



## **THE COLLEGE VISIT**

The information below is a general guideline on how to go about a visit to a college campus. If you are a student-athlete who is being “recruited” by a college coach you may have aspects of the visit already arranged for you prior to arriving on campus. Then again you may not so the information below will still be very useful to you and your families. Not all college coaches are organized nor do they always provide a well rounded visit in educating you to all the facets of their college or university. They may be just interested in you playing college soccer for them and leave the rest to you to work through. Generally though if the coaching staff is experienced you should take in many of the elements below.

Visiting a college campus is the best way to determine whether or not you might want to spend several years there. You should plan campus visits at the end of your junior year, during summer months, or early in your senior year. However, the decision making timeframes for student-athletes, who are being considered by NCAA Division I soccer programs, in some cases, are now being pressured to make earlier college decisions. These decision may be before their junior year begins or in the fall of the junior year. It may be wise for some families to begin the college visit process at the end of the sophomore year and into the summer before the junior year. A student-athlete does not need to commit but gaining an idea and an understanding of where they may want to attend and see what is available can prove helpful in making an informed decision about the respective college or university. The decision as to where to attend college is often very stressful so looking at all facets of the school both academically and athletically are important.

Remember to check the college admission requirements prior to visiting a campus...read admission requirements carefully! Need to find the appropriate academic fit for your son or daughter! Don't base it on a soccer decision but on an academic one.

Too many student-athletes end up transferring because it wasn't the right fit either academically and often athletically.

If you are not being recruited by the respective college coach then you should make an appointment for a visit by calling the admission office. Writing a letter to make an appointment is often too time-consuming and doesn't allow for making changes in date and time without needless correspondence. You don't need to speak with an admission officer to make an appointment; the office secretary usually arranges campus visits.

When you visit a college campus.....

1. Take a campus tour, check facilities, including dormitories.
2. Talk to students, a very useful source of information about a college; but remember that students' personal opinions must be considered with care.
3. Visit a class: talk with a faculty member if possible.
4. Have a meal on campus.
5. Visit the coffee shop, snack bar or pub as a place to meet students.
6. Read the campus newspaper as a means of finding out what the issues are on campus during your visit; check the bulletin boards in the student union or cafeteria.
7. Ask questions! Don't be bashful...talk to the students on campus!

If you visit the campus of a college that offers personal interviews, be sure to set up an appointment when you call to arrange the visit. When you have the interview, be prompt, neat and well groomed. Read the college website and/or catalog so that you are familiar with all areas of the campus and the program that you are interested in. Speak clearly and maturely, don't forget your manners.

**Meeting with the College Coach: Here are a few questions to ask.**

1. Ask what are the aspects of your game that are appealing to the coaching staff? Is it your technical skills and abilities? Is your position that you play?
2. Where does the coaching staff see you playing and what role?
3. Do you have the ability to start or will you be a role player for a time period before you get a chance to work yourself into a starting position?
4. Ask the coach what his style of play is if you have not had the opportunity to see them play? Is it designed to be a possession style or is it more direct?
5. How many players are you looking to keep on your roster? How many can you take on road trips? Who travels on the road trips?

6. What are the needs of their respective recruiting class? Some colleges will recruit certain positions each year. For example a goalkeeper may not be their need in the recruiting class if they already have a freshman and sophomore goalkeeper.
7. In the highly competitive programs they may be looking at only National or Regional Level players so you may not fit into a school long-term recruiting plans. Understand that you may be looking at a role opportunity during your college tenure but you need to appreciate that and understand the lack of playing time. If you have always been a starter and now you are in the mix of a highly recruited class along with top level players can you adjust to the new role both mentally and emotionally? Most coaches will be up front and some may provide some ideas that if you come in and work hard then you may get a shot. At least understand the challenges but you cannot come back and say that they were not fair in their assessment as to where you may fit in on the squad.
8. What type of team formation does the coach play?
9. What is the strength of the schedule that the team plays?
10. What does the team do in the spring season? Do they have strength and conditioning coaches on staff who works with the team? If so how many days per week do they train with the coach in and out of season?
11. Ask the coach what he/she looks for in student-athletes? What characteristics or personality traits?
12. What Academic Support does the Athletic Department provide? Do they have a mandatory study hall for freshman? Does anyone monitor the class grades and if help is needed to whom should the student-athlete seek out for help?
13. How many of the players are graduating and are you looking to fill certain positions or replace starters from within the current roster?
14. Does the team participate in any campus or community activities?
15. Does the program have an alumni association that supports the team?
16. Does the team have support of the Athletic Department and the University? How much support can an athlete expect from the training staff or medical staff if someone needs medical attention for an injury or illness?
17. Does the school have a nutritionist or sports psychologist?

## Meeting with the College players

1. In meeting the players and when you are away from the coach you can ask about the coaching style and if they are demanding and unreasonable with expectations. Do they have the best interest of the student-athlete in mind?
2. How tough is the adjustment from high school to college in terms of managing study and playing?
3. What is the in-season and out-of-season training like and the time frames? If this is a scholarship program then the student-athletes will be expected to train and stay fit throughout the year. College programs training and playing in-season six out of the seven days per week in season. This is a big adjustment to club soccer life though some teams go often 4-5 days per week. The student-athlete will be training and playing for long periods of time as well as traveling away from campus several times for an entire weekend. They will also need to keep up with the academic expectations to maintaining passing grades. A pretty demanding out-of-season of program is also to be expected but it usually isn't six out of the seven days per week. NCAA has time limits on in-season and out-of-season time frames. You should ask about the time frames.
4. What does the team do for fun socially?
5. What are the team's goals and expectations towards winning?
6. Does the university support the program? If yes where is it in the pecking order of the sports programs offered at the school? If not, is winning a championship and getting to the NCAA tournament still expected?
7. Do you like the college and university? If you did not play soccer would you stay at the school and look to graduate?
8. What Academic resources does the Athletic Department provide?
9. How does the Assistant coach interact with the players and with the head coach?
10. How do the captains relate to the team? Do they help set expectations and bring a sense of "team unity and respect" for all team members?
11. Do you feel the training and medical staff support the program and do you have experienced trainers who will work on getting the player back on the field in a timely manner
12. Do the athletes from other programs support one another or is the focus on just one or two teams?

## **WHAT TO LEARN ABOUT EACH COLLEGE**

### **Instruction program & facilities:**

1. What courses are required?
2. Is there a department in your interest area?
3. Is there an adequate science facility?
4. Are provisions made for freshmen to explore their areas of interest?
5. How large is the undergraduate population? What percent of students continue their undergraduate studies at that institution after their first year?
6. Are military programs available (NROTC, ROTC)?
7. Is it possible to transfer into and out of specialized programs?
8. How is the campus networked?

### **Campus and buildings:**

1. Appeal, size, walking distances.
2. Access to the community.
3. Campus pride and cleanliness.

### **Housing & dining facilities:**

1. Is there freshman housing?
2. Roommate assignments or selection.
3. Dormitory Study facilities.
4. Meal frequency, special diets, snack bar, etc.

### **Personal and health services:**

1. Orientation program.
2. Availability of medical, dental, and nursing services.
3. Location of a hospital.
4. Orientation program.
5. Job placement opportunities; both part time and full time.
6. Assigned college advisory for course selection, vocational interest, aptitude testing, personal problems, etc.

### **Religious facilities:**

1. School requirements, nearness to your church, campus chaplain, religious clubs.

**Social and recreational:**

1. Does the school provide: social room, union, commons, parties, intramural leisure time activities, fraternities, sororities, clubs, concerts, exhibits, lectures, etc.?

**College costs:**

1. Tuition, room and board, travel costs, activity fees, social costs such as a fraternity/sorority, concerts, etc.

2. Availability of financial assistance; scholarships, loans, deferred payment plans, work fellowships, grant-in-aids, etc.

**College regulations:**

1. College regulations for all students, for freshmen, attendance requirements, academic requirements, active student council, honor system, automobile restrictions.