Searching to Play in the NCAA

Sharon A. Brennan & John H. MacPherson

About Us: **Sharon A. Brennan**

- **Forty year career in education**
  - Educational Consultant 2006 to present
  - Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management Emeritus, Southern Connecticut State University, 1986-2006
  - Dean of Admissions, Sacred Heart University, 1976-1986
  - Teacher, Amity Regional School District, 1969-1976
- **Served as an educational leader in several professional organizations**
  - Connecticut Regional Representative, New England College Board Regional Assembly
  - President, Connecticut Association for Counseling and Development
  - Board Chair, Board of Trustees, The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall, Milford, Connecticut

About Us: Sharon A. Brennan (Cont.)

- **Presenter at many professional workshops and conferences**
  - National Association for College Admissions Counseling, Annual Conference
  - New England College Board, Regional Meeting
  - New England Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, Regional Meeting
  - State University of New York, College Admissions Professionals Conference

- **Education**:
  - BS Degree, Biology/Chemistry, Sacred Heart University
  - MS Degree, Counseling, Fairfield University
  - Connecticut Certification in Science Education and Counseling

About Us: John H. MacPherson

- **Thirty-Eight year career in education**
  - Educational Consultant, 2005-present
  - Director of Guidance, Christ the King HS, 2005-present
  - Director of Guidance, Half Hollow Hills West HS, 2002-2005
  - Guidance Counselor, Half Hollow Hills West HS, 1987-2002
  - Social Studies Teacher, Half Hollow Hills HS, 1974-1987
  - Social Studies Teacher, Lindenhurst Schools, 1972-1974

- **Athletic Experience**
  - Boys Basketball, Baseball, Football, Tennis Coach, Half Hollow Hills Central School District, 1974-2005
  - Guidance Counselor to all Varsity Athletes, Christ the King HS, 2005-present

About Us: John H. MacPherson (Cont.)

- **Presenter at many professional workshops and conferences**
  - NCAA Clearinghouse workshops at various school districts on Long Island and Connecticut
  - Teacher for professional development class titled “The College Experience from Soup to Nuts” at New York Center for Teacher Development
  - Presented at LICAC Workshops concerning competitive colleges and the admissions process

- **Education**
  - School District Administrator, Dowling College, 2003
  - M.S., School Counseling, Hofstra University, 1974
  - B.A., History Education, Rutgers University, 1971

Introduction/ Mission Statement

This booklet was prepared to assist the high school student-athlete who is interested in playing college level sports. The key players in a student athlete's college admissions process are: the student, parents, school counselor, coach-high school and college and the college admissions officer. With so many players involved in such a complicated and important process, it is imperative that everyone understands the game plan and what their role will be.

This guide will help the student-athlete and the support team move through this process with ease and confidence so that every decision made will be in the best interest of the student. Parents, counselors and coaches must help the student-athlete make the best possible choice by sorting through various competing pressures and interests.

Information contained in this guide will provide all team members with the opportunity to provide current and accurate information related to the college admissions process and the NCAA Clearinghouse and Student Eligibility.

Topics Covered

A. Role of Athletics in the Admissions Process

B. Fundamental Role of the School Counselor and High School Coach

C. Core Course/ GPA and Standardized Testing

D. Recruiting Process: College Recruit Students and Students Recruit Colleges

E. Making the Right Choice: Questions to Ask, Broken Leg Test

F. Division III Colleges and Universities

G. Recruited Walk-On

H. Athletic Admits Who Don't Need to Be

Comments: Current State of College Admissions and the Student Athlete

- Everything may be different for an athletic recruit, from the academic standards by which the application is measured to adherence to published deadlines.
- One reason counselors must be the reality checker and levelheaded ballast in this often emotionally turbulent process is because too often, no one else will do so. Increasingly, the circle of people with an interest in a student's ultimate decision is growing to an almost ridiculous degree
- Quite simply, school sports are increasingly becoming irrelevant in terms of preparation for college careers; they are marginalized by amateur Athletic Union basketball, year round swimming, select soccer, tournament tennis, showcase events in a range of different sports, summer camps in all areas and the list goes on and on.

Role of Athletics in the Admissions Process

- Admissions process is more complicated for student-athlete
- Athletic quotas do exist [set aside seats]. This process is acknowledged but not common knowledge
- Deans and Directors of Admission still make the admissions decision….but not always.
- Best process is collaborative between coaching staff and the admissions office….not always the case. Note: High School counselor might need to intercede here.
- Some questions about the legality of the "quota based athletic admission"

Fundamental Role of the Counselor and the High School Coach: Honor the Dream/ Respect Reality

Counselor

- Counselor is the reality checker
- Student can end up being a pawn in this process
- Counselor must keep the process real
- There are many people involved in the process without a realistic view: student, parents, coaches and maybe even the media

Coach

- Monitor students academic performance in high school including standardized tests
- NCAA GPA computation should be followed
- Pay attention that student-athlete will meet the required 16 core classes on the transcript for Division I and 16 core for Division II colleges.
- Varsity Coach should advise student-athlete on realistic potential playing ability at the college level: Division I, II or III

Core Courses/ GPA and Standardized Testing

- NCAA Freshman-Eligibility Standards Quick Reference Sheet/NCAA Sliding Scale
- Student-Athlete and the NCAA Eligibility Center/Student Responsibility
- Academic Eligibility: Frequently Asked Questions
- Recruiting Regulations and Resources
- Letter of Intent Commitment
- Academic Courses cleared with the NCAA

Recruiting Process
College Recruiting Student

- **Ideal Process**
  - Coaches identify, recruit and sign an athlete for their program. The full scholarship is offered and the student signs the letter of intent. And everyone lives happily ever after!!
- **Reality Process**
  - Coaches use an early recruiting process. Mass mailings are sent out to prospects based on lists and scouting reports etc. These early signs of interest can be often meaningless. The shot gun approach.
  - Real interest is apparent when the recruiter from the college contacts the student. But it is still important for the student to not misunderstand the level of interest.
  - Campus visit for the student-athlete takes place. Counselor can help with this part of the process by making the visit productive.
  - Coaches are recruiting many players to cover the bases for their program. Student might feel like the franchise player at one point and later be dropped from the list,. with no explanation.
  - Coaches handle this process very differently. The students support team should inform the student of all of the possibilities.
  - COACHING is a BUSINESS. A bottom line business, where the athlete is a key cog in the machine.
  - Counselor….cut through the Hoopla!!

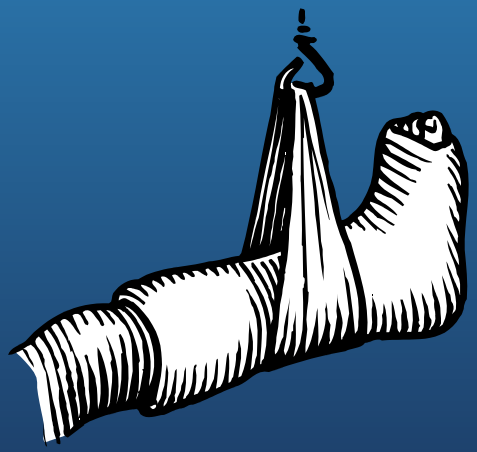
Recruiting Process
Students Recruiting the College

- Most student-athletes fall into this category
- Selling oneself to the college starts in the coaches office. i.e. film/DVD, athletic resume
- Coach can help direct the student to colleges where the student might be able to play.
- Counselor must be a part of this process and should step in here to address the issues related to admissibility to the colleges.
- Things to Do List, personal statement, special talent profile, special talent portfolio, extra-curricular sheet

Making the Right Choice: Questions to Ask and Factors to Consider when looking at Colleges

Broken Leg Test

- If my athletic career was to end, is this the school I want to attend? This question should be asked by the counselor and coach
- Fact: Only about 10% of student-athletes that are recruited to play Division I or II actually play for four years.



Division III Colleges and Universities

- NCAA Clearinghouse/Eligibility is not required
- No athletic scholarships are offered
- Most Division III schools are smaller liberal arts colleges both public and private
- Many field more sports than some of the large Division I Universities
- Many Division III colleges have a highly selective admissions process i.e. Amherst, Bates, Hamilton etc.
- Less selective Division III colleges many times use the athletic program to fill and maximize freshman enrollment

Recruited Walk On

- These athletes do not get scholarship money but are allocated quota spots or are on the coach list.
- Usually there is no difference in the status of the student in the program except that there is no scholarship offer.
- Many times an alternative package is offered such as financial aid or other university scholarships.
- Student will get athletic stamp of approval in the Admissions Office.

Academically Well Qualified Student Athlete

- Academically well qualified student-athletes should go through the athletic admissions process like all other recruits.
- Student should not be too quick to let the coach know that the college is a definite number one choice
- Failure to play cards close to the vest might result in lose of an athletic scholarship and potential playing time.
- Coaches can have a greater investment in scholarship players especially one who owes their admissions to the college to the athletic program.