

Parent's Frequently asked Questions

by [Ray Lauenstein](#)

1. My son received a letter from a college coach. Is he being recruited? What do we do now?

Form letters do not equate to being recruited. Several letters, phone calls during the appropriate contact periods, coming to a game in person and an invitation to visit the campus are what constitute recruiting. A single letter is only the beginning of a long process of communication. Return all information requests and follow up with phone calls. Consider having the high school coach call on his behalf and forward a copy of scheduled games and playing appearances.

2. How do scholarships work? Can we expect a full scholarship?

Do not expect a full athletic scholarship, they are very rare in most sports (except football, men's and women's basketball and men's and women's hockey) Scholarships are renewable each year and are usually renewed barring a major rules or legal violation on the SA's part.

3. Explain Div. I vs. II vs. III

In all sports the major difference is in which schools offer athletic scholarship money and how much they can offer. Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships and Division III do not. Usually, with exceptions, the talent level is better and deeper the higher up the ladder you go. Within each level there are, what you would consider, "major" programs that have more talent than others playing at the same level.

Division I-AA is a football classification that has a choice to offer scholarships or not. The Ivy League is a 1-AA league with no scholarships. The Atlantic 10 is a 1-AA conference and offers scholarships. These schools routinely play each other in non-conference games each year, so they are not mutually exclusive in that sense.

The NCAA regulates all three levels and sponsorships championship tournaments at all levels except Division I football (BCS).

4. The coach invited my son to walk-on. What should he do?

Being a walk on is a long shot. They can make the team and eventually receive scholarship money, but it is rare. Usually a coach invites dozens of players to enroll and walk-on and will have very few available slots. Unless your son will go to that school anyway, encourage him seek out a program where the coach has more vested in him. Beware the coach who invites you to walk on, but has never seen you play.

5. What do coaches look at when they scout?

Tools. Technique. Tactics. Tools – Size, build, strength, vertical leap, left or right footed. Technique - They look at passing, receiving, and tackling. How you go up for headers, how you play in combination, do you use the proper surface/foot to make a pass. Tactics - Decision making and overall vision on the field, positional responsibilities, leadership and organization.

After that they look at mental toughness and make-up. Will to win, attitude following failure, performance under pressure, respect for family, and teammates.

6. How do we get schools to take an interest in our son?

You are off to a good start by bringing him to a showcase. You can start a letter writing campaign to schools he is interested in and follow up with phone calls and schedules of his games. Stats and press clippings are a waste of time. Coaches want to see players in action.

7. What are the pro's and con's of Junior College?

If your son has poor or average grades, was a late bloomer, over looked, or did poorly on the SAT, then JUCO is a great place to improve your grades and scores, while playing a good brand of soccer. The con's to JUCO vary depending on the person and situation. Sometimes credits do not transfer and getting a four year degree takes longer then the player has eligibility for. Other than that, for the right person, JUCO is a good option.

8. We can't afford college if he doesn't get a scholarship, can we?

Yes you can. The key is to start early, educate yourself, and go after every kind of financial aid, loans and scholarship program available. It is like anything else, if you dig and claw, you will find enough money.

9. Which camps are the best for my son?

Depends on his needs and goals. "Select" camps are when there are the most coaches and the best competition to play against. If he wants to be seen by a specific school, it is wise to go to that schools camp. Research the camp staff; find out who will be there and for how long. Don't pay until you have satisfactory answers. There are so many more camps now then even 5-10 years ago. Many are just money makers. Ask around to separate the quality from the trash.

10. What are the signs of a good program?

A fairly balanced mix of freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors. A high graduation rate, good facilities, reputable coach who develops young men, not just soccer players. High value on education and player development. Current players who speak highly of the coach and program (when the coach is not around). Future goals and ambitions that are realistic for the program. Enthusiastic and passionate players/coaches. Players who enjoy and value their time with a program will support it after they graduate.

11. What is the difference between early decision and early action? Does it help to declare early decision?

Early decision, if you are accepted, requires you to withdraw your application from all the other schools you applied to. Unless you are totally sure you want one particular school, this type of strategy does not give you much leverage and you are stuck with the aid package you get. However, this action is hardly legally-binding. It basically allows you to gain admission status quicker than most other applicants.

Early action or early notification requires you to apply early, but not to withdraw other applications if accepted. If available this could be a better option for the student.

Before you do anything though, ask for stats on how many students apply early decision, what percentage are accepted, and do you match these students academically?

12. **Are the on-line, Internet recruiting services worth while.** I defer to the coaches for this one and most say they do not subscribe to or use these services. Most say, "If I was a parent, I would not pay for such a service." To qualify, some services are focused around actual showcases and incorporate an on-line aspect (i.e. www.perfectgame.com, etc). These differ from those that only offer on-line listings. The general rule of thumb is that a coach wants to see you play in person before he recruits you heavily, and definitely before he makes a push for you in admissions.
13. **If more than one school is actively recruiting my son, can we use this as negotiating leverage?** To a degree, yes. Hard ball can also land you with no "bird in the hand." First of all, do not hold out for a full athletic scholarship as it will not happen, and the coach might find another student-athlete in place of your son. You can use the aid package as the final decision maker by telling a coach "Yes I do want to play and study at State College, however my final decision will be based on where I get the best aid package. I will be comparing you and Western College." This type of statement lets the coach know that you will go to his or her school if it offers the best aid package. This is assuming all other things are equal in the equation.