



## College Recruiting 101

### So, you want to play in college?

We are happy to hear that you are interested in continuing your field hockey playing career in college. This is a brief guide to help you navigate the nuances of the recruitment process. For more in depth information we recommend visiting our partners NCSA at [ncsasports.org](https://ncsasports.org)

# The NCAA and Eligibility

## Division I and II

Division I schools are generally larger, both in physical size and in the number of students. While Division II schools emphasize more of a balance between academics and athletics. Division I schools often have larger athletic budgets and support than Division II or III schools. However, both Division I and II offer athletic scholarships, but in order to be eligible, you must meet academic and amateurism standards set by the NCAA.

## Division III

These schools are generally smaller, both in physical size and in the number of students. Academics are the primary focus here. Student athletes usually have shorter seasons and less time away from their studies than Division I and II athletes. Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships, but athletes may receive academic or need-based financial aid.

## ELIGIBILITY

Even if you are just thinking about playing in college, you should take the necessary steps listed below, so that if you decide you do want to play, you won't be behind. Please make note that each Division has its own academic requirements. If you are unsure which division you will likely play at, we suggest following the requirements for Division I. Also note that certain Universities may have their own requirements in addition to the NCAA's. If you have a certain school(s) you are hoping to attend, be sure to check if they have any specific requirements. In order to play in college you must be considered an "amateur". For more information, visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).

## Grade 9

1. Ask your school counselor for a list of your high school's NCAA-approved core courses to make sure you take the right classes.
  - If your counselor does not have this information or you just want to double check, click [here](#). This will take you to the NCAA School Portal where you can search for approved courses at your high school.
2. Sign up for a free Profile Page or create an account to receive reminders about NCAA academic and amateurism requirements, by clicking [here](#).
3. Begin filming your games to later create a highlight video to send to coaches.
4. Start researching schools, reaching out to coaches and visiting schools if you like.
5. Attend camps and clinics at schools you might be interested in.

## Grade 10

6. Make sure you are taking the appropriate courses to be on track to graduate and meet NCAA requirements.

7. If you haven't already done so, create a free Profile Page or account with the NCAA Eligibility Center (see #2 above).
8. Start/continue compiling film/video for yourself to make a highlight video.
9. Start/continue researching schools, reaching out to coaches and visiting schools if you like.
10. Fill out recruiting questionnaires (available on team website)
11. Attend camps and clinics at schools you might be interested in.

### Grade 11

12. Check with your Counselor to make sure you are taking the appropriate courses to be on track to graduate and meet NCAA requirements.
13. Take the ACT or SAT and submit your scores to the NCAA Eligibility Center using the code **9999**.
14. At the end of the year, ask your counselor (or request for yourself) to send or upload your *Official Transcript* to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
  - If you have attended more than one high school, you need to send a transcript from each school.
15. If you haven't already done so, create an account with the NCAA Eligibility Center.
16. This is a crucial year to get in contact with coaches and visit schools. See below for information on contacting coaches.
17. Continue compiling film/video and create a highlight video to send to coaches and invite them to watch you play if possible.
18. Attend camps and clinics at schools you are interested in

### Grade 12

19. Apply to schools.
20. Complete your final courses to graduate and meet NCAA requirements.
21. If necessary, take the ACT or SAT again and submit your scores to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
22. Request your final amateurism certification beginning **April 1** (for fall college enrollment) or **October 1** (for winter/spring college enrollment) in your NCAA Eligibility Center account.
23. After you graduate, ask your counselor (or request for yourself) to send or upload your final *Official Transcript* **with proof of graduation** to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
  - Note\* - Only students on an NCAA Division I or II school's institutional request list will receive a certification.
24. At this point you should be in contact with coaches. Start/continue visiting schools, whether on unofficial or official visits. If you haven't already done so, send your highlight video out and invite coaches to watch you play.
25. In the spring you can continue visiting schools and may participate in Signing Day where you sign your NLI if you are offered and have decided on a school, however this is not a requirement.

\*Be proactive. The earlier you get started on things, the better. Don't be afraid to reach out to coaches, the worst they can say is no. Be transparent. Don't be afraid to ask coaches where you stand on their recruits list and be honest with them with your top schools.

## RECRUITING RULES

### SOPHMORE YEAR – DIVISION I

Recruiting Method	What's Allowed by NCAA
Recruiting Materials	You may receive brochures for camps, questionnaires, NCAA materials, and non-athletics recruiting publications
Telephone Calls	You may make calls to a coach at <b>your expense only</b> , college coaches CANNOT call you
Off-Campus Contact	None allowed
Official Visit	None allowed
Unofficial Visit	You may make an <i>unlimited</i> number of Unofficial Visits, <b>except</b> during a dead period (see “Dead Periods” below)

### JUNIOR YEAR – DIVISION I

Recruiting Method	What's Allowed by NCAA
Electronic Correspondence	All forms of electronic correspondence permissible beginning <b>September 1</b> of your junior year.  Correspondence must be private until you provide a written commitment to the NCAA school. (i.e. do not post on social media)
Recruiting Materials	You may begin receiving materials starting <b>September 1</b> of your junior year.
Telephone Calls to Coaches	You may make calls to a coach at <b>your expense</b>
College Coaches may call You	May not be made before <b>September 1</b> of the start of your junior year
Off-Campus Contact	Allowed beginning <b>July 1</b> after your junior year
Official Visit	None allowed
Unofficial Visit	You may make an <i>unlimited</i> number of Unofficial Visits, <b>except</b> during a dead period (see “Dead Periods” below) beginning <b>September 1</b> of your junior year.

### SENIOR YEAR – DIVISION I

Recruiting Method	What's Allowed by NCAA
-------------------	------------------------

Electronic Correspondence	All forms of electronic correspondence are permissible beginning <b>September 1</b> of your junior year.  Correspondence must be private until you provide a written commitment to the NCAA school. (i.e. do not post on social media)
Recruiting Materials	Allowed
Telephone Calls to Coaches	You may make calls to coaches at <b>your expense</b>
College Coaches may call You	Unlimited calls after you sign an NLI (National Letter of Intent), written offer of admission and/o financial aid; OR after the college receives a financial deposit from you
Off-Campus Contact	Allowed
Official Visit	Allowed beginning opening day of classes your senior year.  You may make only <i>one official visit per college</i> and up to a maximum of <b>five</b> official visits to Division I colleges. There is no limit for Division II colleges.
Unofficial Visit	You may make an <i>unlimited</i> number of Unofficial Visits, <b>except</b> during a dead period (see “Dead Periods” below)
Evaluations and Contacts	Seven recruiting opportunities (contacts and evaluations combined) per prospective student athlete between September 1 and May 31. During the senior year no more than three of the seven opportunities may be contacts.

#### DIVISION II AND III

<b>Recruiting Method</b>	<b>What's Allowed by NCAA</b>
Recruiting Materials	You may receive printed materials any time.
Telephone Calls	No limit on the number of calls or when they can be made by the college coach.  You may make calls to the coach at your expense.

Off-Campus Contact	A college coach may begin to have contact with you or your parents/guardians off the college's campus <i>after</i> your <b>sophomore year</b> .
Official Visit	You may make official visits beginning January 1 of your junior year.  There is no limit to official visits to Division II and III colleges.
Unofficial Visit	You may make an unlimited number of unofficial visits any time.

For more information regarding recruiting, including definitions for the “recruiting methods” above, please click [here](#).

## DEAD PERIODS

During a dead period a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents, and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write and telephone student-athletes or their parents during a dead period.

### FIELD HOCKEY DEAD PERIODS:

- November 12-15, 2018 (Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the fall signing of the NLI)
- November 14-19 (noon), 2018 (Wednesday prior to the NCAA Division I Field Hockey Championship to noon on the day after the game).

## NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT (NLI)

A National Letter of Intent (NLI) is signed by you, agreeing to attend a Division I or II college for one academic year. NLI member institutions agree to provide financial aid to you for a minimum of one academic year as long as you are admitted to the school and are eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules.

The NLI is voluntary and not required for you to receive financial aid or participate in sports. Signing an NLI ends the recruiting process because coaches are prohibited from recruiting student-athletes who have signed NLIs with other NLI member institutions.

If you sign an NLI but decide to attend another college, you may request a release, but it is the school's discretion to grant your NLI release or not. If you sign an NLI with one school but attend a different school, you lose one full year of eligibility and must complete a full academic year at the new school before being eligible to compete. If you have questions about the NLI, visit the website at [nationalletter.org](http://nationalletter.org).

## **COLLEGE VISITS**

Any prospective student athlete and their family can visit a college, participate in programs, take tours, meet with professors, etc. at any time. Participating in a camp or clinic at a college campus does not count as an official visit. However, there is a big difference between an Official and Unofficial Visit to a college campus.

### **UNOFFICIAL VISITS**

An Unofficial Visit is when a prospective student athlete's visit to an NCAA member institution's campus is financed in whole by the student or their family. This can take place at any time, and for an unlimited number of times, except during a dead period. If on an unofficial visit, you can take a campus tour, open house, or other events operated by the institution. You can also arrange a meeting with the coach, check out the school's athletic facilities, or observe a practice.

If you are planning to visit and would like to meet with a coach, we highly recommend letting them know several weeks in advance, telling them what day, the hours you will be on campus, and ask if there is a time they can meet with you and your parents. You may consider including information about your academic achievements and aspirations and athletic credentials. If you do meet with a coach be sure to send them some type of thank you after your visit.

### **OFFICIAL VISITS**

An Official Visit is when a prospective student athlete's visit to an NCAA member institution's campus is financed in whole, or in part by the institution, lasting no more than 48 hours from the time the prospect arrives on campus. The institution may pay for transportation, meals, housing and entertainment expenses for the recruit. Before a prospect can make this visit, the institution must receive a valid score form either the PSAT, SAT, PLAN or ACT test, a high school transcript, and verification that the prospect has registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. You may only make one official visit per institution and no more than five in total.

Official visits are generally used on prospects whom the coach is serious about recruiting and/or those who have already been admitted into the school. The purpose of an official visit is to give the student a sense of what it would be like to be a student athlete at that institution and to help them better compare campuses they may be considering. On most official visits you are able to attend a class(es), eat meals and spend time with the team, go to athletic events, etc. Some schools that require admission interviews may also schedule that for you while you are on your visit. Remember to always be courteous in accepting or declining an invitation for an official visit, as well as thank the coaches afterwards if you do visit.

## CONTACTING COLLEGE COACHES

Before contacting a coach there are a few things we suggest you do first. One, create a profile page or an account with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Two, if you know anyone on the team already, contact them and ask them questions about the team, the coaches, school, etc. And three, go on the team website and fill out the recruiting questionnaire if they have one (most do). During your sophomore year of high school you are allowed to make phone calls to coaches and if they answer you can converse. Beginning September 1 of your junior year you can have electronic correspondence with coaches. If you are interested in playing for a school, send the coach or coaches an email (or letter if you wish) introducing yourself and expressing interest in the program.

Assistant coaches are often in charge of recruiting, so even if you emailed the head coach, an assistant may be the one who replies to you. If they do reply, they will most likely ask for unofficial transcripts, test scores for the SAT or ACT, and film/video. Be sure to have these items ready so you can respond promptly. Once the line of communication is open, don't lose it. Send periodic updates, especially if you are attending a tournament where they may be able to watch you. However, don't over-do it, you don't want to annoy them.

It is likely that a coach will ask you to send film/video. You should have game highlights and possibly some skill drills that demonstrate your skills and abilities. Make sure to clearly identify yourself and don't make it more than 4-5 minutes long, they don't have time to watch your game highlights for an hour. There are many services that can create a video for you, so be sure to consider your options.

If you and your family are planning an unofficial visit, let the coach(es) know in advance so they can try to set up a meeting with you. If you are competing in a tournament and you know the coaches will be there, send them your game schedule and your jersey number. If you wear or have a distinctive stick you can let them know that as well so they can easily identify you. After the tournament or meeting be sure to send them some type of thank you.

Finally, remember that coaching is their job, and if they are in season they may not be able to respond to you right away. Also, coaches move around so don't rely on promises made. If it's not in writing, it doesn't mean anything to other people. And don't forget that only admissions officers can make an offer of admission to a school. Coaches can support athletes through the application process, but they cannot make official admission decisions.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Collegiate athletic scholarships can be confusing. Remember that only Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships. Ivy League and Division III schools only offer aid based on financial need and academic ability.

Field hockey is considered an equivalency sport, which means that scholarships don't have to be given as "full", they can be split up. At the Division I level there are 12 full scholarships available and 6.3 at the Division II level. However, the scholarships are awarded at the coach's discretion. Most coaches distribute the money (but not necessarily equally) among the four classes (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). It is unlikely that if you are offered a scholarship that it will be a "full ride". Coaches often split the scholarships they have in order to give something to all or a majority of their team. These partial scholarship amounts can cover all or a portion of tuition, fees, room and board, and/or books.

It is important to understand that scholarships are usually awarded on a yearly basis and are not guaranteed for all four years. A coach may choose to cancel or reduce an athlete's scholarship for almost any reason. Athletes must be prepared to fund their educations if their scholarship amount decreases. However, you may receive other aid (need based, academic, or outside scholarships) regardless of whether you have an athletic scholarship or not. When awarding scholarships, coaches may consider a variety of factors such as playing ability, work ethic, leadership skills, seniority, etc. When talking to coaches in the recruiting process, you may want to ask them how they award their scholarships. Even if you aren't offered any money your first year, there is still a chance you will be offered something the following year(s).