

What are YOU looking for in YOUR College Experience?

Academic and General College Criteria – what is important to YOU?

- Where do you want to fit in academically (after all it is SCHOOL)? Top 25%, bottom 25%.
- How does that translate to you as an athlete?
- Academic reputation of the college. Is that important to you? Be careful here as you shouldn't be focused on the best college you can get into but on the BEST FIT for YOU.
- How well you do in college is important for future internships, jobs, references and grad school (if that is your path).
- Classes and Curriculum: Ability to get desired classes and the ability to graduate in four years. Does the school offer majors you are interested in? Do you like the curriculum: liberal arts? Research? Open?
- Div 1, 2 or 3 (spectators perspective) – School spirit
- School size: small, medium or large (smaller, same or larger than your high school?)
- Class Size: What does that mean i.e. class discussion vs. lecture? Relationship with the professor? Teaching style? Are classes taught by professors or by graduate students/teachers assistants?
- Location: rural/suburban/urban
- Travel: proximity and convenience of airplanes/trains and time/cost required to travel home
- Do you like how the school feels? How does it look? Does it look like the students could be your friends? Do you fit in? Are the students happy?
- Surrounding Community: proximity to stores, restaurants, pharmacy? What else is there to do nearby?
- Weather: Can you be above the weather for four years?
- Acceptance rates: What are your chances of getting in?
- Housing: Is it available? For how many years? What are the dorms like? How is the food and what is its availability and cost?
- Social life: What do they do for fun? What is the school's reputation? Do they have a Greek system? Can athletes go Greek?
- Study Abroad: encouraged or not by school and by the coach?
- Internships: Are they available in the community or on campus?
- Strength of the alumni network for job contacts post graduation
- Financial Aid: Is it available and in what form (grants vs. loans)?
- Balance: Are you comfortable with the required balance of social and academic
- School philosophy
- Academic Support: what kind is available? What is the cost? Study Halls?
- What are the school traditions and is there school spirit? What is the school culture? is there an academic advisory system or academic counseling available?
- Do you like it? Could you live there for four years

Athletic Criteria: What are your Goals for Swimming?

- Training: do you want to train harder, as hard or less than you currently train?
- Training Regimen: Is it flexible? Are all practices required? What is the schedule?
- Academics: Will you be able to compete academically if you are part of this team?
- Composition: Do you want a co-ed team or separate men's and women's teams?
- Traditions: What are the team traditions? Do they sound like fun?
- Improvement: Do you care about continued improvement or are you looking for a team to be part of? Is it the right level of competition for you?
- Championships: Is it important for you to be part of the League or NCAA Championship Squad? How would you feel if you were not included?
- Team Performance: Is it important how strong the team is relative to the competition?
- Travel Team: Will it matter to you whether or not you make the travel squad?
- The Pool: Is the quality of the facility important to you? You will be spending a lot of time there!
- Coaches: Do you like them? How do the swimmers describe them? What are the interactions coach to coach and coach to athlete? Do their swimmers improve in college? Where did they swim in college/ Where did they coach before this job? What did they coach before i.e. sprints, distance, stroke? What do they think are the strengths of this college's program?
- Coach's Philosophy: What type of team philosophy would mesh with you?
- The Team: What are your criteria? competitive? supportive? family feeling? Business like? Do you fit in with the team culture and goals? Do they like each other?
- Teammates: probably the most important criteria. You will laugh with them, cry with them, bond with them, live with them, advise with them, study with them, travel, be sick, etc. with them. They are very important.
- Team Social: Can you fit in socially with the team? What do they do for fun?
- Position: Who do you want to be on the team: superstar? hold team records? middle of the pack spurred on by the faster swimmers? slowest but want to be part of strong team?
- Retention: Are there many juniors and seniors on the team?
- Scholarship Opportunities: important or not?
- Athletic Department Support: Is the team an important part of the athletic department. Is continued funding an issue? How do they support their athletes?
- Summer and Winter Break Training requirements: What are they? Cost?
- Athletic Support: What kind of support, if any, is provided i.e. tutoring, priority registration, meals, trainers, laundry services, etc.
- Reputation/success: Have OA swimmers or swimmers you know been part of this program?
- What was their experience?
- Other Activities: Will the team support involvement in other activities i.e. clubs, internships, study abroad, Greek system, employment, etc?
- Walk-ons: Is there the potential to walk-on the team?

“LookForIt” (lookforit.com)

A relatively new website designed to ultimately be used as a tool for swimmers, club coaches and college swim coaches to find colleges/teams that are the right fit for both the swimmer and the college. As it is new, it isn't yet the industry standard but it can, very easily, make a first cut of college teams for which you are recruitable. The basic service is free and upon registering, LookForIt will generate a list of collegiate swim teams for which there is a possibility based on times alone that you could swim. It will create a list of collegiate swim teams on your “dashboard” for which you would be ranked the current #1, #2 or #3 swimmer (or close). The drawbacks are that the list may have literally hundreds of options to consider, it does not take academic level into consideration and you may actually be too fast for many of the teams. By paying \$5 per month, LookForIt provides a few other personal preference options to help you cull your list to a more manageable number i.e. limit the Divisions searched (D1, D2, D3, NAIA, etc), specify certain regions of the United States, eliminate schools where your time would be the fastest, etc. Remember that you only really need a list of 10-20 schools, so if there are schools on the list that you, your family or your coaches have never heard of, you may want to put them aside for now.

Collegeswimming.com:

This is an awesome tool to gain more information on a team: Which Division they swim in, which conference, meet results, size of the team, number of seniors vs freshman on the team, which swimmers are graduating, depth of each event, etc. While results for college teams are listed on their respective athletic websites, every team's results are available and consolidated on the collegeswimming.com website (one stop shopping!). Using these tools, you can compare your top times to a team's results to quickly determine if your fastest times are within the “recruitable range” (roughly defined as the top 1-4 times on a team roster). If the team is a “fit”, you may want to consider other teams in their conference.

CollegeBoard.org:

Search for a particular university and then click on its link. Basic information will be given about the school: size, location, picture, cost, etc. Then go to the left hand column and click on “Applying”. The level of selectivity will indicate how hard it is to get into the school (support from a college coach may help here) but there are also buttons for Academics/GPA and another for SAT/ACT scores. The SAT/ACT button will show you the midrange of accepted students test scores. This will give you a general idea of whether or not it is an academic fit for you. A good benchmark for a “good fit” is being at the top of the range for that school. Too low and you may struggle academically at that school, too high and the school may not be the right fit. This website provides a quick and pretty painless way to narrow your list.

June/Summer Between Junior and Senior Year:

- Obtain a copy of your Unofficial Transcript. Many high school offices are closed during the summer months. Plan accordingly.
- Prepare all information needed to prepare counselors/teachers to write their Letters of Recommendation (some high schools require both student and parent “brag sheets”). This is easy to do over the slower summer months but could cause great delays in the Fall especially if you are considering applying Early Decision.
- Continue college visits. Write the admissions offices and request information. Many schools document the number of times you “touch” them i.e. taking virtual tours, requesting information, meeting with school representatives, etc.
- Update Coaches. Continue to email coaches with updates. If you are interested in going on a recruit trip to a specific school, let the coach know that their school is one of your top choices. Continue to reconfirm your interest in their program and your interest in a recruiting trip.
- Immediately respond to any correspondence from college coaches. If you do not receive initial responses to calls or resumes or submissions of on-line questionnaires, you may want to call or email the coach to make sure it was received.
- Coaches may begin contacting athletes directly beginning July 1st. Be prepared to talk to these coaches. Have a sheet of paper/pencil and questions available for these calls. Take notes and especially remember the name of who contacted you.
- Fine tune your list of college criteria and your list of athletic criteria (Section
- Target 10-15 schools that are both an academic and an athletic fit
- Prepare the OA Grid (list of target colleges/teams) and meet with your coach!
- Begin work on your college essay(s)!

Senior Year:

- Take additional Standardized tests, if needed
- Go on recruit trips!
- Follow-up with coaches immediately! Reconfirm your interest in their program.
- Follow up/double check to make sure that letters of recommendation, transcripts and applications are received in a timely manner (financial aid information too)
- Consider Early Decision or Early Action to college(s) as applicable. Discuss with your OA coach.
- Submit applications in a timely manner i.e. in advance of the deadlines. Make sure to keep track of any information the colleges may send you re: application ID numbers, student ID numbers, instructions for logging onto Admissions websites, passwords, financial aid, housing instructions, orientation information, etc. Know how each college is going to communicate with you as THEY ARE ALL DIFFERENT.
- January: File the Free Application for Federal Student (FAFSA). Your parents will need their tax information (or a good estimate) in order to fill out these forms. Make sure you are as accurate as possible when filling out these forms as it is difficult to make corrections. Many college teams have specific Financial Aid representatives available to athletic recruits. It may be possible to get an early read from the FA officer. If their financial award estimate will not allow the college to be affordable, let the FA representative and/or the coach know.
- Check emails frequently for correspondence from each college.
- May 1st is the acceptance date for most schools. Many athletes will hear months in advance of that date. As soon as you have accepted a college admittance letter, withdraw your applications from all other colleges.

Sample Sports Resume: Name

Address: 1234 Main Street
Moraga, Ca 94556
Home Phone: (925) 376-1212
Email Address: djohnson@gmail.com
Current Age: 17
High School: Miramonte High School
750 Moraga Way
Spokane, Wa 94563
Current Status: Senior (Graduation: June 8, 2016)

(ATTACH PHOTO)

Academics

Overall GPA: 3.83 (4.0 scale)
Class Rank: Not available
Honors: Sophomore Class Treasurer
Washington State Scholarship Fed.
National Merit Commendation
National French Award
Interests: Linguistics
Collegiate Goals: Advanced degree in Linguistics/French
Continue to Improve Times
Qualify for NCAA Championships

Extracurricular

Activities: Senior Boy Scout ('08-'12)
SwaziSwimming Swim A Thon ('11-'12)
Sea Serpents Special Olympics Coach ('10-'12)
Swim Coach ('10-'12)
Honors: Eagle Scout ('12)

Athletics

High School: N/A
USA Club: Spokane Waves Aquatic Team
USA Swim Coach: Michael Woodward
(541)913-4709
Honors: USA Swimming Academic All American
Scholastic All-American
North Coast Section Qualifier ('10-'12)
USA Swimming "Nationals" Qualifier

Best Events

50 Freestyle 22.03 (SCY)
100 Freestyle 49.37 (SCY)
400 Freestyle 4:00.37 (SCY)

Ten Common Questions Asked of Coaches

As the recruiting process progresses, most coaches research beyond the Athletic Resume and the USA Swimming website. They review the club team's website, the swimmer's facebook page and usually touch bases with the swimmer's coach. Their questions of a swimmer's current coach typically revolve around:

- Times: Would the swimmer's times help the college team at conference/NCAAs?
- Grades/academics: Will admissions accept this swimmer? Can they handle the academics work load while juggling swimming?
- Swimming background: HS, Club experience (year round vs. recreational swimmer)
- Time progression: Is this swimmer developing or plateauing?
- Versatility: In how many events is this swimmer competitive?
- Training ability: What is their current training and how do they handle it? Are they are a strong workout swimmer? Have they done weight training?
- Injuries: history and severity
- Swim Goals: What is this swimmer looking for in swimming?
- College Goals: What is this swimmer considering when looking at colleges?
- Value: How can this swimmer add value to the team?
- Team Components: How does this swimmer interact in a team environment and with teammates?
- Character: What is this swimmer's character? Any discipline problems?