

Published October 12th, 2011

Three Top Recommendations for the Recruited Athlete

Elizabeth LaScala



Elizabeth LaScala Ph.D. guides college, transfer and graduate school applicants through the complex world of admissions. She develops best match college lists, offers personalized interview and essay coaching, and tools and strategies to help students tackle each step of the admissions process with confidence and success. Elizabeth helps students from all backgrounds, including visual and performing arts students and athletes, to maximize financial aid awards. Contact her @ (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

and/or academic scholarship, be certain to consider some schools where your athletic and academic skills and abilities are stronger than those of your peers and fellow recruits.

4. Get Educated about College Athletic Scholarships: The expectations of parents and athletes often differ sharply from the financial realities of college athletics. Sources differ in their estimates, but most agree that the average athletic scholarship is around \$10,000- and this figure includes the glamour sports of football and basketball. The average scholarship is often far less since coaches must adhere to strict NCAA guidelines regarding mandatory annual renewals and no year to year guarantees. Scholarships are typically split and distributed across a team because most institutions do not fully finance "non-revenue" sports like soccer, baseball, swimming and track and field. The scholarship an athlete is offered is likely to pale in comparison to the \$20,000 to \$40,000 bill the college sends for tuition and fees alone. Nearly every parent that spends years sitting on the sidelines at youth sporting events dreaming of that elusive sports scholarship experiences a wake-up call when this reality hits.

5. Keep Your Options Open: A word to the wise is to keep several college options in the mix until the Early Application deadlines pass. Coaches may insist on a verbal commitment before that time. However, it is in your best interests to stay neutral until you have more information. You should be certain the formal visits go well, have written confirmation that admissions approves your application, and be clear about finances before you commit. You can be direct and honest by telling the coach that his/her college is one of your top choices, but you and your family are still visiting colleges and reviewing affordability issues.

College sports can be rewarding and fun, but the extra commitment taxes the student's energy and can limit academic options. There are 6 AM practices, team meetings, and long bus and plane trips to games. Team commitments often limit the college coursework students can take, and sometimes even the selection of a competitive major, like engineering or pre med. Getting informed and being

Adding sports to the college admission equation can make an already complex and time-consuming process more confusing and emotional. The "official visit" to the college is a prime example of one of the events that is often fraught with anxiety. October is the primary season for "official visits" for many collegiate sports. You can go on unofficial visits any time you wish but the number of official trips is limited. On these formal visits, and over the weeks that follow, many disappointments can be avoided if you plan well. Here are 5 great strategies to avoid stress and increase your odds of making sound decisions.

1. Think Reciprocal Evaluation: Many athletes experience so much anxiety about an official visit that they forget an important aspect that can help them feel more at ease. Yes, you are being evaluated, but you too should be doing your share of evaluation. You are checking out the sports program in general, the team in particular and, most important of all, the college environment that houses it all. An athlete can decide the experience does not match up with her expectations or the coach can drop a student from the recruitment list because they get thumbs down from the Admissions Department. It is a two way street.

2. Use the Overnight Stay Wisely: Most coaches will invite recruits for an overnight stay and this visit typically includes a team practice, an interview with the coach and a dorm sleepover with a team member. This is an important opportunity to evaluate whether the coaching style will bring out the best in you as an athlete and the social environment matches your personal values and interests. If the team's idea of making you feel welcome is to keep you awake all night partying with kegs of beer, you need to determine if that is how you want to spend your next four years.

3. Remember Admissions Has the Final Word: Ultimately, you must get admitted to the school before you can play sports at the college. A coach has only so much say in the matter. Your transcript, test scores, and personal statements must be reviewed by an admissions officer or in committee. How colleges do this varies, but the end result is you must be a successful applicant to be a successfully recruited athlete. If you want more acceptance letters or an athletic

prepared at the onset can help to ensure the sacrifices are outweighed by the rewards of collegiate sports.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA