



# COLLEGE PREP GUIDE

IOWA FLYERS SWIM CLUB-

UPDATED 9-13-2021

*Do you have a high school aged swimmer? Are you not sure what you should be advising your child to do in order to become a collegiate athlete? This guide should help you and your child navigate the coming years.*

*Let's dive in!*

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## TERMINOLOGY

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- ❖ **College Visit-** Campus visit of college of choice
  - Zero interaction with anyone from athletic department
- ❖ **Unofficial Visit-** Campus visit paid for by college-bound student-athletes or their parents
  - Cannot meet with a coach during a dead period
  - Start September 1 of Junior year (11<sup>th</sup> grade)-  
if your Junior year starts after 9/1, then first day of Junior year
    - Unlimited duration of stay
    - Unlimited number of visits
- ❖ **Official Visit-** also known as, “Recruiting Trip”- Campus visit paid for by the college or university
  - Expenses covered by the college or university: transportation, room and meals, and reasonable entertainment
    - Parents/guardians may attend official visits (what gets paid for is dependent upon the college or university’s budget)
  - Start September 1 of Junior year
    - Allowed a total of 5 official visits between Junior and Senior year
- ❖ **National Letter of Intent (NLI)-** A legal document, when signed, that states the college-bound student-athlete agrees to attend the college or university for one academic year. In exchange, that college or university must provide athletics financial aid for one academic year.
  - Pertains to scholarship athletes only
  - This is a binding commitment
    - Exception: Able to get out of the NLI if the head coach of the college or university you agreed to attend will no longer be there.
- ❖ **Scholarship Athlete-** A collegiate student-athlete who receives a scholarship of *any* size/amount.
  - College coaches will break down full scholarships into smaller scholarships to attract more swimmers
  - The majority of student-athletes are offered partial scholarships (e.g: only covering *books or food and board*)
- ❖ **Walk-On-** A student-athlete who reaches an agreement with a college coach to participate on a varsity team without receiving a scholarship.



- Walk-ons are treated the same as scholarship athletes, participate with the varsity teams, and can compete (generally at home meets).
- Walk-ons can, on occasion, become scholarship athletes at the college coach's discretion following exceptional performances in the water or in the classroom.
- ❖ **Verbal Commitment-** a phrase used to describe a college-bound student-athlete's commitment to a school before he or she signs (or is able to sign) a National Letter of Intent.
  - Pertains to scholarship AND walk-on athletes
  - Can announce a verbal commitment at any time
  - This is NOT a binding commitment for neither the college-bound student-athlete nor the college or university.
- ❖ **Dead Period-** A period of time in which a college or university coach may not, at any time, have *in-person* contact (on or off campus) with you or your parents.
  - 4 days in November and April
    - During the week of signing period

#### SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

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- ❖ **Men's-** At the Division I level, over 130 universities have swim teams for men. There are a maximum of 9.9 scholarships available per team to be divided among the athletes.
  - At the Division II level, nearly 70 universities have swim teams for men. They use 8.1 scholarships available per team to be divided among the athletes.
- ❖ **Women's-** At the Division I level, over 200 universities have swim teams for women. There are a maximum of 14.0 scholarships available per team to be divided among the athletes.
  - At the Division II level, over 80 universities have swim teams for women. There are a maximum of 8.1 scholarships available per team to be divided among the athletes.
- ❖ **Division III schools** (over 200) do not offer *athletic* based aid
- ❖ **NAIA** schools (over 30) offer a maximum of 8 scholarships on the men's and women's sides.

#### OPENING THOUGHTS

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- ❖ There is a place for everyone! The limiting factor is the number of boxes each school checks.



- There are multiple commitment levels to swimming, even within the different divisions
  - Division I, Division II, Division III, NAIA, Junior College, and Collegiate Club teams are all viable options
- ❖ Remember to be realistic in your approach to college swimming. Just because you can be admitted to a school doesn't mean you should swim there.
- ❖ Aim to keep your decision as logical and emotion-free as possible.
- ❖ Ask for help! Use resources available to you. IFLY coaches will help you as much or as little as you want.



## PREPARATION FOR THE RECRUITING PROCESS

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### 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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- Create an account on [www.collegeswimming.com](http://www.collegeswimming.com)
- Research what you are looking for in a college
  - College coaches look at how a swimmer would perform at their conference meet. Looking at conference meet results is one of the best ways to see how well you will fit into the swim program.
  - Swimmers usually race a minimum of three events, so being open to racing events as a club swimmer and showing range is valuable!
- Create a list of *all* the schools you are interested in (based on: geography, ease of travel, potential majors, urban/rural, state schools/private, cost of attendance, team's history of improvement **and** include all of them, even the ones which don't offer varsity swimming)
  - School list should include: reaches, ones right in your wheelhouse, and safety schools
- Take one or two unofficial visit
  - Coordinate a campus tour with the university (preferably during a time when students are in session)
  - With new NCAA legislation, coaches will not be able to meet with swimmers before 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Performance
- Establish great practice and race habits. Understand that your meets are a reflection of what you do/don't do in practice. The older you get, creating good habits only gets harder.
- Get good grades! Scholarships are easier to come by when you have a higher GPA, higher ACT/SAT test scores, and AP credits.

### 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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- Have a broad list of schools that you are interested in. Edit your list from 9<sup>th</sup> grade so it accurately reflects your current interests.
- Email college coaches
  - Meet with your IFLY coaches to construct an informative email listing important info.
  - Reach out to college coaches once every one or two months to check in. You need to sell yourself!
- Take 2 or 3 unofficial visits



- Coordinate a campus tour with the university (preferably during a time when students are in session)
- With new NCAA legislation, coaches will not be able to meet with swimmers before 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)
- If you plan on competing at an NCAA Division I or Division II school, you will need to be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center
- Must be registered to go on Official Visits (which start in 11<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Registration costs \$80
- Performance
- This is the first of your two big *performance years*. Do your best to hit the goal times that you and your coach have come up with. Continue good racing and practice habits.
- Build leadership skills at practice.

## 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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- Narrow down your list of potential schools
- September 1<sup>st</sup>- Colleges can make calls to you AND you can start taking official visits (a.k.a-recruiting trips)
  - You only get 5 official visits between your 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Performance
- This is the second of your two big *performance years*. Do your best to hit the goal times that you and your coach have come up with. Continue good racing and practice habits.
- Build leadership skills at practice.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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- Narrow down your list of potential schools
- Fill out FAFSA- <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Take official visits
  - Reminder- you only get a total of 5 official visits
  - Don't sign at your first trip! Take your time to consider your options
  - Ignore social media. Your decision should not be based on which picture will look best on your feed now.
- Performance
- If you have not decided on a school, this is your last year to show what you can do in the pool. Once you have decided on a school, you need to fine tune the skills and habits that will be expected of you in college.



## AFTER YOU'VE SIGNED

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- You're not done! You've just begun your college experience. You still need to prepare for your first season.
  - Continue to work hard
  - Practice with even more intensity than what got you to this point
- Check with your future college coach and make sure you are meeting weekly practice goals, seasonal training expectations, and performance goals leading up to your arrival.
- Set a great example for future IFLY college signees. Show them how to prepare like a champion!
  
- Returning home from a college? Want to train with IFLY?
  - **OF COURSE WE WANT YOU BACK!**
  - Out of courtesy, please contact a coach to inquire when practices are taking place and ensure lane space won't be an issue. If it's an extended break back home, we may re-activate your account.
  - Have a conversation with IFLY coaches to discuss what your training schedule will *actually* be and stick to it! Show your teammates how collegiate athletes train. Arrive early, stay the whole time, and put in work your college coaches will be proud of.
  - If you can, schedule a chance to chat with our JRE/SRE/JR/SR groups to tell them about your collegiate experience. You are an inspiration to your teammates; let's celebrate your journey.