

STAR Aquatics – College Recruiting Guide

Purpose: This guide is designed to assist swimmers and parents in the college swimming recruiting process. This guide should be used to support open communication among swimmers, parents, and your coaches.

Sophomore Year: Time to Think

___ 1. Goals

Consider your goals as a swimmer, as a student, and as a member of your family. Swimming may help you in a variety of ways, but you need to know how you want the sport to help you. (You may have more than one goal.)

Possible goals:

- a. I want to reduce the cost of a college education.
- b. I want to gain access to an academically exclusive institution (like Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, Duke, Davidson).
- c. I want to be part of a fantastic team.
- d. I want to be a big contributor to a team.
- e. Do you have a goal not listed here? If so, write it down:

___ 2. Interests:

Consider your major areas of academic interest. A good idea would be to list three possible academic majors.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

___ 2. Location:

Consider where you would like to attend school.

- a. Do you want to be within driving distance?
- b. Do you need frequent contact with your family and hometown friends?

- c. Are you independent?
- d. What climate do you prefer?
- e. Will travel expenses be an issue?

___ 3. Academics:

Take a good look at your grades. College admissions officers study your academic record from sophomore year through graduation.

- a. If you want to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman, you must earn a minimum grade point average of 2.00 in a core curriculum of 16 academic subjects for Division I and 14 for Division II.
- b. To gain admission to academically competitive schools, you should be taking the toughest courses available to you in which you can earn an A or B average. This may include advanced placement and/or honors courses. Swimming may be the ticket to gain admission to such schools, but you will need superior grades and excellent SAT scores. Many worthy students are rejected from these schools simply because the academic competition is fierce. Swimming may put you in the “fast lane” to admission.
- c. Many state schools also qualify as academically competitive. However, many have somewhat less rigorous standards. ANYONE seeking an NCAA scholarship, however, must select a college preparatory curriculum for four years of high school. Be very careful about course selection and electives in courses like English, which is required for admission. Be sure that your choice is considered at least college preparatory in the course guide. If you have a question regarding this, call or make an appointment to see your guidance counselor.
- d. Study, study, study. Remember, swimming may open the doors, but you have to earn the grades to get accepted to a school and maintain them once you are admitted. Learn to study and develop solid, responsible academic habits NOW.
- e. Take the PSAT at the earliest test date, usually in October of your sophomore year. This will give you an idea of where you stand academically and where you might need to get a little help.

___ 4. Swim Times

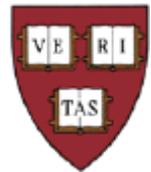
After your championship meet(s) in the spring of your sophomore year, take a look at your times. Think about where you are, and think about how fast you think you may be at the end of your junior year. Then, read the article which follows. It contains valuable tips on matching your ability level to a school.

Five Best Events	Best Times Now	Practical Goals for Next Year
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

So You Want to Swim in College?

Great! We've put this page together to help you obtain more information about college swimming.

The best site to begin your search is the [Harvard University](#) website. It contains direct links to almost all of the major college swim teams. As you visit each college's swimming web page, look for things such as their Freshman Records or their All-Time Top 10 (or 20) list. From these times you can determine where you would fit into their program.



If there is a link to the college's conference or year-end meet, go there and look at last year's conference results. That will also help you get an idea of where you would fit into their program. Remember, most conferences have limits on the number of swimmers and divers that a team can take to the conference meet (typically 16-18 swimmers for each men's and women's teams). Thus, if the team is quite large find out about the conference limits unless swimming at a conference meet is not a concern for you.

From the conference meet, most colleges go to one of the NCAA Swimming Championships (Division I, II, or III), the NAIA Championships, or the National Junior College Championships. You can get the latest NCAA Championship Time Standards from the [USA Swimming website](#).

Remember, the "A" NCAA standard does not necessarily guarantee you entry into the meet. Most NCAA championships are limited to a specific number of swimmers in each event. The fastest swimmers get into the event, and some may be left out even if they achieve the "A" standard. The "B" standard lets you into an event if you are in the meet with an "A" cut or

entered as part of a relay. The [Harvard Results](#) site normally carries all of those results and you should look for them to find out where you might best fit. You can also find the latest NCAA Championship meet information and results by visiting the [All Sports Swimming Championship](#) website.

Another good place to check for college swim programs is the [Directory of American Colleges and Universities](#). Click on a State and then visit all the colleges from that state. At each college, look around for Athletics and see if they have a swim program.

These general university and college sites might also help you get an idea of admissions requirements and scholarship opportunities.

Remember, in Division I and II, schools can offer scholarships for swimming but the total amount of scholarship money available is limited to approximately nine (9) full-time out-of-state scholarships for each school. This money is often distributed among many swimmers. In addition, the money your child receives in academic aid will also count towards the university or college's swimming scholarship amount.



One place you'll want to be sure to check is the [NCAA website](#). You'll find answers to many of your questions regarding academic eligibility, financial aid, recruiting, and graduation rates, just to name a few. And as the president of the NCAA advises, start your college career by asking lots of questions. Find out if you're on track to meet academic eligibility and core-course requirements. See what the graduation rate of the athletics programs and the athletes in your sport are at the colleges in which you are interested. Ask what academic support services are available and how academic progress is tracked.

___ 5. To check out all of the links and read the above article online, go to <http://www.missourivalleyswimming.com/recruiting/index.asp>.

Other resources that will help you learn about the recruiting process include

- a. www.collegeswimming.com
- b. www.ncaa.com
- c. www.findacollege.com
- d. Individual college websites and individual college swim team websites

___ 6. Summer project:

Considering your areas of academic interest, your goals as a student, swimmer, and member of your family, your practical goal times for next season, and your needs as far as climate/location are concerned, find ten schools that may interest you. At least four of these schools should be well within your reach, three should be a bit more difficult to attain, and three should be your "reach" schools (if everything including grades, times, finances, scholarships were to be absolutely perfect!).

My top choices for college right now include:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Junior Year: Time to Shine

1. Academics:

Keep working hard. Remember, your grades are part of your academic record. Any college recruiter or coach will be examining them.

- a. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): Be on the lookout for testing dates, which are offered almost monthly. Check the www.sat.collegeboard.com website for specific dates and locations. You will probably want to take this test more than once so that you can achieve your best combined results (verbal, math, and writing).
- b. You may want to take an SAT prep course; however, most libraries carry free SAT prep books, and certainly they are available for purchase (with CD ROMS) from most book stores.
- c. To be eligible for recruitment in Division I, you must complete a minimum of 16 core courses and present the required GPA/SAT scores (see the sliding scale in Appendix C). To be recruited in Division II, you must complete a minimum of 14 core courses with a minimum GPA of 2.0 and a minimum SAT score of 820–1010 (critical reading and math combined).
- d. Other tests: Some colleges have different testing requirements. Be informed. Know what you need to take to gain admission.
- e. College swim coaches are looking for student athletes who can handle the demands of their school with little effect on pool performance. Work hard in the classroom.

2. Swimming:

Work hard, stay healthy, swim fast. Now more than ever, it is important to do everything you can to swim well. Focus at practice. Get enough sleep. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. The times you post at the end of your season

this year will play a large part in the recruiting process. A few swimmers may be signed early after their junior year end-of-season times, but mostly coaches look at these times to see how you are progressing as an athlete. College coaches are looking for swimmers who can improve, so you need to keep improving to attract attention.

3. **Goal Check:**

Revisit your sophomore summer project. Are your goals still the same? Do you need to make adjustments? Re-evaluate? If you have changed your mind (as MANY student athletes do), you will need to go back and do some more research.

- a. There are 142 Division I schools that offer swimming scholarships.
- b. There are 50 Division II schools that offer swimming scholarships.
- c. The total number of scholarships for men in the NCAA is 1,810.8.
- d. The total number of scholarships for women in the NCAA is 3,108.4.

4. **Register with the NCAA Clearing House website (also known as the NCAA Eligibility Center).** This is necessary for any NCAA athlete. Although there is no deadline, you should register at the beginning of your junior year as you cannot receive a scholarship unless you are registered with the site. There is a registration fee (see www.ncaa.org).

5. **Online questionnaires:** Fill out an on-line questionnaire for each of the ten schools on your list from your sophomore summer project. This will indicate your interest to the coaches. If one or more of your chosen schools does not offer an online questionnaire, send a letter of interest to the coach (see Appendix A).

6. **Results:**

Look at your times and match them to the level of college swimming that will be most suitable to your ability and your goals. Use the websites from the previous article to complete this research.

7. **Establish Contact:**

Begin talking to coaches by e-mailing them. Send your resume, and let them know that you are interested. Be sure to follow the NCAA recruiting guidelines (NCAA.org). Do NOT wait for coaches to contact you **as it is against NCAA recruiting rules for them to initiate contact before July 1 following your junior year.** However, coaches may respond to your e-mail and may talk to you when you initiate the call and reach them by phone.

If a coach does not initially respond, you should not give up immediately. Provide a few follow-up emails. Include your progress, show your enthusiasm, and let them know that you are excited about their school and their swim team. This is not the time to be shy or too humble; however, be sure to stick to the truth!

Some coaches may send you mail about their school and their team; this may include a media guide which includes brief biographies of the swimmers, team records, best times, etc. This is useful information for you to help you evaluate the team. Receiving this mail shows a coach's interest in you; however, this does not mean you are guaranteed a spot on the team or a scholarship offer.

8. **Unofficial Visits:** An unofficial visit may be taken any time although the summer before your senior year is often convenient for families. Simply put, an unofficial visit means that you and your family travel to the school completely at your own expense. Coaches, however, are permitted to talk to you, so try to schedule a meeting with the coach and with someone in your area of academic interest.

A. Preparing for the visit:

1. Be sure you have submitted your swimming questionnaire online.
2. Prepare questions for the coach.
3. Practice answering questions they may ask you. Role play with a parent, teammate or friend.
4. Be ready to talk about your strengths and weaknesses.
5. Obtain references:
 - a. Coach
 - b. Teachers
 - c. Others: employers, teammates
6. Prepare your resume
7. Do your research on the swim team
 - a. Know the coaching staff
 - b. Review the team roster
 - c. Review the team records, meet schedule, rankings

B. During your meeting with the coach:

1. Be early.
2. Be neat, clean, and organized.
3. Ask questions. You can write them down if necessary. (See Appendix B)
4. Take notes.
5. Be sure to get names, addresses, phone numbers (ask for a business card).
6. Answer questions with S.A.R (situation/action/results).
7. Tell a brief story.
8. Show ENTHUSIASM.
 - a. Act as if this is the absolute best school for you (but be honest).
 - b. Show your desire by using positive body language and remaining engaged. Turn OFF your cell phone.
9. Turn your negatives into positives.
10. Do not respond with a “yes” or “no.” Always explain.
11. Relax, have fun, be yourself.

C. After your meeting with the coach:

1. Send a thank you note to each person who spent time with you. E-mail is acceptable, but a hand-written note is always more impressive.
2. Re-assess your choice. Is this school and team right for you?
3. Continue to communicate and show enthusiasm if this school is still on your list of possible choices.

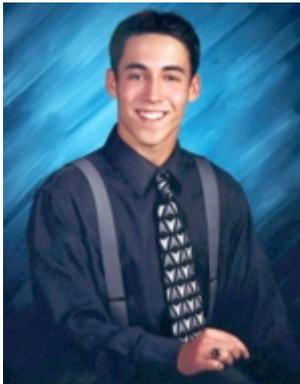
9. **July 1st:** On July 1st following your junior year, coaches may begin to call you if they are interested in recruiting you. Some swimmers may find this both flattering and overwhelming. This is a time to keep your top choices in

mind, remember your goals as a student and a swimmer, and be honest with coaches. Do not lead them on with false hope just to be polite. On the other hand, if you are interested in the school as one of your top five choices, let the coach know that very clearly. If a coach calls, this does not mean you are guaranteed an offer. Nothing is official until you sign that letter of intent.

10. Resume:

Create a swimming resume as shown below from the www.missourivalleyswimming.com website.

John Q. Public



Address: 1234 Any Street
Anytown, KS 66699

Home Phone: (785) 555-1212 (785) 555-1212

Email Address: jqpublic@myhome.com

Current Age: 17

High School: Kansas High School
2468 Main Street
Anytown, KS 66699

Current Status: Senior

Graduation: May 26, 2002

Academics

Overall GPA: 3.83 (4.0 scale)

Class Rank: 9 / 287

Honors: Junior Class President

Principal's Honor Roll ('99-'01)

2001 Citizenship Award

Who's Who of Top

High School Students

National Honors Society

Interests: Science and Mathematics

Collegiate Goals: Advanced degree in Engineering

Swim for NCAA Division I College

Qualify for 2004 Olympic Trials

Extracurricular

Activities: Concert Band ('99-'02)

Math Club ('00-'02)

Chess Club ('99-'01)

Habitat for Humanity ('01-'02)

Lifeguard (('98-'01)

Honors: Phi Kappa Delta Award (2001)

Athletics

H.S. Sports: Swimming and Basketball

H.S. Swim Coach: Bill Cordell

(785) 555-5611 (785) 555-5611

MVS Club: Kansas "Stingrays" Swim Club

MVS Swim Coach: Jeff Vanderhaven

(785) 555-3289 (785) 555-3289

Honors: Kansas High School "Top Male Athlete"

Award ('01)

Missouri Valley Swimming's

"Top 8" Honors ('97-'01)

Missouri Valley Swimming District

Record Holder (50m Freestyle)

USA Swimming "National Championship"

Qualifier ('00-'01)

Best Events

50m Freestyle 24.03 (LCM)

100m Freestyle 52.27 (LCM)

Senior Year: Time to Choose

1. **Academics:** DO NOT SUCCUMB TO SENIORITIS. Maintain excellent grades; show your focus and determination in the classroom. Continue to take the most academically challenging classes that you can handle. This will not only help you in your quest for admission, but it will also be invaluable once you are taking college courses. Continue to take the SAT's until you are satisfied with your combined scores.
2. **Swimming:** Train hard, stay focused, and swim fast. College coaches may visit your practice. They are not only interested in your times, but also in your work ethic, your ability to work as part of a team, and your leadership skills. You may also see college coaches at swim meets. Be sure to check the current NCAA guidelines (NCAA.org) for talking to coaches at meets. For example, a coach may speak to you at a meet, but only after you swim your last event. If a coach attempts to speak to you before this point, he or she is in violation of NCAA recruiting policies and the coach may be penalized for the violation.
3. **Recruiting trips:** You are allowed to accept five recruiting trips. Coaches offer these if they are very interested in you. Most often, the recruiting trip is an all expenses paid weekend visit to the college. There are many things to consider regarding these trips:
 - a. Recruiting trips detract from training and from school work. Go on the trip only if you are serious about the college.

- b. The recruiting trip is the time to show the coach your wonderful personality. Talk, observe, ask questions, and be interested. Coaches may recruit primarily by times, but they also recruit by personality.
 - c. The recruiting trip is a time to meet your prospective team mates. Be open to meeting them and try to make connections. Try to show that you would be a good team mate by being polite, kind, and cooperative.
 - d. The recruiting trip, unfortunately, is a time when some recruits get into trouble. **DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN UNDERAGE DRINKING OR ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE USE.** Although you may see it happening around you, participating will reflect badly on you, your team, your family, and your school. Additionally, the college may find itself in violation of NCAA recruiting procedures should you be caught. The college would then be penalized for the violation, and the coach may not remember you fondly following the penalty.
 - e. Once you have participated in recruiting trips, you may feel pressure from the coach to commit to the school. This coach has invested time and money in you, and he or she may try to pressure you into making a commitment because of it. This is why you should **ONLY** go on a recruiting trip if you are seriously interested in the school.
 - f. Follow the advice for meeting with coaches outlined in the previous “unofficial visit” section.
4. **Financial Aid:** Very few full scholarships are awarded to swimmers as it is an equivalency sport. It may be in your best interest to become familiar with and submit the FASFA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form).
5. **Negotiating a Scholarship:** At this point, parents should definitely be highly involved if not in charge of any discussion. There are a few things to consider about scholarships:
- a. Coaches can divide scholarship money among multiple athletes.
 - b. Division I swimming programs have 9.9 scholarships for Men and 14 for Women.
 - c. Division II schools have 8.1 scholarships for Men and 8.1 for Women.
 - d. Typically, each program has only 20–30% of their totally swimming scholarship money to offer to incoming freshmen each year.

- e. Try not to get emotionally involved in the negotiating process. Consider how you feel when you are buying a car or a home; a college education is a big ticket item that needs to be considered from many different perspectives.
- f. If you are offered a scholarship, it is good manners to keep the financial details to yourself. After all, your team mate may not have gotten the same deal. Becoming part of a new team means not making waves by making comparisons.

6. Making A Commitment:

- a. Never make a verbal commitment to a coach on a recruiting trip unless you have first discussed it with your family.
- b. Verbal commitments are not legally binding; however, if you give a verbal commitment, you should have every intention of attending that school.
- c. Those athletes who have been asked to sign letters of intent early may do so in the designated week (in mid November).
- d. Regular signing for most swimmers occurs in April and May.
- e. The signing dates change year to year, but you can confirm the exact dates on www.nationalletter.org.

7. **Letter of Intent:** This is a letter than officially indicates that you will be attending a school and accepting an athletic scholarship from them. Signing this letter marks the end of the recruiting process; other teams should no longer contact you.

Conclusion: Choosing a college, and a college swim team, are important decisions in a swimmer's life. Your family as well as your STAR family will be here to help you. By following the steps outlined in this document, you can limit the confusion, concern and worry that most teenagers face when they are choosing a college. When you do make your final choice, let us know so we can celebrate your success!

Appendix A

100 Pool Street

Anytown, USA

Dear Coach XXX:

I am writing to express an interest in attending XXX University and representing The University of XXX on the swim team. My name is XXX. I am a competitive swimmer and I'm starting my Junior year of High School at XXX in XXX, North Carolina where I am focusing my studies on XXX.

I have enclosed my current "Best Times", swimming resume and latest school transcript. I currently swim for STAR Aquatics. Please feel free to contact Coach Jay Dodson (336)337-0169 with any questions. You can also track my results at -----.

I am planning an "unofficial visit" to your school sometime soon. I look forward to hearing from you in the future. Thank you for your time and consideration.

XXX

Appendix B

School _____

Date _____

Coach _____

- Tell me about your training / workouts:
- How would you describe your coaching style?
- Will you be here for the next 4 years?
- What assistant coach will I be working with?
- Who else are you recruiting in my events?
- Where do you see me fitting into the team?
- What do you look for in a recruit?
- What are your short term & long term goals for the team?
- How good is the department in my major (s)?
- What academic support programs are available for student / athletes?
- What is a typical day like for a swimmer on campus?
- What are the residence halls like?
- Do student - athletes have to live on campus?

- Am I able to have a car on campus?
- What all is covered under an athletic scholarship?
- How much other financial aid is available (academic, summer school)?
- Would I be eligible for other financial aid?
- Are there opportunities for work on campus?
- Is there academic criteria tied to maintaining a scholarship?
- Is there any financial support available after I complete my degree if I continue my education here?
- Are you looking at any other swimmers from the SE Region?
- How can you help me reach my goals?

Appendix C

NCAA FRESHMAN-ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

KNOW THE RULES:

Core Courses

NCAA Division I requires 16 core courses as of August 1, 2008. This rule applies to any student first entering any Division I college or university on or after August 1, 2008. See the chart below for the breakdown of this 16 core-course requirement.

NCAA Division II requires 14 core courses. See the breakdown of core-course requirements below. Please note, Division II will require 16 core courses beginning August 1, 2013.

Test Scores

Division I has a sliding scale for test score and grade-point average. The sliding scale for those requirements is shown on page two of this sheet.

Division II has a minimum SAT score requirement of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes **only** the critical reading and math sections. The writing section of the SAT is not used.

The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a **sum** of the four sections on the ACT: English, mathematics, reading and science.

All SAT and ACT scores must be reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center by the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used. When registering for the SAT or ACT, use the Eligibility Center code of 9999 to make sure the score is reported to the Eligibility Center.

Grade-Point Average

Only core courses are used in the calculation of the grade-point average.

Be sure to look at your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses on the Eligibility Center's Web site to make certain that courses being taken have been approved as core courses. The Web site is www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

Division I grade-point-average requirements are listed on page two of this sheet.

The **Division II** grade-point-average requirement is a minimum of 2.000.

DIVISION I

16 Core-Course Rule

16 Core Courses:

4 years of English.

3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).

2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).

1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.

2 years of social science.

4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy).

DIVISION II

14 Core-Course Rule

14 Core Courses:

3 years of English.

2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).

2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).

2 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.

2 years of social science.

3 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy).

PLEASE NOTE: Beginning August 1, 2013, students planning to attend an NCAA Division II institution will be required to complete 16 core courses.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Division II has no sliding scale. The minimum core grade-point average is 2.000. The minimum SAT score is 820 (verbal and math sections only) and the minimum ACT sum score is 68.

14 core courses are currently required for Division II. However, beginning 2013, students will be required to complete 16 core courses.

16 core courses are required for Division I.

The SAT combined score is based on the verbal and math sections only. The writing section will not be used.

SAT and ACT scores must be reported directly to the Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Scores on transcripts will not be used.

Students enrolling at an NCAA Division I or II institution for the first time need to also complete the amateurism questionnaire through the Eligibility Center Web site. Students need to request final amateurism certification prior to enrollment.

For more information regarding the rules, please go to www.ncaa.org. Click on "Academics and Athletes" then "Eligibility and Recruiting." Or visit the Eligibility Center Web site at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

Please call the NCAA Eligibility Center if you have questions:

Toll-free number: 877/262-1492.
NCAA Eligibility Center
05/07/08 LK:cr

**NCAA DIVISION I SLIDING SCALE
CORE GRADE-POINT AVERAGE/
TEST-SCORE**

New Core GPA / Test Score Index

Core GPA SAT ACT

Verbal and Math ONLY

3.550 & above 400 37

3.525 410 38

3.500 420 39

3.475 430 40

3.450 440 41

3.425 450 41

3.400 460 42

3.375 470 42

3.350 480 43

3.325 490 44

3.300 500 44

3.275 510 45

3.250 520 46

3.225 530 46

3.200 540 47

3.175 550 47

3.150 560 48

3.125 570 49

3.100 580 49

3.075 590 50

3.050 600 50

3.025 610 51

3.000 620 52

2.975 630 52

2.950 640 53

2.925 650 53

2.900 660 54

2.875 670 55

2.850 680 56

2.825 690 56

2.800 700 57

2.775 710 58

2.750 720 59

2.725 730 59

2.700 730 60

2.675 740-750 61

2.650 760 62

2.625 770 63

2.600 780 64

2.575 790 65

2.550 800 66

2.525 810 67

2.500 820 68

2.475 830 69

2.450 840-850 70

2.425 860 70

2.400 860 71

2.375 870 72
2.350 880 73
2.325 890 74
2.300 900 75
2.275 910 76
2.250 920 77
2.225 930 78
2.200 940 79
2.175 950 80
2.150 960 80
2.125 960 81
2.100 970 82
2.075 980 83
2.050 990 84
2.025 1000 85
2.000 1010 86