

Recruiting: Narrowing the List

Going from many potential colleges to just a few

Narrowing a field of hundreds of colleges and universities into a list of five to eight schools can be a tough process for swimmers. Student-athletes must consider each potential school from both academic and athletic perspectives. There are few colleges that perfectly meet all the necessary personal criteria of a college-bound swimmer. Student-athletes are concerned with more than just academics, as the college must also provide a compatible swimming and diving program.

Five to Eight School List

College-bound athletes should compile a list of five to eight schools by the end of their junior year. All of the schools on the list should be well researched and meet the athlete's necessary criteria both academically and athletically. Consider the size, location, reputation, and cost of each university. Colleges provide statistical profiles of current students and admissions criteria. Compare your GPA and SAT scores to assess compatibility with these profiles.

Do Your Homework

Swimmers must also consider each program's coaching staff, history, size, and funding. Similarly, research each team's best swimmers and assess your ability to compete and contribute. Make note of those colleges that fulfill both your academic and athletic needs.

Focus

This preliminary list should then be carefully focused and narrowed. The goal is to develop a list of five to eight colleges placed into two distinct tiers: reaches and safeties. Those schools that will most likely admit you based upon academic and athletic quality and skill are considered safeties. Reaches, which may or may not be stronger academically and athletically, are schools that have lower acceptance rates. Your list should include three or four safeties and four or five reaches.

Get Help

Be sure to develop this list in conjunction with your parents and college or guidance counselor. Remember, while each school on your list might be markedly different, you should be content attending and swimming for each one. Developing such a list is difficult, and perhaps burdensome, but it is a necessary step towards finding your ideal match.

