The Student Athlete: Navigating Recruiting, Eligibility, and the Academic Index

Session Date: Monday, April 16, 2018
Session Time: 3:15-4:30 PM.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenters</th>
<th>Contact us at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephan P. Breit</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbreit@loyolablakefield.org">sbreit@loyolablakefield.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Blakefield, Maryland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon-Paul Sousa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:JSousa@fcps.edu">JSousa@fcps.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chantilly High School, Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand what it means to be a recruited student-athlete
2. Understand eligibility standards of college athletic governing bodies
3. Understand the Academic Index
OBJECTIVE 1: THE STUDENT-ATHLETE & COLLEGE RECRUITING
DEFINITIONS

• NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association
• Most familiar, and largest, governing body of college athletics.
• Three Divisions: I, II, III
NCAA

• **DIVISION I**
  - Can offer scholarships*
  - Head count vs Equivalency sports
  - *Head count* sports offer full scholarship for each athlete.
    - Ex: Football, Men’s Basketball, Women’s Basketball, Women’s Gymnastics
  - *Equivalency* sport are designated to offer a certain number of scholarships, which tends to get divided into even more partial scholarships.
    - Ex: Baseball, Softball, Soccer (M&W), Swimming (M&W), Lacrosse (M&W)
NCAA
- **DIVISION II**
- Schools can offer athletic scholarships – often partial.
- Offers alternative to Division I and Division III.
NCAA

- Division III
- No athletic scholarships – but can be better alternative in terms of financial aid.
- Quality of life can be better – more down time out of season, can be a multi-sport athlete.
- Many rules governing D-I athletic recruiting do not apply to D-III.
NCAA: RECRUITING TERMS (D-I)

- **Prospective Student Athlete:**
  - Begins beginning of 9th grade year
- **Contact:**
  - any face-to-face contact between a college coach and prospective student-athlete
- **Contact Period:**
  - In-person contact on or off campus
- **Dead Period:**
  - No in-person contact
- **Evaluation:**
  - Any activity by a coach to assess a prospective student-athlete
NCAA RECRUITING TERMS

- **VISITS**
  - *Official*: Paid visit for the s-a by the D-I or D-II college.
    - Maximum of 5 allowed
  - *Unofficial*: Any visit by the s-a to a college that involves contact with coaching staff. Paid for by the s-a. No max.

- **Verbal Commitment**:
  - Non-binding commitment by prospective student-athlete to attend an institution (prior to sending National Letter of Intent).

- **Academic Index**:  
  - Formula utilized by Ivy League, Patriot League and NESCAC schools to calculate a standardized number that incorporates GPA and standardized test scores.
NCAA RECRUITING TERMS (CONTINUED)

- **NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT (NLI)**
  - A “binding” document which commits a student-athlete to attend a university.

- **REDSHIRT**
  - A student withheld from a season of competition (mainly due to injury, physical development, or academics) while not losing a year of eligibility. S-A is allowed to practice with the team during this time and remains on scholarship.
NCAA: RECRUITING TIMELINE

• IMPORTANT DATES:

• **September 1 of Junior Year**: Phone calls & recruiting materials permitted at institution’s discretion for most sports.

• **July 1 prior to senior year & September 1 of senior year**: Off-campus contact, official visits permitted for all sports.

• Division I basketball, football and Ice Hockey have varying timelines.

• Access NCAA recruiting calendars that are more sport specific at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).
NAIA

- NAIA: National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
- Smaller athletic governing body of mostly small, private and religiously-affiliated schools.
- Not as well-known in this area – mostly South and Midwest.
- Two Divisions: I & II
- Division I is more competitive level.
OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTANDING ELIGIBILITY

NCAA & NAIA
STORY: THE ADMINISTRATOR
NCAA: WHAT IS A CORE COURSE?

An academic, four-year college prep course eligible for high school graduation in one or more of the following areas:

- English
- Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- Natural/Physical Science
- Social Science
- Foreign Language and/or
- Comparative Religion or Philosophy
WHAT IS NOT A CORE COURSE?

• **Courses**
  - in “non-core” areas, fine arts or vocational training
    • Ex: Driver’s Education; Keyboarding; Art; Music; Physical Education
  - in world of work/life preparation
    • Ex: Personal Finance; Consumer Education; Technical preparation
  - taught below grade level, at a slower pace, or with less rigor or depth
    • Ex: Basic, Fundamental, Essential, or Foundational courses
  - that are “non-academic in nature.”
    • Ex: Film Appreciation; Video Editing; Greenhouse Management
  - Computer Science Courses that do not meet graduation requirements in the area of mathematics or physical science
    • EX: All LB Computer science programs are considered “additional” courses and are therefore not eligible for approval.
DIVISION I CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• 4 years of English*
• 3 years of Math (Algebra I or higher)
• 2 years of Natural or Physical Science (including 1 year of lab, if offered)*
• 1 year of additional English, Math, or Natural/Physical Science
• 2 years of Social Science
• 4 years of additional core courses from any category above, or Foreign/Classical Language, or Comparative/Nondoctrinal Religion or Philosophy
NCAA DIVISION I ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

• For students enrolling full time at an NCAA Division I college or university on or after August 1, 2016, there are three possible academic outcomes:
  
  – **Full Qualifier:** Allowed to:
    • compete
    • receive athletic aid (scholarship)
    • practice in the first year.
  
  – **Academic Redshirt:** Allowed to:
    • receive athletic aid in the first year
    • allowed to practice in the first regular academic term (semester or quarter).
    • Not allowed to compete in first year of enrollment.
  
  – **Nonqualifier:** Not allowed to:
    • receive athletic aid
    • practice or compete in the first year
NCAA DIVISION I FULL QUALIFIER

• Must meet these elements for Division I eligibility:
  – *Minimum core-course GPA of 2.300 in 16 core courses required,*
  – Meet the minimum requirements along the Core-course GPA and SAT/ACT sliding scale,
  – Course completion required before beginning of senior year (7th semester).

NCAA CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL QUALIFIERS

• A QUALIFIER:
  – Must complete **10 core courses before seventh semester of high school** (senior year).
  – Of the 10 core courses completed, **7 must be in the areas of English, Mathematics, or Natural/Physical Science.**
  – These 10 core courses become “locked in” for the purpose of GPA calculation.
  • A repeat of one of the “locked in” courses will not be used if taken after the seventh semester begins.
PARTIAL QUALIFIER AKA “ACADEMIC REDSHIRT”

• Requirements for Scholarship and Practice:
  – Minimum required GPA: 2.000 in 16 core courses.
  – Proper alignment with core-course GPA & SAT/ACT sliding scale.
THE ISSUES WITH “RECLASSIFICATION”

• Reclassification is a term for a student who repeats a grade or skips a grade.

• Many schools are well-intentioned but new rules can cause issues:
  – NCAA clock begins in ninth grade year
  – 4 years of English and the locked-in ten through 6 semesters
  – Repeated courses with the same titles
GRADE POINT AVERAGE

• Eligibility Center calculates GPA based on grades earned in NCAA-approved core courses only.
  – Only the best grades from required core courses are utilized.
  – Grades from additional core courses will only be used IF THEY IMPROVE THE STUDENT-ATHLETE’S GPA.
  – GPA’s calculated on a 4.0 scale
    • Plus or minus grades are not used when calculating GPA

• CALCULATING GPA:
  – Multiply quality points of each grade earned by amount of credit earned
    • EX: An A grade (4 pts) for a semester course (0.50 units) = 2.00 quality points
    • An A grade (4 pts) for a full-year course (1.00 units) = 4.00 quality points
STANDARDIZED TESTING

• A combined SAT score is calculated by adding Critical Reading and Math sub scores.
  – EX. CR: 500, M: 500 = Combined Score of 1000

• An ACT sum score is calculated by adding English, math, reading and science sub scores.
  – EX. E: 25, M: 25, R: 25, S: 25 = 100 (composite score of 25 is not used)

• A student-athlete may take the SAT or ACT an unlimited number of times before he enrolls full-time in college.

• If a student-athlete takes either test more than once, the best sub score from different tests are used to meet initial eligibility requirements.
NCAA DIVISION II ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

• **BEGINNING FOR MATRICULATING 2018 CLASS**

• **FULL QUALIFIER:**
  - 16 Core Courses
  - *Core-course minimum GPA of 2.200*
  - GPA in alignment with SAT/ACT Division II sliding scale
  - Graduate high school

• **PARTIAL QUALIFIER:**
  - 16 core courses
  - *Core-course minimum GPA of 2.000*
  - SAT/ACT score matches core-course GPA on Division II sliding scale
  - Graduate high school
DIVISION II CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **3** years of English
- **2** years of Math (Algebra I or higher)
- **2** years of Natural or Physical Science (including 1 year of lab, if offered)
- **3** years of additional English, Math, or Natural/Physical Science
- **2** years of Social Science
- **4** years of additional core courses from any category above, or Foreign/Classical Language, or Comparative/Nondoctrinal Religion or Philosophy
POP QUIZ

1) Which of these IS NOT an NCAA-approved course at Loyola?
   a) Introduction to Philosophy
   b) AP Computer Science
   c) Spanish IA
   d) College Algebra

2) Which of these IS an NCAA-approved course at Loyola?
   a) Film Study
   b) AP Music Theory
   c) Advanced Architectural Design
   d) Introduction to Engineering
STORY: THE STUDENT ATHLETE & ELIGIBILITY
NAIA OVERVIEW

- Eligibility requirements:
  - Successfully graduate from high school OR
  - Be accepted as a regular student in good standing as defined by enrolling institution AND
  - Must meet TWO of the three:
    1) Achieve minimum of 18 (composite) on ACT (no Writing) OR 860 (combined Reading & Math) on SAT.
    2) Achieve minimum GPA of 2.000 on a 4.000 scale.
    3) Graduate in top half of high school class.
OBJECTIVE 3: THE ACADEMIC INDEX

Ivy League & Patriot League
NESCAC
THE ACADEMIC INDEX

• Formula computed for every student initially created by Ivy League to ensure a league minimum in admission of a "representative" group of student-athletes.

• Not that important for admission at most schools unless a prospective student-athlete. For Ivy & Patriot it is a "credentialing" for all students to see how athletes “fit in.”

• Patriot League: All recruited athletes must average within 1-standard deviation from the institutions average.

• Ivy League: All schools are trying to get as close to the mean average of the incoming class.

• Even if student-athlete meets minimum league Academic Index standards, can still be denied by individual institutions.
ACADEMIC INDEX: GENERAL FORMULA

• Two ways to calculate that are frequently associated with AI:
  1) $\frac{1}{3}$ SAT I/ACT average + $\frac{1}{3}$ SAT II average + $\frac{1}{3}$ Converted Rank Score

OR MORE COMMONLY USED:

  2) $\frac{2}{3}$ SAT I/ACT average + $\frac{1}{3}$ Converted Rank Scores

• Converted Rank Score is a GPA or Class Rank Calculation (based on institution charts or formula).
  - Ivy League not using CRS anymore because so few schools rank.
  - Last 1/3 based on student’s grades (GPA, rigor, etc.).
ACADEMIC INDEX: ROLE WITH COLLEGE ADMISSION

- Most Important Factor in Admission in Ivy, Patriot & NESCAC:
  1) Level or rigor
  2) Grades
  3) Test scores (esp. Ivy League = major part of AI)
  4) Essays are vital for PSA’s!!!

- Coach identifies PSA with academic & athletic credentials possible for admissions and provides “priority list” to admissions office (sometimes PSA’s will be pre-screened for admissibility).

- The stronger the player, the greater the possibility for admission.

- PSA’s with great rigor, grades & test scores = optimal recruit.

- Patriot League - GPA gets locked in after grade 11. Only way a PSA can increase AI in twelfth grade is through standardized test scores.

- “The Academic Index number is not going to lie.” PSA’s must communicate with coaches!
Every school is different & NESCAC schools are D-III (Band System, test optional schools, etc.)

“Presumptive Floor” – Lower end of AI are extreme and rare examples meant for highly qualified students who may be missing a “piece” (Ex: one test score is low).

EX: For Patriot League, basketball & football are given 2 points of added room on AI scale. (EX: 168 AI as basketball player is admissible by Patriot League standards).

- All other sports require a “Presidential Exception” which is quite rare because President has to put in writing to Patriot League why the exception was made.

Patriot League: GPA will be converted to AI formula whether weighted or unweighted. (but each school calculates GPA differently).

Test optional schools still need standardized test scores of PSA's for AI calculation.

AI is an evolving and constantly shifting process because score is based on entire admitted student population per school.

Patriot League: Department-wide Academic Index is reported every fall by admissions office of each school's totality of accepted incoming class.
TYING THIS ALL TOGETHER

How to Apply to YOUR Student-Athletes
HOW TO BEST ADVISE THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

• Have student meet with you to create a list of colleges that are potential matches.

• Student-Athletes must talk with their school coaches and/or their club coaches to see if any colleges they are interested are colleges at which they might be able to play. Once you discuss this and possibly other schools, return to your counselor to discuss them as academic matches.

• Student-Athletes should write a letter expressing their interest to coaches and attach a resume or player profile. Each college website should have coaches listed under the “athletics” section.

• Student-Athletes should register with the NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER by the end of junior year if they want to play for DI or DII.
COUNSELING ADVICE (CONTINUED)

- Student-Athletes should respond and stay in touch with coaches who contact them, even if they decline their attention, and say that their interests lie at other schools. Be gracious.

- Go on official visits if invited. This may mean missing a day or two of school, so contact teachers and do one’s best to stay up with coursework.

- Use best judgment when on a college visit. Do not do anything that will compromise character or integrity while there.

- Student-Athletes should send a thank you note to the coach after a visit, and highlight why they enjoyed their visit.
EVALUATING A VISIT

- Did you find the coaching staff approachable? Honest?
- Were they clear about academics being the priority?
- Will I grow into this program?
- Were the players friendly?
- Would I be happy at this school if I never played, became injured, or lost interest in the sport?
FINAL THOUGHTS

• **COUNSELORS:**

• Core Course Submission: TITLES MATTER. SEND DOCUMENTATION (Scope & Sequence; Flow Charts).

• Take advantage of the great resources available through:
  - NCAA ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org))
  - NCAA 2.3 or Take a Knee ([http://www.ncaa.org/static/2point3/](http://www.ncaa.org/static/2point3/))
  - NAIA ([www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)).

• **COMMUNICATE WITH:**
  • Your students and their parents/guardians
  • Your high school coaches
  • College coaches
  • College Athletic Departments, specif. compliance officials
  • Governing body representatives, esp. NCAA – They try their best to answer!
STORY: THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR & THE STUDENT-ATHLETE
REFERENCES

• NCAA Eligibility Center high school portal (2018 January 6). Retrieved from

• Play NAIA (2018 January 6). Retrieved from
  https://www.playnaia.org/?_ga=2.192560618.1311616835.1522524712876
  802027.1522083903.

• Road to college (June 2010). Understanding admission and the role of athletics
  .../Academic_Index_and_NESCAC_Bands.ppt.

• Smith, A. (2 April 2018). Associate Athletic Director/Compliance & Internal
  Operations: American University Athletics Department. Personal interview.

• Wnek, W. (10 April 2018). Associate Athletic Director/Compliance: Loyola
  University Maryland Athletics Department. Personal Interview.
THANK YOU for attending this session!

We’d love to hear from you!

Please submit a session evaluation via the conference mobile app or from www.pcacac.org.