

TIMELINE SUGGESTION

June

Get a job!

Whether you're an incoming high school freshman or an outgoing senior, securing a job for the summer speaks volumes about your ability to manage your time, manage your finances, take on responsibility, and even multi-task. All important items when it comes time to apply to college.

Why? Admissions Counselors are always looking for well-rounded students who would compliment their campus. Combining employment experience along with extra curricular activities, athletics, advanced or honors courses for example, gives them a complete picture of who you are as prospective student and if you can balance college studies with additional activities.

July

Organizing the college search

High School might be out for the summer, but organizing your college search shouldn't be on summer break too. Here's what you can do to keep yourself proactive:

Cultivate a list of colleges which are a good fit for you academically, and if interested in college soccer, athletically as well. Decide what is most important to you as you review each one; is it the location, the climate, type of campus, programs of study, is it a junior, public or private college that appeal to you?

Consider looking outside your own backyard for college and think about options that are out of town, or even out of state. There are hundreds of colleges and universities across the United States, and many may have exactly what you are looking for in a degree program and overall college experience. Take the time to thoroughly research all opportunities, you might be surprised at just how many choices you have to receive a great education in a place you've only dreamed about.

August – College Basics with Sam Snow

Register for Eligibility

If you're an incoming high school junior and are considering playing at the NCAA DIV I or DIV II level, now is the time to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. The NCAA affiliation will require certification of your eligibility in order to make sure you are on track academically and are of amateur status.

Visit NCAA.org for more information.

Incoming high school seniors who are interested in playing NAIA, will need to register for eligibility as well. The NAIA has its own set of standards that must be met and you can find out specifics by visiting www.playnaia.com

September

Time to submit college applications

If you're a high school senior and have a pretty good idea of the colleges or universities you would like to submit applications to, now is the time to do so if you have not already. Be sure to keep an eye on application and scholarship deadlines. Many colleges have hard dates in place to receive applications and apply for scholarships. Once those deadlines have passed you will not be considered for application and or scholarship opportunities.

Keep in mind that the more competitive the college is in admissions, the earlier you need to apply. Colleges typically have a pool of money that is used when awarding scholarship and or grants. The earlier you apply, the better chance you have at receiving a larger portion of funds from that resource. Once the pool of funds is depleted, it will not be replaced until the following year for award distribution.

October

SAT and ACT testing

Consider taking an SAT and or ACT test if you are a junior or senior in high school. For seniors, find out the last applicable date that a college will accept your scores from, as many will have a December cut-off date.

Did you know on average, most students take the SAT test 2 to 3 times, and or the ACT twice? Check to see what combination of scores can be utilized for the colleges and or universities you apply to. Many will let you create a Super Score, or will allow you to take the best scores from a single testing date to submit for admissions purposes.

November

Showcase your abilities and connect with college coaches

Traditionally, late fall and early winter are a time for teams to participate in college showcases across the country, giving players an opportunity to be seen, noticed, and recruited. For student athletes considering college soccer, this is a great time to connect with those coaches whose programs interest you the most.

If participating in a showcase(s), be sure to review the list of attending colleges coaches and connect with those who have what you are seeking both academically and athletically in a college program. An email introduction with 3 to 4 paragraphs about yourself if sufficient, be sure to include your game schedule, and attach your player profile/resume as well.

Follow up with any replies or phone calls from coaches after the showcase in a timely manner, and begin to establish a dialogue. If your and their interest persists, consider scheduling a campus visit, see if there is opportunity to work out with the team and even spend the night. This will help you determine if this could possibly be your perfect college fit.

December

Take the time to volunteer your time and talent!

City web sites usually have an area dedicated to volunteer opportunities within the community and how to connect with organizations that need your help. While some opportunities might be one time only, many others will ask you to commit to either a weekly or monthly obligation. Think about what you can do, what you would like to, and the type of commitment you are willing to take on.

Admissions counselors are always looking for students who can offer more than just a great GPA, and will often gauge applicants on what they have also done outside of an academic environment, such as volunteer work for example. Not only is volunteering a great way to give back to your community, it helps you become a well-rounded individual too.

January

Keep calm and file the FAFSA

For those seniors graduating in the spring, now's the time to file your FAFSA!

The FAFSA can be completed as early as January 1st, and should be done so as soon as possible to give you the greatest opportunity to receive the maximum amount of financial aid. All colleges and universities require students to submit a FAFSA before they can determine exactly what you will receive in aid and how much. It's important to file the FAFSA even if your family has yet to file their IRS return. You will have the option to select "Will File" when filling this form out, and then will be able to go back and change it at a later date to "Has Filed" once the IRS return has been completed.

The longer you wait to fill out the FAFSA, the less money there may be available to you in your financial aid package.

February

National Signing Day is right around the corner

National signing day is February 5th, but don't panic if you have yet to commit a college or university. You will have until August 1st to sign on the dotted line. As a matter of fact, the greatest number of soccer signees will sign between March and April.

Signing day usually involves a National Letter of Intent, but is also dependent on the athletic affiliation you've decided to play within. Your future coach will be able to provide you with information on what their college or university and athletic affiliation expects, regarding an NLI and the obligation it requires from you.

March

Time for a road trip

Did you know March is a great time to take advantage of Spring Break and make a college campus visit?

With the school year almost over, this is a great time for those freshman through juniors to make campus visits to prospective schools. Check the calendar of those schools you would like to visit though and make sure they are in session and not on break as well.

Be sure to research each campus you plan to tour, and find out what makes it unique for those that attend. Is it rich in history, have an outstanding athletic program, is it known for study abroad opportunities and great degree programs? All these factors will form an imprint as to what it is you may want out of your college experience.

Think of it this way, the better informed you are about a college or university, the better your perspective will be when it comes time to make a decision about where you could spend 4 to 5 years of your life after high school graduation.

April

Charting your future

April is the time most high school students will begin the process of course selection for the next academic year. Take time to sit down with your high school counselor to determine the following:

- Are you meeting graduation requirements with core courses and required electives

- If pursuing athletics, are you meeting NCAA core course requirements
- Ask about taking Pre-AP, AP or Dual Credit courses where applicable
- Ask which courses you should take if there is a specific field of study you would like to pursue, to help give you a head start in your selected field

May

Formulate an action plan

Determine if you have done or could be doing the following to make your path to college an easier one:

- Performing in the classroom and on the field
- Assessing your strengths as a player and student-athlete
- Beginning the college identification process early, freshman and sophomore years in high school
- Eliminating those college programs from your search that are not a good fit for you academically, athletically, or financially
- Evaluating your options as a student first and an athlete second
- Selecting 7-10 compatible college programs based on your needs and ability
- Choosing the one college or university that best fits your needs and abilities. The right choice for you means that it fully meets your objectives of a degree plan and athletic program, all at a cost you and your family can afford