

College Recruiting Timeline (thanks to USA Swimming)

Freshman/Sophomore Year

Start searching universities on the www.ncaa.org webpage

- Find schools that have the major you want (your diploma will be more important than your swimming times after graduation!)
- Find out about the academic reputation of the school
- Check out the team records, coach's history with the program

Send the coaches of the programs you're interested in a cover letter, with an athletic resume including: (send them updated letters/info annually!)

- Your name, birthdate, address, phone number, email
- GPA and test scores
- Training background
 - How many workouts per week, yardage, hours per workout
 - If you've done weights, running, medicine balls---all dryland
 - How many years you've been swimming
- Competition background
 - Send them a record of your times/improvement
- Any/all other activities you're involved in

During your freshman/sophomore years, the college coaches can send you a questionnaire in response, and general team info, but no recruiting materials.

Check Initial-Eligibility Requirements. There are certain courses you will need to take to be eligible to swim as a Freshman in college.

Junior Year

After you have begun your junior year, the college coaches can begin sending you official recruiting material.

You should be sending updated information to them, and narrowing your list of universities to select from.

Sign up NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. You can do it online at www.ncaachlearinghouse.net It currently costs \$50.

July 1 between your Junior and Senior Years

College coaches can officially begin calling you on this date. They may only speak with you once per week, but may send unlimited mailings and email.

Senior Year

Once your senior school year has begun, you may take 5 “official” visits (where the university pays for any/all of your trip) to college campuses. These 5 visits must be to different campuses. You may go to any campus “unofficially” (where you pay for all your expenses) as many times as you like, and at any point in the selection process...during any year of school.

Be sure to take a copy of the list of questions with you, to cover all your bases.

Keep a journal/notes of your visits...write down your impressions of each place...what you liked, didn't like, etc. Put down as many details as possible, so that you can compare the campuses after you've visited a number of them. Remember, you are choosing the place where you want to be happy for the next 4 years of your life!

It's very “romantic” to be recruited...having college coaches paying all this attention to you. Be sure to get your questions answered, and keep your eyes and ears open to what is best for you! If you decide you're really not interested in a particular school and the coach continues to call you, please tell him/her you're not interested. It's a difficult thing to do, but it will save both of you time in the long run. If the coach gets mad or says mean things to you for not wanting to join his/her program, then it probably confirms that you didn't want to swim for this person anyway!

There are two “signing” periods for scholarships if you are offered one....early (November) and late (April). There are pros and cons to both...if you take your visits early and are sure of your decision, then by all means, sign early! It takes a load of pressure off your shoulders in the spring semester! Some coaches may say to wait...they may have more scholarship money available in the spring semester to offer. This is a gamble....maybe they will, maybe they won't....it's not always a guarantee. Some coaches may offer a full scholarship (room/board/tuition/fees/books)...others may offer a partial scholarship, which can include any of those segments. Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships, Division III only has academic scholarships. If you are not sure, then do wait 'til the spring. Give yourself more time to think over the decision, and make the one that's right for you.

Your High School guidance counselor can help you through this process, too.....s/he can help you with financial aid information, getting your test scores, etc sent to places before your official visits, and may also have resources to tell you about the academic reputations of the schools you're looking at. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get help! The more informed you are, the more easily you're going to make the best decision for yourself!

Good luck!!!

