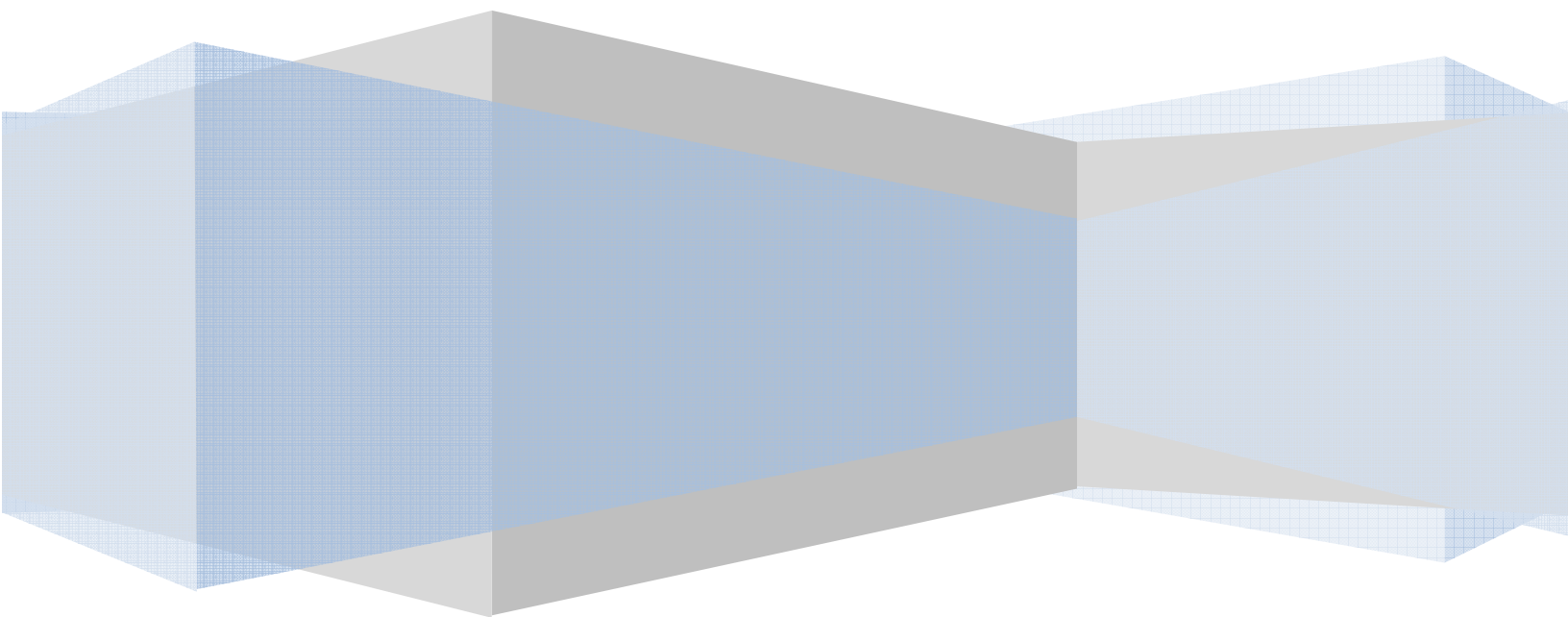


# Recruiting for College Softball

*Learn how to get recruited and play college softball*



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## Introduction

Getting recruited for college softball can be a very stressful time for parents and player when it comes to picking out the right college. The calendar months keep flipping over and still no offers that you thought were going to come in by now. If your daughter is not on the right travel team that goes to the right showcase tournaments she will be another good player that slips through the cracks. Most players and parents who are involved in the recruiting process have very little knowledge on the subject and are looking for any advice to help out. Parents who especially want to help their daughters with the process are usually left looking for answers. Some parents thought that the athletic director at high school would take care of it. Others thought that as long as their daughter played on a good travel team that the chips would fall into place. You must do some work to create opportunities or it will not happen. It is a process that takes time but with a plan it can be done. Hopefully in this E-book you will have a better understanding of the process of getting recruited and what really needs to be done.

Deciding to play softball in college is much different than playing at high school or on their travel team. This is a serious business to college coaches and it is not a game. Coaches are pulling paychecks for this gig and losing is not an option for them. This is their real job and they are looking for better players every year to come in and play for them and help them win. They really don't care what you think or how it affects you or your daughter. If there are new recruits better than you they will play ahead of you until who knows when. If you do not pick the right college you could end up as a practice player that just sets up equipment and participates in scrimmages and rides the pine. You could go from being the "star" player in high school to the "role" player

on your college team. I always loved that term “role player”. In college it is a politically correct term used for someone who does not start or who hardly plays.

## **CHOOSING A COLLEGE—WHAT DIVISION?**

I know what is happening with you right now when it comes to softball. You getting write ups in the weekly Bee, Gazette, or newspaper for your great game you had. You might have even gotten a little television time also. You hear lots of talk around town about you and softball. Hey, we all love it. We all have egos too so I know where you are coming from. It makes us as parents/ players proud because we know how hard you have worked to get your game to this point. Congratulations are in order.

The 2 most popular things I always hear from college bound softball players from high school..... I am going to play Division 1!!!!!!! And she is on a full ride. Did you ever notice that everyone you talk to who is attending college playing a sport is on a full scholarship? Not true. Here is a little bit of a breakdown on scholarships. There are 262 D-1 programs that have 12 scholarships. There are 253 D-2 programs that have 7.2 scholarships to use. Some players do get full rides but the fact of the matter is that most coaches like to take those scholarships and cut them in half and pass out smaller amounts to get more players that can play.

Don't get caught up in having to play D-1? Of course many are lead to believe that the best players play at D-1 but there are also D-1 players at D-2 and D-3 colleges. There are also D-2 and D-3 players playing at D-1 colleges also. They are all scattered around at different colleges. The point I am trying to make is that it is more of a player's ego telling them they need to play softball at a D-1 program. They feel unless it is a D-1 college it is beneath them. There is good softball at every level in college. The fact of the matter is that when you leave high school to move on to college nobody in your hometown cares about your softball game anymore. You were

yesterday's news. You are quickly forgotten. I know that sounds cruel but it is reality. The most important thing you need to know is this: You are not going anywhere with softball. Your education will make you more money than softball ever will. A softball scholarship is simply transportation to the education. It is so important to always remember that.

### **WITH THAT BEING SAID:**

Home or away, that is the million dollar question. Of course you want to go away!!!!!! You want to be far enough away so you can party, play softball, and oh yea, go to school. Being out of town means that your parents can't "pop in" to check up on you. Be careful what you wish for. The percentages say that most kids that go away to school end up transferring back closer to home after the first year.

Even if you would like to go away to college I suggest that you do some of the local college softball clinics when they are available. Whether it be the hitting or fielding clinics or the pitching, catching clinics. I suggest doing them because it gives the coaches of those universities a chance to meet the player that they have read about in the papers for a couple of years. It is about putting a name with a face. It is a great way to have a visit without having to use an official visit for the college. Even if you have accepted an offer at another school out of town, make sure that you call and say thank you for the visit and meeting you. You must make a good impression because if it does not work out at your first choice you have a place to come back to. You don't want to burn any bridges. College coaches are looking for talented softball players but they also want good character people that will be a reflection of their coach and there programs.

Players who get along with each other and know how to act when they are in the public eye

Division-1 teams that give scholarships are always nice when it comes to picking up some or all of the tuition. You must keep in mind however that a scholarship is more like an advance on your paycheck. It is a way of life and you must truly be ready to dedicate plenty if not most of your time all year to the game that you have a love affair with.....softball. Be prepared to work for every dime of that money that you were given. There is a fall schedule, work outs, weightlifting, fund raising, endless practices, set ups and breakdowns of practice equipment, grooming of the fields after home games, extensive travel, bus rides, hotels, and plenty of fast foods. Make plans on bulking up your frames when playing college softball at any level. Some girls don't like to look "butch" but it always happens in college sports. So weight gain and muscle mass will happen. Keep in mind also that there is plenty of time out of the classrooms. You might want to make a sure that your team has a good amount of scholar athletes on it for when you need tutoring on the bus ride home or when you need help writing that term paper that is due the day you get back from your weekend road trip.

Division 2 also gives scholarships and they are also very good if not as good as some D-1 programs. Don't be fooled by this division. It is no slouch. This is an excellent division also to play college softball at. Most have a fall schedule and everything else I talked about in the D-1 programs. They also can be very time consuming.

Division 3 does not give money for athletes to sports but it is a very good way of staying competitive in college and still playing at a high level. Players who play at this division truly have a love for the game still. Most players who come out for the team usually make the roster at this division in most cases but not always. Every school varies on their procedure. Most of these programs at this level do not have a fall schedule (some do however) and it is not as demanding as some D-1 or D-2 programs.

NAIA- At present there are 291 NAIA colleges divided into 25 conferences located throughout the United States and Canada. It is an organization that promotes athletics as an integral part of education. These are generally smaller campuses and smaller classroom sizes and more than 90% award athletic scholarships. The NAIA has fewer restrictions on the contact a student athlete and coach can make. In the event the softball player feels the school or team is not the right fit, she can transfer to another NAIA college and compete the next season without sitting out a year. Please refer to this web site for schools and conferences.

<http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/about/members.htm>

NJCAA- (Junior College) Softball is played at all 3 divisions but athletic scholarships are only available at the D-1 and D-2 level. There are 148 D-1 and 122 D-2 junior colleges that offer financial aid. The NJCAA allows 24 scholarships per school in total. They are full ride but some schools can offer partial grants in aid depending on the school. It is a fact that many of these junior college coaches do not spend all the money in their budget because they were never approached by suitable players. So ask!!!!

So when you see your choices of colleges it is about finding the right fit. More than anything you have to find a place where you will play. Ask the player this..... Would you rather go and sit on a winning team or play on a team that loses more games? Personally for me, I would rather play and watch my team lose and be part of the fight. If a player goes from playing every inning in high school and travel, to sitting on the bench and not playing in college she will be very unhappy very quickly. You might be on the road to eventually quitting the game you once loved. So as you can see you need to find a good fit where she will play and find a college that offers her interest or major. Sometimes better to take a step down and play unless you think you are that good.

## **OPEN TRYOUTS**

Most colleges that have softball teams will usually have an open tryout. These tryouts are open to anybody who might have the talent to play college but did not receive scholarship money. More times than not if you have been playing travel softball and have some good skills you will make the school softball team. Playing time might be a little hard but that is not to say you will not play. Coaches are always looking for talent that they might have over looked. This is still a good way of getting your foot in the door. There have been many athletes who have gone as a walk on and received money the following year by staying with the team. Keep in mind that the first year as a walk on they probably will not give you any money. It is still a way to stay involved with the game that you still have a passion for. Maybe you did not get recruited at this school for softball. Maybe you played travel and when high school was over with, you decided you did not want to play in college but now you have changed your mind. This is a good idea for the athlete that has decided to pick the game back up.

## **GRADES**

Man is this big or what. Here is the math. If your daughter has a very good GPA and ACT and/or SAT score (if your state offers it) this definitely helps the cause. If she has the good grades the college will kick in more money for tuition making it less draining on the softball program. Here is an example. If a school's tuition is \$25,000.00 the school itself might pay \$15,000.00 for her very good grades and sat scores. This would mean that the player needs to cover the remainder of the tuition of \$10,000.00. They (softball program) might offer her maybe \$5,000.00 meaning the player only needs to pick up \$5,000.00 to get a deal done.

The person with lower grades and test scores might only get say \$8,000.00-\$10,000.00 from the school making it a little more draining or not affordable to the



coach. That is why sometimes the athlete who is going there might not be as good as you but she might be more affordable at the moment because of her superior grades, SAT or ACT scores. That's why college coaches love smart athletes. The smarter the athlete the less money they the coach needs to shell out of there program. So make sure your softball player takes that SAT or ACT a couple of times. It could make the difference. I very highly recommend a review course. The Princeton Review course is a little pricey but it does get some outstanding results. It's what you can afford, but well worth it.

## **VIDEO**

The video is very important as you might have heard. If you have not heard about the video let me explain. A video is a like a calling card for you. Most coaches will request a video if they have an interest in you. This is a video of the player's skills. Most coaches do not want live game footage. They want to see your hitting, fielding, bunting, running, pitching, and catching skills on tape. They get a chance to check the mechanics of your swing, the speed of your pitch along with movement, speed around the bases, your throwing motion, bunting techniques, etc. The main reason for this is that they do not want to go after a perspective athlete that they might already have on their roster. They might already have a couple of pitchers that throws hard but maybe this year they want to add a junk ball pitcher with more of a menu of pitches. They might already have 3 catchers on the roster but maybe your arm will work at 3<sup>rd</sup> base better. It is a way for the coach to better evaluate the talent level of the player's skill. Even if a coach is very impressed with the video of a player most coaches will not recruit off of a video alone. Usually what comes next is an e-mail asking where she might be playing this upcoming weekend. Most coaches want to see the perspective prospect in person in a game situation. The reason for this is because most college coaches know that the video that they have just viewed has been edited.

Even though a pitchers 10 change ups looked fantastic on her video, they know that it took her 35 pitches to make 10. They loved the way she bunted but how many pitches did she really have to get to execute the 10 on the video. They want to see the player in a pressure situation in game conditions. Does she have confidence in her rise ball to throw it with a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base in a close game? By being there in person a coach can see if she is cool under pressure or if she hits panic mode and shows her emotions when things don't go her way. A college coach who is investing in an athlete wants to see this situation and really who can blame them? They just want to protect their investment because once they pass out money to the student athlete they are committed to that athlete.

### **WHO REALLY IS THIS COACH:**

Now that the coach has put you the player on the hot seat maybe it's time to learn a little about what kind of coach you might be playing for.

One of the things I always recommend is this. Go on to the web site of this college team that you might be thinking of going to and go into the box scores. Check out the starters for some of the games? Did the coach start the same players the 2<sup>nd</sup> game as coach did the first game? That's ok if coach did. You're playing to win every game at this level. Now find a blowout game where they won big. Were there any substitutions? Some coaches even when their team wins big will keep their starters in the whole game to help pad their All American stats. Look for patterns. That could lead to a pretty boring time if you are not going to play period if you know what I mean. Not all coaches do that but yes many of them do. You need to go through those box scores and look closely for substitutes entering the game if any at any point. You know yourself best, are you going to be ok with that situation if you fall into it? Some grow into their rolls, others never accept them.

Make sure while you are on that web page that you do a little more reading on there All Americans. If this team happens to have some younger All Americans (not a junior or senior) that play the same position as you, you might want to think twice about attending that college. That is of course if you don't mind playing another position. Sometimes players are ok with switching to another position in college. Shortstops can play 2nd base and vice versa, catchers make great 1<sup>st</sup> baseman, etc. These are things to really think about that most potential players don't pay attention to. Most successful coaches never guarantee playing time. If they do make sure you realize that your possible replacement could be coming as soon as the following year. Most coaches will offer the opportunity to compete for a position which is what they should say.

That is why it is so important to get multiple choices on colleges so you can compare your choices and hopefully make a good choice that fits best. Some players are just so into the name of the school and the tradition it carries and make their choice based on that alone. Look into different divisions and put the egos aside. Make a choice where you the player are going to play, excel at school, make new friends, be comfortable with the new surroundings, and more than anything look forward to the next year. If the player is miserable on the softball team and not playing, everything else will get derailed as well as the grades. So make sure that you the player and parent do not get caught up in that, "I have to go to a D-1 school or nothing". Your daughter will follow your lead. If she hears from you that it is ok to play at another division if that is the school she likes you will start off on the right foot for your daughter to head off to college and play ball.

## TRAVEL BALL

This is strictly my opinion when it comes to getting recruited but to me it is all about one thing when it comes down to it. The player needs to be on a high profile travel team that gets looked at. That means this team is doing the softball tournaments that have a reputation of drawing college coaches. What I mean by that is that you need to be playing on the field when there are college coaches standing on the sidelines. As I stated earlier, college coaches want to see players playing live and in person. Sometimes what you have to consider is joining another travel team for a weekend to get looked at. The travel team that you presently play on might not be able to enter the elite softball showcase tournaments. Your coach might have told you that there are showcase tournaments on the schedule but so many of them are nothing close to the right college showcase tournaments! Every tournament director out there is trying to put on a “college showcase tournament” either in the spring, summer or fall. I am not going to fault them for that. I will give them credit for trying to establish their softball programs and to help all these players who are trying to get looked at. Many of them however just do not bring in the out of town coaches that need to see you play. The people that run them will say that they have e-mailed 300 coaches about this tournament. How many of them really come? What schools do they come from? Some of these showcases only draw a minimal amount of local coaches. Most of these are just a waste of a weekend and higher entry fees. It is better to go to a proven showcase that has a tradition and reputation of attracting top college coaches in the country. Rising Stars for example, in Florida is a quality college showcase that you will not be disappointed in when you see how many coaches are in attendance. Another great softball tournament that is known for attracting a lot of college coaches from around the country is the Pennsbury tournament. This is an invitation only tournament but if you can get there you will be playing in front of college coaches from some of the top programs around the country. The only problem is that

sometimes the travel team that your daughter currently plays on can't get into some of these high profile tournaments.

The next best thing that you can do is to go on the web page of that particular tournament and register the player alone. Sometimes, not always on the tournament web page there is a spot if you search, where you can register as a "player looking for a team". Here you can leave your name and what position you play, for any team that is already in the tournament but needs positional help. Coaches are always looking to upgrade their teams in these tournaments. This is a great way to get on a very good team for more than a couple tournaments. There is a good possibility that you might get multiple phone calls. Some of these coaches that have an interest in you for a particular tournament might call and request your video before they commit to you. It is understandable because they do not want to get a player who is average. Some will also do a Google search on you. Lots of times when a player joins another team for a tournament like this the girls become friends quickly over the course of the weekend and tell their coach how nice you were, how good of a player you were, get her back for next week, etc. This is the course I personally recommend for the player who is on a good travel team but not going to the right tournaments. The summer of your completed junior year of high school is the biggest year to get looked at. Sooner if possible but that year is the most important in my opinion. Some of these travel coaches are still competing for hardware at this age and it really isn't about the hardware anymore. It is about losing a close game or 2 with the sidelines filled with college coaches looking for potential players. Even if you go an entire weekend and don't win 1 game, college coaches don't care what the score was. More important to have a good weekend hitting, pitching, fielding or catching instead of winning some close games. The coaches are not concerned with the outcome of the games. They want to see a live game played in the dirt.

## **GETTING SOME BACKGROUND ON POTENTIAL COLLEGES:**

A really great site to use when you have found some possible colleges and need more detailed information is this site: <http://www.collegeboard.com/> This site allows you to enter a college and it will give you great information on many things from how many full time students, part time students, it will show the percentage of female, male students, what percentages of different races that are enrolled. What percentage of in state and out of state students and much more. All you do, enter the name of the college and all the information that you are really looking for is right there. This is a valuable tool that you will use endless times. It really answers some questions for you that you really don't feel comfortable asking the school staff about. I would call it your politically correct way of getting the answers that you are looking for but you can't ask in person. Remember that attending school out of town takes some time and good research. You want to spend quality time researching the answers that YOU want.

## **START CORRESPONDING WITH COACHES, DRAFT A CUT AND PASTE LETTER:**

One of the most important things that you need to do is to get college coaches to start sending e-mails back and forth with you. The beauty of the internet is that the person on the other end of the computer can't see who they are talking to. That would be you the parent or the player. Even though the college coach thinks it is the player that is in touch with them it does not have to be!!! Of course the college coach wants to talk to the player but a little help from parents will not harm anyone. If we make a conscientious effort as parents to apply ourselves we know that it is getting done.

Draft up an introduction letter to a college softball coach that explains that you have an interest in their college. What you are doing is actually sending out feelers for a

response. Here is an example of a letter that I used. This was very, very successful every time I used it. I got a response 90% of the time. I always found that Monday was the best day to receive e-mails back from coaches. Don't ask me why on Mondays but I figured that they read there e-mails over the weekend and sent out replies on Sunday nights. Here is the letter that I used. Names and schools have been changed for this E-book example but the letter is exact.

Feb. 24. 2008

Coach Mary Brown

University of Whatever

P.O. Box 6000

Smithville, NY 10000

Dear Coach Brown:

My name is Kathy Smith and I am beginning my senior year at Orlando Central Senior High School in Orlando, Fl.

I am a 3 time All State Pitcher, All County and Region team selection, 2007 Gatorade Player of the Year, 2007 Pitcher of the Year, and Honor Roll Student.

I am very much interested in continuing my education and softball career at the collegiate level. Your

college is one I am definitely interested in visiting for both academics and softball.

I am searching for a college with smaller classrooms, strong academics, suburb or city location, and a softball team that is committed to winning. My present SAT score is 1727 and my GPA is 90.00

I am a team leader, take pride in my mental toughness and work ethic. I practice hard, play hard and take my softball very serious. I am anxious to join a team full of players and coaches with the same desires. If there are any other questions I can answer please call me at your convenience.

I would be glad to send you my skills video and my schedule at your request.

Thank you.

Kathy Smith

Class of 2008

407-123-4567

This letter always got me a response. The e-mail that would follow after this letter would always ask for me to send in my skills video. The one thing I would suggest is that never ever send in your skills video unless a coach requests it. If it is sent without them expecting it, more times than not it will get lost, misplaced and never looked at. You don't want to waste your video because they do not get sent back to you so please



keep that in mind. I got a few e-mails back saying, "Thank you for your interest but we are done recruiting the class of 2008". That really did not happen that much. If you have had an impressive high school career, college coaches naturally want to hear a little more about you. It does not necessarily mean they want you, but they at least want to know more. It is just important to keep the communication going on between you and the coach who e-mails back with interest. There are plenty of times that coaches are also "window shopping" for players. Where they act like they have a strong interest at the moment but weeks later after sending them your video they send you an e-mail stating, "thank you but no thank you". Next thing you know you're out a video and now back to square one. That's why it is important to never sit on one coach or college. You need to get as many choices as you possibly can. Many of these coaches will make it sound like they have a strong interest in you at the present time, which many times they do. The only problem with that however is things change in college from year to year. Players quit, they transfer, they get hurt. Coaches scramble at the moment and try to bring players in. That coach that had an interest in you 2 years from now when you graduate has filled that spot with someone else because of changes that coach had to deal with at present. He or she no longer needs to recruit that position in that year now. It can be very frustrating.

Let's say that you have a coach that has a really strong interest in you as a player after seeing your video. What usually happens next is that particular coach might ask you where you might be playing this upcoming weekend. The coach will want to see the player in person physically playing in a game outside. Most if not all coaches will not recruit a potential player off of a softball skills video. They will come right out and tell you. Like I said previously in this E-book they know that your skills video has been edited. They want to see you in live situations. What if you're like a lot of players and might not be playing next weekend? This could be in September when you're being contacted by a college coach and your travel ball is done. The college coach

does not really care. If you are not on a diamond that weekend they will find someone else to watch. Those are the cold hard facts. This is why recruiting is all about being on the right team doing all the right tournaments. A possibility is seeing if you can join a team for a fall schedule. Many top travel Gold teams do a fall schedule and get there players some real good exposure during the fall. Maybe you're saying to yourself, "there aren't any Gold teams near me". My advice is to travel even further away unfortunately. Many players are playing on travel teams in the next state for the same reason. It is something that has to be done. That is why I recommend if your player is very good at a young age get her on the right team early on. It is an easier transition when they are younger than when they get older. Older players are less likely to move because of the bonds and friendships they have made with fellow teammates. A lot of travel coaches try to put very good teams together and are also very successful at doing it. The only problem is that they might not be able to get into the tournaments that the player needs to be at like the college showcases at Pennsbury and Colorado Fireworks. I definitely recommend a player plays on a Gold team that plays ASA if possible. You need to find that travel team that is in need of your position. Trust me when I tell you, that team is out there looking for you also. Every coach out there with a travel team wants to have the best, strongest team possible. If you can help them become stronger they will take you. No such thing as, "we have enough players".

Here are some web sites that can help you reference college softball teams to the conferences that they play in by division. If you go into each school listing and pull up the softball program you will get the coaches e-mail address. There you can do a cut and paste of the letter that I showed you earlier and see if you can start drawing some interest. You will get some responses if you start getting to work on a plan.

[http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div\\_id=2](http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div_id=2)

[http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div\\_id=3](http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div_id=3) D-2

[http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div\\_id=4](http://www.nfca.org/fastpitch/?div_id=4) D-3

## **THE OFFICIAL VISIT**

The official visit is when there is serious interest between the player and the university. This is where it is time to come out and see for yourself what the campus and the team really are all about. More times than not there is an offer waiting for the prospective player. The visit is a great way for the player to visit the campus, see the surroundings of the city, meet the rest of the team and the coaching staff. It is usually paid for even when you bring the parent(s). The potential athlete will actually get to see how a practice is run which is good. They can't take part in the activities but they will be able to observe the routine that they will go through every day if they join this team. My advice when going on a visit is to take some time and write down some questions. If you don't I guarantee you will go home and say to yourself, "I forgot to ask this or that". You will be assigned a couple of players while on your visit. These will be players who usually are "straight up" when you ask questions but keep in mind they are trying to sell you on the program. They will pretty much give you honest answers to your questions that you might have. Try to talk to some seniors who have been around a while, who know the routine, know the coaches a little bit longer than say the freshman or sophomores. Make sure that you have a purpose on your visit. You will have a great time but remember why you are there. You are conducting an interview with the players and the coaches to see if this university is the RIGHT fit.

You will know if this is the place for you very quickly during and after the visit. You will leave the next day going home and you will either say, "I really liked the girls, they were all so nice to me" or you will say, "I could not stand 4 of the girls on the team". It usually is a something similar to that nature. You will actually know your

decision sooner than later. If you find that you are trying to talk yourself into going to a university you will be making the choice for the wrong reason. You will know right away that this particular college is for you.

Go for these reasons: I like the campus, I like the location of the school to my home, I like the size of the classrooms, it has my major, I like the town the campus sits in, I like the dorms, I like the climate, the team made me feel welcome, I like the routine of the team, I like the make-up of the team, the coaches seem like a good fit for my personality, I liked the facilities, I liked the girls and the 2 most important things. I WILL GET A CHANCE TO PLAY HERE, and MY PARENTS ALSO LIKE THE SCHOOL!

Don't go for these reasons: I have no other offers, seems like a great team to party with, I can get the other players to like me, I think the coaches will come around once they get to know me, my boyfriend can still visit me if I'm this close to him, it does not offer my primary major but I will find something else to study to be able to play softball here. If you leave an official visit and you had doubts about quite a few things or more importantly you just did not feel very welcome than continue the search. Just keep in mind the scholarship is not going to keep waiting for you forever. The coach will give you a little time to think it over but they will move on quickly to recruit there class for the year with or without you. Whether you decide to go or not to go make sure that you follow up your visit with a thank you e-mail to the coaches that you met for their time. If it is definitely not a place you want to think about anymore, immediately e-mail them back right away thanking them but explaining it is just not a good fit for you so they can get back to finding someone to take that roster spot. Don't talk yourself into a college, it should come with excitement because of what you saw and you can picture yourself being a part of it.

## **NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE- WHAT IS IT?**

The NCAA Clearinghouse is the organization that determines whether prospective college athletes are eligible to play sports at the D-1 or D-2 level. The D-3 level does not require registration with the NCAA Clearinghouse at this time.

It does this by reviewing the student athlete's academic record, SAT or ACT scores and amateur status to ensure that it conforms with NCAA rules. Remember this however, the higher the player's GPA is the lower SAT OR ACT score is needed. The lower the GPA is the higher SAT or ACT score is needed. Grades are very important!!!!

The recommended time to register for the Clearinghouse is usually at the beginning of their junior year in high school. There really is no deadline to register but keep in mind that they must be cleared by the Clearinghouse before they receive any kind of softball scholarship if any is being given by the potential college. The fee is usually \$50.00 and in some cases, not all, you can get it waived.

Students basically need to have their high school transcripts sent to the Clearinghouse directly by the high school they are presently attending. Keep in mind that the student can update the information as often as need be. They really should update it regularly up to the point of final certification which is usually 3 to 4 months before enrolling in college.

Here is a great web site to really get a great overview of college eligibility for sports from the Clearinghouse. Click on it and do some reading.

[https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/pdf/ec\\_tri-fold\\_4-18-08.pdf](https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/pdf/ec_tri-fold_4-18-08.pdf)

## **NLI OR NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT**

The National Letter of Intent is used to indicate a student athlete's commitment to a university. Recruits that have signed a NLI must attend the school they have signed with in order to receive financial aid. That player can no longer be recruited by prospective colleges any more. It is usually a great and proud moment for both athlete and parent for the hard work and accomplishments that the player and the parent has worked so hard for and made so many sacrifices for.

In some cases players who have signed a NLI sometimes have had a change of heart on attending that university. The university you originally sign with can actually make you sit out your first year of playing while attending another D-1 or D-2 college. So remember to think it through and weigh the options and make sure that this is the place you want to be at. The parent needs to be involved in this process. No one knows better than the parent when it comes to knowing their own. So ask yourself you the player if you were not playing softball at this college would you still like being there. Injuries happen and lots of times the player feels separated from the team when they cannot participate in practice and games. That is when campus life fills some voids for the injured player. This is when you will turn to the other side of campus life to get you through some down time when you might get bored, lonely, and homesick.

## **CLOSING**

There is a place for EVERY person who wants to play softball in college but it is up to you to find out where it is. Just remember that if you think that you are going to be found you are wrong. It is up to you the player to make something happen. If you don't make some phone call and write some e-mails and start corresponding with potential colleges it will not happen for you. You will slip through the cracks and

before you know it you will be graduating from high school and still hoping that maybe something will come up in your senior summer. Get to work on your recruiting process as soon as possible. It is never too early to get the ball rolling. Coaches want to find out who you are also. It is up to you to stay after them by e-mailing them and letting them know where you will be playing this weekend and the next weekend. Don't sit around and stop marketing yourself because 1 coach told you he likes the way you play and wants you to play for him. Get as many offers on the table as you possibly can and see which one makes the most sense and offers your major. You just have to keep after it. The most important thing to remember about all of this is this. After 4 years of college softball you will be setting your alarm clock and going to work just like the rest of us. Your education will make you a lot more money than softball ever will!!!!

Below are some extra links to help you on the scholarship and funding process that you might be entitled to while attending college.

Good Luck!

## Resources

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### Online Resources

#### Free Application for Federal Student Aid

##### [FAFSA](#)

This is a must, even if you don't do anything else you must complete this application in order to be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid. FAFSA is part of the department of education and you can apply online. FAFSA opens the door to the federal aid process. Every step you can take gets you closer to achieving your education goals

## **College Sporting Scholarships**

<http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/collegeresources.htm>

## **101 Top College, University and Scholarship websites**

<http://www.college-scholarships.com/100college.htm>

## **Athletic Scholarship Links**

[http://www.college-athletic-scholarships.com/athletic\\_scholarship\\_great\\_links.htm](http://www.college-athletic-scholarships.com/athletic_scholarship_great_links.htm)