. (Parents: read the NCAA rule book and memorize the rules on contact. We see parents breaking these rules right and left -- sometimes coaches too -- but you may not realize your daughter's eligibility to play could be jeopardized by what you consider a harmless conversation about a college's football team.)

Coaches really need to know accurate grade point averages -- NCAA "core and cumulative" -- and SAT or ACT scores. Almost all coaches are looking for strong, consistent hitters. Most will tell you they'd rather work to develop a player's fielding skills than have to teach her how to hit. Unless you're incredibly lucky or amazingly athletic, becoming a good hitter is a matter of learning the right mechanics (teaching your muscles what to do), developing a keen eye and teaching yourself very good discipline at the plate... and then practicing to get even better! Again, it may not be fair, but clutch hitting is what gets coaches' attention (if you're not a pitcher)!

When coaches are scouting, it's virtually impossible to differentiate between the travel ball player who sees college softball as a beginning -- e.g., when she gets there, she'll work even harder, become an even better player, etc. -- and the travel ball player who sees college ball as an ending -- e.g., she's been doing this summer ball stuff to get a college scholarship or to get into college. As far as she's concerned, once she's there, she gets to level out and have a good time. She doesn't have to get any better. But if you ask coaches, they will all tell you it's the first type of player they really want. There's way too many kids out there for coaches to see all of you. Don't assume

because they're watching your game that they're there to see you. You need to show them you're motivated enough to put some effort into your college search!

By the end of a big exposure tournament, coaches are bleary-eyed and exhausted. And we can guarantee you they won't remember everyone they've seen. If you want them to remember you, follow up after the tournaments with a call or email to find out if they even saw you play... and to ask where they are with recruiting.

### **Observations for/about Players**

Sometimes it just happens, you're just having a bad day. But a rotten attitude turns coaches off faster than anything else. If you don't want to be playing softball, don't play. (Mom and Dad will get over it -- eventually). Occasional frustration is natural and understandable. But coaches want to see if you deal with adversity in a positive or negative way. If you're struggling, don't throw your bat or helmet. Go ask for help and figure out what to do to fix the problem. If you're not performing well at the moment, focus externally and support your teammates instead of sulking and feeling sorry for yourself. Players who focus on what is going on with the team and not so much on their own successes and failures are the one's who will usually succeed!

Weight training and running will be part of your college experience if you play softball. Don't wait until you get to college to figure this out. Start now. You'll feel better, look better, perform better and have more stamina. And you'll be way ahead of the other freshmen starting school with you!

College coaches really prefer to hear from you. They're not recruiting your mom or your dad or your club coach. No matter how scary it is, if you're not motivated enough to call coaches, talk to them, etc., they may figure you're really not that interested in playing college softball for them.

Don't ever just take the SAT or ACT once -- unless you score a 1600 or 36 out of the gate. No matter how unpleasant it is, work to raise your scores. There's a lot more academic money than athletic money available and coaches look for kids with high test scores.

Coaches will be recruiting your daughter. If she doesn't want it, you can't make it appear that she does. Ask her on a regular basis if she's sure that playing in college is what she's wants. If it is, help her learn how to reach that goal. If it's not, let her do something she enjoys -- and you can go get a life!

Learn the recruiting rules. Don't ever approach coaches to chat about their teams or about your player. Don't jeopardize your player's eligibility and then use the excuse, 'Well, I didn't know.'

Find out what your daughter or player's grades really are. Learn the difference between an NCAA "core GPA", a "semester GPA" and a "cumulative GPA". This is critical information for many college coaches.

Always support your daughter in a positive way. No matter how frustrating it is for you, it's ten times more frustrating for her. Do you think she wants to be striking out???? Don't you think she'd prefer to be hitting line drives to the fence or throwing an incredible rise ball??? Your negative comments

simply make things worse. They never make things better. If your player is struggling, be helpful, not hurtful. Help her determine whether her problems are mechanical or mental. If they're mechanical, then get some expert advice on how to fix them; and remember, it takes a lot of repetitions to change muscle memory. If she's in a mental slump, help her discover ways to build self-confidence, to develop discipline. Ten years from now, chances are the quality of your relationship with your daughter will be greatly improved if you leave your ego out of it and help your player learn the positive lessons softball has to teach... not the negative ones.

## The College Checklist

Whether you are a freshman or a senior, start thinking about college NOW. The preparation you do today, will make your decision-making process easier when you being recruited. Research, research, research... discover what your interests are, and what schools will best help you achieve your goals for the future. Below are some standard questions and checklists which will help you prepare for your recruiting opportunities:

### Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse

**1. Why do I need to register and be certified??** If you intend to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman in college, you must be registered with and be certified as eligible by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Please note that initial-eligibility certification pertains only to whether you meet the NCAA requirements for participation in Division I athletics and has no bearing on your admission to a particular Division I or II institution.

**2. When should I register??** You should register with the clearinghouse whenever you decide you would like to participate in athletics as a college freshman. It's generally best to register anytime before participation. If you register late you may face delays that will prevent you from practicing and competing.

**3. How do I register??** You will need to obtain registration materials from your high-school guidance counselor. These materials include a student-release form and a red brochure titled, "Making Sure You Are Eligible to Participate in College Sports". Fill out the student-release form completely and mail the top (white) copy of the form to the clearinghouse along with the scheduled fee. Give the pink and yellow copies of the student-release form to your high school to forward your transcript to the clearinghouse. The high school will keep the pink copy of the form for its files.

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**4. What if I have attended more than one high school??** If you have attended multiple high schools since ninth grade, each school will need to send your official transcripts to the

clearinghouse. You should give the pink and yellow copies of the student-release form to the counselor at the high school from which you will be graduating. You also will need to make copies of this form and send them to the counselors at the other schools that you have attended.

**5. Are standardized test scores required??** Qualifying test scores are required for participation at both Division I and II colleges. If you intend to participate at either a Division I or II school, the test scores may be taken from your official high-school transcript.

### **General Tips on Recruiting**

**1. Develop a resume just as you would if you were looking for a job.** Although it's never too late, the ideal time to start putting this together is the beginning of your junior year. Begin with the basics - name, address, telephone number, and school. Then list your athletic and scholastic accomplishments, plus any honors you've received to date. Add any extracurricular activities in which you've participated at this point. Community service is always a plus!

**2. Do your research!** Check the libraries for college reference books, then look to see which schools offer a softball program and curriculum that best suits your needs.

**3. Write interest letters to coaches; to find the coaches names, look on the internet or call the schools' athletic departments.** If you can't get a particular name, address the coach by title:

Head Softball Coach  
Athletic Department  
University Name  
City Name,  
State and Zip

Note in each letter that you're interested in the schools athletic and academic program and fill the coach in on your background. Enclose your resume and, if possible, a letter of recommendation from a high school or summer team coach. You'll most likely get a letter back with a questionnaire to fill out.

**4. Make a skills tape.** This is the single most important recruiting tool, so make sure that you get a video that is well produced and contains PROPER skills and mechanics. It does not have to be

### **The Ending Sophomore, Beginning Junior Year Checklist:**

1. Involve your parents in your decision-making process.
2. Decide how close you want to be to your home and parents.
3. Decide on what level (Division I, II, III) you can or want to compete at in college.
4. Ask your high school and summer league coaches for an evaluation of your ability.
5. Write introductory letters to college softball coaches.

6. Personalize each letter. (College coaches are really turned off by form letters)
7. Return all softball questionnaires sent by college coaches as soon as possible. **Delays indicates lack of interest.**
8. Make a softball skills videotape. (Many college coaches will request a videotape of your softball skills)
9. Send high school and summer softball schedules to college coaches.
10. Be conscious of your high school grades, the level of courses you take, the correct number of courses and your rank in your class. Your school counselor will be able to get this for you.
11. Schedule yourself to take the SAT's. Have your PSAT scores available.
12. Decide on which colleges have your areas of study or interest.
13. Be aware of "college nights" in your area.
14. Start your initial-eligibility clearinghouse:

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### **The Ending Junior, Beginning Senior Year Checklist:**

1. Follow up on your clearinghouse eligibility.

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2. Take or retake your SAT or ACT to improve your score.
3. Start collecting and filling out college applications. Be aware of deadlines. Complete and mail applications early.

4. Let coaches know you have applied. Follow up your contact with college coaches with a phone call or note.
5. Try and narrow your choice of colleges to five or six. Decide on what colleges to visit (remember - you may only make five official "paid" visits)
6. Do not make a decision unless you have visited the campus and met the coach and players.

## **NCAA Division I & Division II Rules to Follow:**

1. Coaches may not contact prospective recruits before Sept. 1st of the players' junior year in high school. You can call or write but they cannot call you or send any promotional softball material about their program.
2. Coaches may not contact you by phone or in person before July 1st after your junior year.
3. Coaches may not talk to senior players at tournaments until their team has been eliminated. They can talk to a family member, which will constitute an official contact.
4. Coaches may only call prospective student athletes once a week. (You may call them as often as you like.)
5. Coaches can only have 3 in person official contacts with a player. (Parents talking to a coach is a contact.)
6. A player can only have 5 official visits. (You must be in your senior year to take an official visit.)
7. Early signing period is during the 2nd & 3rd week of November of your senior year; the next signing period is in April of your senior year.

Please remember it's great to receive letters from schools and coaches, but most schools send out hundreds of letters to athletes. This is only the first step in the recruiting process. So don't slow down on marketing yourself because you are receiving some letters, no matter how interested the coach seems. They are sending the same letter out to a lot of other athletes. There are some athletes that will receive 50 to 100+ letters from different colleges, and some schools do heavy recruiting knowing they don't have enough scholarship money to go around. Most programs will only be recruiting 3 to 4 players a year.

# What To Ask During Recruitment Visits

## A Few Softball Questions:

- 1. What positions will I play on your team??** It's not always obvious. Most coaches want to be honest so that you are not disappointed.
- 2. Describe the other players competing at the same position.** If there is a former high-school all-American at that position, you may want to take that into consideration. If a freshman or sophomore is a starter at your preferred position, it may affect your decision as well. This will give you clues as to what year you might be a starter.
- 3. What is the "redshirt" policy??** Find out how common it is to redshirt and how that will affect graduation. Does the school redshirt you if you are injured?
- 4. What are the physical requirements each year??** Philosophies of strength and conditioning vary by institution. You may be required to maintain a certain weight.
- 5. How would you best describe your coaching style??** Every coach has a particular style that involves different motivational techniques and discipline. You need to know if a coach's teaching style does not match your learning style.
- 6. What is the game plan?** For team sports, find out what style of offense and defense is employed.
- 7. When does the head coach's contract end??** Don't make any assumptions about how long a coach will be at a school. If the coach is losing and the contract ends in two years, you may have a new coach.
- 8. Describe the preferred, invited, and uninvited walk-on situation.** How many make it, compete and earn a scholarship? Different teams treat walk-ons differently.

## A Few Academic Questions:

- 1. How good is the department in my major??** Smaller colleges can have very highly rated departments. A team's reputation is only one variable to consider. Your degree is what really matters!
- 2. What percentage of players on scholarship graduate in 4 years??** This will tell you about the quality of their commitment to academics. The team's grade-point average also is a good indicator of the coach's commitment to academics.
- 3. Describe the typical class sizes??** At larger schools, classes are likely to be larger and taught by teaching assistants. Average class size is important to the amount of attention you receive.

**4. Describe in detail your academic support program??** For example: Study hall requirements, tutor availability, staff, class load, faculty cooperation. This is imperative for marginal students. Find a college that will take the 3.0 students and help them get a 3.5 GPA.

**5. Describe the typical day for a student-athlete.** This will give you a good indication of how much time is spent in class, practice, studying and traveling. It also will give you a good indication of what coaches expect.

**6. What are the residence halls (dorms) like??** Make sure you would feel comfortable in study areas, community bathrooms and laundry facilities. Number of students in a room and coed dorms are other variables to consider.

**7. Will I be required to live on campus for all four years??** If the answer is yes, ask whether there are exceptions. Apartment living may be better than dorm living.

### **A Few Financial Aid Questions:**

**1. How much financial aid is available for summer school??** There is no guarantee. Get a firm commitment. You may need to lighten your normal load and go to summer school in order to graduate in four years. You can take graduate courses and maintain your eligibility.

**2. What are the details of financial aid at your institution??** What does my scholarship cover?? What can I receive in addition to the Scholarship and how do I get more aid?

**3. How long does my scholarship last??** Most people misinterpret that a "full ride" is good for four years. Financial aid is available on a one-year renewable basis.

**4. If I'm injured, what happens to my financial aid??** A grant-in-aid is not guaranteed past a one-year period even for injuries. It is important to know if a school has a commitment to assist student-athletes for more than a year after they have been injured.

**5. What are my opportunities for employment while I'm a student??** Find out if you can be employed in-season, out-of-season or during vacation periods: NCAA rules prohibit you from earning more than the value of a full scholarship during the academic year.