

# FINDING SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AS A COLLEGE RECRUIT

Quick ideas on finding scholarship money during the recruiting process.

Published: December 22, 2012 - Swimming World On-Line

PHOENIX, Arizona, December 22. THE *Ask A Coach!* series provides some advice on ways to secure funding as a college recruit. Tennessee associate coach of men's and women's swimming and diving Tyler Fenwick follows up with Linda and Doug, who had a question regarding recruiting. Fenwick initially [wrote about how to choose the best college](#). Today, he looks at ways to find scholarship money.

**Dear Coach,**

**Our son is a Junior in high school, swims year round with his club team and competes for his high school team. We are starting to seriously look at colleges and wanted some advice. He actually has already received some letters and emails. This is our first time through this process so we're wondering if you can provide some guidance on the best way to go about looking at schools and finding the best swimming program. Also, what is involved in obtaining an athletic scholarship? Thanks for your help!**

**Linda and Doug**

*Linda and Doug,*

*In my previous column, I discussed preparing for the college recruitment process. Because of the depth of the topic, I wanted to wait until this week to address your question regarding athletic scholarships. To be candid, there is no concrete answer to this question. Differing philosophies, team needs, scholarship availability, NCAA rules and many other intangibles make obtaining an athletic scholarship extremely rare and tremendously complex. I can provide some advice that should shed light on the process.*

*Scholarship availability depends heavily on the university. Where schools within a conference often have similar resources, this is not always the case. Even in the Southeastern Conference, not all swimming programs offer the maximum amount of scholarship allowed by the NCAA. If an athletic scholarship is an important factor, begin to identify schools that offer scholarships. For example, I was a member of the College of William and Mary's swim team. Although they are a Division 1 school, their program does not offer athletic scholarships. W&M competes in the Colonial Athletic Association where many of their competitors do offer athletic scholarships. College coaches will be candid with you regarding money. Be sure to ask what type of funding their team has at its disposal. This should give you a better idea of the likelihood of obtaining scholarship money.*

*A major misconception is that large programs have unlimited scholarship money available for athletes. This is far from the case. The NCAA allows at a maximum 9.9 total scholarships to distribute across a men's team and 13.9 for a women's team. Scholarship money is far from abundant, even at the top swimming schools. Many men's teams have upwards of 30-40 swimmers. With 9.9 scholarships to distribute, scholarship money can be scarce. The reality is that scholarships are dictated by available funds and unfortunately not by what a coach or athlete feels they deserve.*

*Where many schools may not enjoy full funding in terms of athletic scholarships, there are outlets for schools to help student athletes with tuition. Grants, in state tuition exceptions, waivers due to the lack of availability of a major at your state school are just a few examples from a long list of options available to perspective student athletes. A good coach will know all the options at their disposal. If not, they will certainly know who to ask at their institution. With the understanding that options vary per the university, don't hesitate to discuss available opportunities with the*

*schools on your list.*

*I have only scratched the surface in terms of college recruiting and scholarships. It is a complicated process but the best advice I can provide is simple; focus on what you can control. Most of the factors that determine a college scholarship are out of the hands of parents and athletes. Knowledge is at your fingertips. Researching each school and program, talking with coaches and financial aid offices will help you understand the financial landscape at each university. Your support as a parent is crucial in terms of your son's success. Your guidance will help him excel at whatever school he chooses. Best of luck and keep us posted!*

Our resident expert coach currently is Tyler Fenwick, Tennessee's Associate Coach for the men's and women's swimming and diving program. Fenwick has coaching experience at both the collegiate and club swimming level. Before moving to Tennessee, he spent three years (2009-12) as the Head Men's National Team coach for the Mission Viejo Nadadores, a premier gold medal club in Mission Viejo, Calif.

In his time with the Nadadores, Fenwick's athletes posted 58 National Age Group top-10 swims, 24 top-three swims and seven #1 ranked swims. His swimmers broke 13 Nadadore club records, four Southern California records and one National Age Group record. This past year alone, two swimmers each made the U.S. National Team, Junior Pan Pacific Team and Junior World Championship Team. Two of his swimmers won gold and bronze medals at the Junior Pan Pacific Championships. To cap it all off, he coached the 5k National Champion, David Heron, at the Open Water National Championships. Heron, and another top distance freestyle recruit Evan Pinion, have since committed to swim for UT after high school.