



St. Anne's-Belfield School

ASPIRING COLLEGE

BOUND ATHLETE
GUIDE

Helping St. Anne's-Belfield School Athletes
Take the Next Step

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Dear Students & Parents,

This information packet was put together to help you thoroughly understand and navigate through an important time of you or your child's life. Continuing an academic and athletic career at the collegiate level is a privilege that requires a tremendous amount of work and dedication. We've created this guide to assist you with the college recruiting and admission process; you need to ensure that you accomplish the necessary tasks. But you are not alone. St. Anne's-Belfield School college counselors, coaches, and faculty are here to help whenever possible. In order to complete a successful recruiting and selection process, students must maintain realistic expectations of their abilities, both in the classroom and on the playing field. Use this guide to familiarize yourself with the academic requirements, recruiting timeline, and NCAA rules and regulations.

If you ever have any questions throughout the process, do not hesitate to ask for help.

Regards,

Dewayne Robinson
Athletic Director

THE BEGINNING

Every year, thousands of student athletes and parents market themselves to college coaches. Some are able to do this very successfully while others struggle. The key to managing a complex process is to create a road map and secure the necessary resources in advance. This will give you the best possible advantage as you begin this journey. Regardless of the sport you wish to participate in, the process is the same - you have to get noticed to get recruited!

The key to success is to know that this process is not a sprint that will happen in any one year of your high school career. It's a multi-year marathon and the journey starts with a basic plan and honest assessment. As a parent/student team, spending a little time each month on this process can open doors you never thought were possible and lead you to a collegiate student-athlete experience of a lifetime.

Can I compete at the college level?

The reality is that collegiate athletic scholarships aren't available to everyone. You should be aware that most student athletes will not be able to play Division I sports. It simply isn't feasible given the number of colleges compared to the number of student athletes. It is important for families to know that while Division I programs are often highlighted, there are a vast number of colleges or universities outside of Division I that have very competitive sports programs.

Student athletes will have to meet some important criteria to make playing at the next level a reality. There is a significant number of student athletes seeking to fill college rosters and potential scholarship offers. You may be a top athlete here at St. Anne's-Belfield or on another recreational team, but you should definitely know how you match up with other high school star athletes around the country. You'll need to identify your academic and athletic abilities to better determine what division is best for you. This will ensure you target the right schools where you have the best chance of competing for a spot on the roster and potentially receiving a scholarship. You should meet with your coaches to get an honest assessment of your talents and abilities, in addition to a recommendation of what level would work best for you.

A coach will typically provide an assessment based on his or her views of your practice/playing habits and your growth as an athlete. There are times when students are surprised by the assessment, or disagree with the views of their coaching staff. Families should understand that there is no negative intent behind these assessments, and we certainly aren't aiming to sell any of our student athletes short. However, our coaches understand that this is a critical part of the process, and they don't want you to waste your time and energy focusing on colleges that don't suit your academic or athletic abilities. To compete at the college level, coaches are looking for a student athlete who possesses the applicable sport specific tools such as strength, speed, hitting, hitting for power, fielding etc. In addition to that, they consider intangibles such as character and mental toughness that make up the will-to-win, attitude following failure, performance under pressure, and respect for family and teammates. One of the reasons our athletic program focuses on creating an athletic experience that is valuable and enriching is to ensure growth in these areas in order to make our athletes highly attractive to college coaches.

What do college coaches expect?

A very small percentage of high school student athletes receive college opportunities or scholarships because the coach "happened to find him or her." Only the top elite athletes (usually the top 100 nationally) receive enough media coverage and recognition that they are automatically recruited without having to make an effort. The other 99 percent have to take the initiative to research potential colleges and contact the coaches at schools that they are interested in. Most schools don't have a large recruiting budget, so they rely on you to put yourself on their radar.

Phone calls, emails, cover letters, profile resumes, stats, video, and outside references become key tools for the coach in the recruiting and evaluation process. You might think that self-promoting by making the initial contact with a coach in an attempt to "market" yourself, but you should understand that this is the norm. If you don't, other student athletes will likely get the opportunity to get noticed and recruited because they and their parents made the effort to reach out. It's become common practice and expected by coaches at the college level. Outside of the high caliber prospects, they want people who want to be there.

Additionally, coaches want students who have taken the steps to prepare themselves academically. The success of collegiate coaches outside of the top 30 or 40 major sport programs in the country, usually depends on the academic success and graduation rates of their programs. Therefore, they place a primary importance on finding students that are well prepared in the classroom in addition to their rosters. Failure to meet academic requirements usually leads to failure to be successful in a collegiate athletic program.

Regardless of your athletic talent, your grades and test scores will make the biggest difference in admissions and financial aid outcomes. Many colleges have academic scholarships or grant money that is awarded to students and student athletes who demonstrate academic achievement. High academic achievement means you will be accepted into more colleges, thus expanding your options and allowing you to be more critical in the decision process. Tuition costs will be much less each year, and you give yourself reason to stand out from the pack.

Outside of being ranked in the top 100 nationally, or being seen at summer camps or competitions, college coaches won't know you exist unless you reach out to them. Here are a few rules of engagement when dealing with college coaches:

1. Be an effective communicator – Student athletes (not parents) should write or email the coach when appropriate. He or she should always reply whenever the coach reaches out.
2. Little things count – Be sure to review your letters and/or e-mail messages for errors, and ensure you spell their and the school names correctly.
3. Be honest – If you are interested in their program, tell them. If not, politely say that. Don't string coaches along and waste both theirs and your time.
4. Provide your contact information – Make sure to note how to reach you and when you are available, providing multiple ways for them to contact you, if applicable.
5. Complete applications – Follow up and send grades/faculty recommendations to the schools you are interested in. Get the paperwork done as early as possible in the process.
6. Prepare a list of criteria that is important to you as you go through this process – Develop questions that will help you accurately evaluate the colleges in these areas. This shows that you are truly interested in finding the best situation for you.
7. Do your homework on the school and the athletic program – Know the division they are in, the conference, and program history.
8. Keep us informed – Let your current coach and college counselor informed about your recruitment and communication at the college level.

Be persistent at this stage as college coaches receive a great amount of interest and have little time to pursue everyone. Effort in addition to proper materials and high academic success helps you stand out from other applicants. Explain how you can enhance their program and show your character as a student and athlete.

What can you expect from your coach?

St. Anne's-Belfield School coaches want their athletes to choose a college that is the right fit for them as an individual and help them accomplish their goals, both inside and outside of the classroom. Because our coaches are engulfed in other areas of the school, they can provide good insight into what to look for, in addition to serving as a great resource for college coaches. Our coaching community is a valuable and powerful resource that college coaches will want to thoroughly assess your ability, potential, and eligibility. Families should work hard with the coach to keep communication flowing and to ensure the relationship is a positive one. Our coaches want to see every student athlete accomplish his or her goals, and will help him or her in this journey to find the best academic and athletic fit.

THE STUDENT ATHLETE GAME PLAN

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Establish a 4-year academic plan to meet all core course requirements
- Take a strong academic course load
- Maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average out of 4.0 in core courses
- Talk with your coach about your aspirations to play collegiately. Get an assessment from him/her on the level you should be focusing on
- Talk with your coach about other opportunities to increase your exposure in your sport
- Attend summer camps:
 1. For exposure (select camps at colleges that you might want to attend)
 2. To improve skills
 3. To see how your skills stack against others
- Videotape games
- Keep records of your athletic achievements, extracurricular activities, etc.
- Visit the websites of the schools on your list. Most have a simple questionnaire you may fill out and email to the coach. Also view college athletic rosters to see number of athletes graduating, as well as potential trends in recruiting

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Reach out to our college counselor to talk about your goals academically and athletically
- Evaluate your 4-year academic plan to ensure you are meeting all core course requirements
- Meet with your advisor to determine a suitable academic load based on your freshman grades
- Maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average out of 4.0 in core courses
- Create a list of 10 schools you would be interested in. Five of the schools should be at the level you aspire to be, and five should be from other levels that interest you athletically
- Start to think about academic areas that interest you. Keep this in mind as you re-evaluate your 10 schools
- Keep records of your athletic achievements, extracurricular activities, etc.
- Download the NCAA Guide for the college bound student athlete and read through it with your parents
- Continue to inquire about summer opportunities for more exposure with your coach. Ensure that you are developing personally and athletically each year
- Reply promptly to any correlation from colleges or coaches that reach out
- Create a spreadsheet of schools that have contacted you in addition to schools you are interested in so that you can keep up with all the schools. If you decide to rule out a school, be sure to communicate that with the coach or admission office and cross them off your list

JUNIOR YEAR

- Meet with your coach for a thorough evaluation of your current athletic ability and work to narrow your list down to no more than five schools. Work with your coach to ensure your list consist of schools that fit your current abilities
- Discuss with your coach his/her involvement in your recruitment process. Ask him/her to be proactive on your behalf by responding to questionnaires sent by recruiting coaches
- Work with our college counselor to ensure that your workload and course selection is suitable for your updated list of schools
- Register for and take the required standardized tests (i.e. SAT, ACT) in spring semester
- Designate the NCAA to receive SAT & ACT scores when registering for test. NCAA- Code is #9999 on SAT & ACT registration form
- Read literature sent to you by schools
- Develop a list of prospective schools to visit with the help of counselors and coaches; create a file for each of the schools you are interested in and chart of areas you want to evaluate these schools in
- Request college applications as early as possible, preferably during your junior year

- Develop an athletic resume and continue to update records and lists of athletic and extracurricular activities
- Review the NCAA guide to the college bound student athlete again to familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations governing recruiting, eligibility and financial aid. Don't expect every college to just play by the rules
- Send a letter of introduction and phone call along with your athletic resume; to coaches of schools on your updated list
- Continue to attend sports camps.
- Continue to videotape games. Send video (or preferably DVD) to prospective coaches at the end of the junior year. Don't just focus on highlight plays. Show all aspects of your game that display your ability to contribute in various ways
- Update your athletic resume to reflect accomplishments from your sophomore year
- View college games to assess their level of play and compare it to your level

SENIOR YEAR

- Continue to work hard in your academic courses
- Submit NCAA Clearinghouse form in the fall of your senior year
- Take and/or retake the standardized tests as needed. Check with your counselor for national testing dates
- Obtain and complete college applications
- Meet with your counselor to review application materials
- Write a personal statement
- Complete Financial Aid forms early – *Profile* form in the fall (only needed for select colleges) and *FAFSA* (required for all colleges)
- Continue to visit the campuses of those schools in which you are interested. It is recommended that you either call or write for an appointment to meet with a coach, admissions officer, financial aid advisor and departmental chairperson
- Prepare to apply to several colleges – Even if you are going to apply “early decision” to one college, there is never a guarantee of admission
- Continue to write, call or e-mail coaches expressing interest in their school and athletic programs
- Update your athletic resume
- Be prompt in your response regarding college questionnaires or other similar requests
- **Students and parents must take the initiative and work on their own behalf. Please do not sit back and wait for someone to do it for you. Staying on top of all the information throughout the high school years makes it easier when the actual time comes to applying for college**

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

TO BE COMPLETED IN FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) governs three divisions of college athletics and requires that students interested in playing on either Division I or Division II teams file forms for certification of athletic eligibility. The form, in addition to the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete referenced throughout this document, can be found at www.ncaa.org. Students who want to participate in Division I or Division II sports should start the certification process no later than September of their senior year.

The procedure is as follows:

- If you wish to participate in Division I or Division II sports, you must submit your SAT scores directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse, code 9999
- You must fill out a “Domestic Student Release Form” (SRF) in September of your senior year. The form gives our School (and any other high school you may have attended) the authority to release your transcript, and eventually, proof of graduation. It also gives the NCAA Clearinghouse permission to release all academic and testing information to the colleges that request it. The preferred method of registering is online at:
https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/student/index_student.html
 - Select “Prospective Student-Athletes” and click on “Domestic Student Release Form” or “Foreign Student Release Form”
- Or by completing the student release form with which students must do the following:
 - Fill out and make three copies. Mail one copy to NCAA Clearinghouse
 - Give two copies to our Upper School registrar who will, upon receipt, send it to NCAA Clearinghouse with your transcript

IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLETE THIS FORM. YOU CANNOT MAKE OFFICIAL VISITS (financed by the college) TO A COLLEGE CAMPUS OR TRY OUT/ PRACTICE WITH A COLLEGE TEAM UNTIL THIS PAPERWORK IS FILED WITH THE NCAA OFFICE.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVISION I, II, & III

Division I

Division I (DI) member institutions have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season has to be represented by each gender, as well. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball, DI schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against DI opponents – anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50 percent DI. Men's and women's basketball teams have to play all but two games against DI teams. For men, they must play a third of all their contests in the home arena. Schools that have football are classified as DI-A or I-AA. DI-A football schools are usually fairly elaborate programs. DI-A teams have to meet minimum attendance requirements:

- 17,000 people in attendance per home game
- 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years, or
- 30,000 permanent seats in their stadium and average 17,000 per home game, or
- 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years, or be in a member conference in which at least six conference members sponsor football or more than half of football schools meet attendance criteria.

DI-AA teams do not need to meet minimum attendance requirements. DI schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletic program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport a school cannot exceed.

Division II

Division II (DII) institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender, and playing season represented by each gender. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria – football and men's and women's basketball teams must play at least 50 percent of their games against DII, DI-A, or DI-AA opponents. For sports other than football or basketball there are no scheduling requirements. There are no attendance requirements for football, or arena game requirements for basketball. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a DII school cannot exceed. DII teams usually feature a number of local or in-state student athletes. Many DII student-athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans and employment earnings. Most DII athletic programs are financed in the institution's budget like other academic departments on campus. Traditional rivalries with regional institutions dominate schedules of many DII athletic programs.

Division III

Division III (DIII) institutions have to sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, with two team sports for each gender. There are few contest and participant minimums for each sport. DIII athletics features student-athletes who receive no financial aid related to their athletic ability and athletic departments are staffed and funded like any other department in the university. DIII athletic departments place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators. The student-athlete's experience is of paramount concern. DIII athletics encourages participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletic opportunities available to students, placing primary emphasis on regional in-season and conference competition.

CONSIDER THIS

- There are 966 high schools in Virginia.
- There are 17,346 high schools in the United States
- There are 10,000,000 participants in high school athletics in America
- 2% of these participants are contacted by a college coach
- 3.5% of these participants actually participate in college sports at any level
- Less than half of 1% of athletes receive some form of aid
- Most high schools never have a full scholarship DI athlete

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AND/OR COACHES

Athletics

1. What positions will I play on your team? It is not always obvious. Most coaches want to be flexible, so you may not receive a definite answer.
2. What other players are or will be competing at the same position? The response could give you an idea of when you can expect to be a starter.
3. Will I be redshirted my first year? The school's policy on redshirting may impact you both athletically and academically.
4. What expectations do you have for training and conditioning? This will reveal the institution's commitment to training and conditioning program.
5. How would you best describe your coaching style? Every coach has a particular style that involves different motivational techniques and discipline. You need to know if a coach's teaching style matches your learning style and is something you would be comfortable with.
6. When does the head coach's contract end? How long does the coach intend to stay? The answer could be helpful. Do not make any assumptions about how long a coach will be at a school. If the coach leaves, does this change your mind about the school/program?
7. What are preferred, invited and uninvited walk-on situations? How many do you expect to compete? How many earn a scholarship? Situations vary from school to school.
8. Are you recruiting anyone else for my position? Coaches may consider other student-athletes for every position.
9. Is medical insurance required for my participation? Is it provided by the college? You may be required to provide proof of insurance.
10. If I am seriously injured while competing, who is responsible for my medical expenses? Different colleges have different policies.
11. What happens if I want to transfer to another school? You may not transfer without the permission of your current school's athletic administration. Ask how often coaches grant this privilege and ask for an example of a situation in which permission was not granted.
12. What other factors should I consider when choosing a college? Be realistic about your athletic ability and the type of athletic experience you would enjoy. Some student athletes want to be part of a particular athletics program, even if that means little or no playing time. Other considerations include coaching staff and style. Of course, the ideal is to choose a college or university that will provide you with both the educational and athletics opportunities you want.
13. What does an off season and in season day for athletes on your team look like? The answer will give you a good idea of how much time is spent in class, practice, study and travel. It also will give you a good indication of what coaches expect.
14. What are the majority of your players majoring in? If there are players on your team that are majoring in the same field, you will have people every day that can assist you in areas of need or with questions you may have about the program.

Academics

1. How good is the department in my major? How many students are in the department? What credentials do faculty members hold? What are graduates of the program doing after school?
2. What percentage of players on scholarship graduate? The response will suggest the school's commitment to academics. You might want to ask two follow-up questions:
 - a. What percentage of incoming students eventually graduate?
 - b. What is the current team's grade point average?
3. What academic support programs are available to student athletes? Look for a college that will help you become a better student for the future.
4. If I have a diagnosed and documented disability, what kind of academic services are available? Special academic services may help you achieve your academic goals.

5. How many credit hours should I take in season and out of season? It is important to determine how many credit hours are required for your degree and what pace you will follow to obtain that degree.
6. Are there restrictions in scheduling classes around practice? NCAA rules prevent you from missing class for practice.
7. Is summer school available? If I need to take summer school, will it be paid for by the college? You may need to take summer school to meet academic and/or graduation requirements.

College Life

1. What are the residence halls like? The response should give you a hint of how comfortable you would be in your room, in study areas, in community bathrooms and at the laundry facilities. Also ask about the number of students in a room, co-ed dorms and the rules governing life in the residence halls.
2. Must student-athletes live on campus? If “yes,” ask about exceptions if you are hoping to stay off campus.
3. What is the city outside of the college campus like? If you are looking for alternate things to do on weekends or prefer a quiet and small town, it is good to know these things.

SAMPLE RESUME

Educational Background:

Extracurricular:

Athletic Background:

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Educational Background:

Extracurricular:

Athletic Background:

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Do it Yourself Recruiting Guide: www.sacrg.org
2. Miller Place Union Free School District: <http://www.millerplace.k12.ny.us>
3. NCAA: www.ncaa.org (terms, calendars, rules, qualifications, numbers)
4. High School Baseball Web: www.hsbaseballweb.com (Testimonials and available info on college recruiting in general)

5. Bellarmine Preparatory School: <http://bellarmineprep.org>
6. St. Ignatius College Preparatory School: <http://www.siprep.org>