

College Recruiting Timeline

Freshman/Sophomore Year

Start searching for universities/colleges on the ncaa.org, naia.org, and njcaa.org webpages.

Find schools that have the major you want. Remember your degree will be more important than your swimming after graduation!

Find out about the academic reputation of the school and the programs you are looking into.

Check out the team's current times, where you would stand on the team in your events, team records, research the team success' and coach's history with the program, where you would stand in their conference and division.

It is important that you have colleges on your "wish list" from all levels. Not all swimmers can swim on Division I programs and may end up being a better fit at Division II programs or Division III programs. There are many opportunities to swim in college out there if you look for them. College swimming is not just for the "elite" swimmers.

Check initial-eligibility requirements for college student-athletes. There are certain courses you will need to take to be eligible to swim as a freshman in college. The requirements are different depending what Division (I, II, III, NAIA, NJCAA) the school is.

Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. This is a good step to take your sophomore year of high school, so that you are ready to start taking official or unofficial visits your junior year. Before you visit, the coach needs to know that you are eligible to compete at their school. If you're visiting Division I and Division II schools, you need to get a [Certification Account](#). There is a fee for setting up the account. If you're visiting a Division III school sign up for an NCAA Profile page, which is the free version of the Certification Account. You only need a Certification Account if you're actively getting recruited by Division I and/or Division II colleges. When you register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#), you will receive your NCAA ID number. Many coaches will ask for your NCAA ID number before your official visit.

Contacting Coaches

Send the coaches of the programs you are interested in a cover letter, with an athletic resume. Include your name, birthdate, address, phone number, GPA and test scores. Include your training background. How many workouts per week, yardage, and hours per workout you have done. If you have done weights, running, dryland, other conditioning, or other sports. How many years you have been swimming and your competitive background. Send them a record of your times and improvement. A great extra to add to your letter/email is why you are interested in their program. Also include other activities you are involved in.

Most teams/athletic departments have questionnaires posted online (send them updated letters/info annually). They are not that detailed so the more information you send them about yourself the better!

Official/Unofficial Visits Defined

Official visits are where the College pays for any or all your trip to their campus. You are allowed 5 Official visits (more info below) The 5 visits must be to different colleges. Unofficial visits are where you pay for all your expenses. You may go on unofficial visits to any campus as many times as you like.

Division I Schools contact timeline

During your freshman/sophomore years college coaches can send you a questionnaire in response, camp brochures, non-athletic institutional publications, NCAA educational materials, but not any recruiting materials.

Starting June 15th of your sophomore year coaches can start using all forms of electronic correspondence, as well as sending other recruiting materials.

Starting August 1st before your junior year recruits can begin taking official and unofficial visits to schools.

Starting August 1st before your junior year coaches can start off-campus contact with recruits.

Division II Schools Contact Timeline

During your freshman/sophomore years college coaches can send you a questionnaire in response, camp brochures, non-athletic institutional publications, NCAA educational materials, but not any athletic recruiting materials.

Starting June 15th of your sophomore year coaches can start calling athletes. Athletes may start taking official visits at this time. Also, coaches can conduct off-campus communications with athletes and/or parents.

Starting July 15th after your sophomore year coaches can begin sending recruits printed recruiting materials.

You can take an unlimited number of unofficial visits at any time.

Division III Schools Contact Timeline

Athletes can receive recruiting materials at any time.

There is no limit on when college coaches can call athletes or contact them digitally.

After your sophomore year college coaches may begin to conduct off-campus communications.

After January 1st of your junior year you may begin taking official visits.

You can take an unlimited number of unofficial visits at any time.

Junior/Senior Year

You should be sending updated information to coaches and narrowing your list of universities that you are interested in attending.

When you go on your college visits make sure to take a copy of a list of questions you have for the college coaches, athletic department, school etc. Keep a journal or 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. Remember, you are choosing the place where you want to be happy for the next 4 years of your life! It can be a stressful process, but it also can be a fun process to be recruited by college teams. Be sure to get your questions answered, and keep your eyes and ears open to what is best for you.

After each visit, make sure you follow up with the coach. Send them a "thank you" note, thanking them for their time and telling them some of your favorite parts of the visit. Ask them any questions that you may still have or forgot to ask. You can also let the coach know where you will be competing next if they would like to watch you in person. The follow-up

shows the coach you are a thoughtful, courteous athlete, and it also keeps you top-of-mind as they assemble their roster.

If you decide you are not interested in a school and the coach continues to call you, please tell him or her you are not interested. It is a difficult thing to do but it is the respectful thing to do, as well as good experience for you as get down to picking where you would like to go. It will also save both of you time in the long run.

Senior Year Signing Dates

There have been changes to the signing periods for athletes in their senior year. Swimmers can begin signing scholarships on November 11, 2020 and continue to sign anytime through August 1, 2021.

If you take your visits early and are sure of your decision, then sign early. If coaches are offering you a scholarship, they may also give you a deadline that you have to decide by. Being able to sign early takes a load of pressure off your shoulders during your senior year. Some coaches may say to wait to see if they may have more scholarship money available to offer in the 2nd semester. This is a gamble. Maybe they will, maybe they won't. It's not always a guarantee.

Coaches may offer a full athletic scholarship that covers tuition, room, board, and books but that does not happen very often. Most coaches will offer a partial athletic scholarship, which can include any of those costs. Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships, Division III only has academic scholarships, grants, and aid they can help to reduce tuition for their athletes. Colleges can also supplement your athletic scholarship with academic scholarships, grants, or aid.

If you are not sure where you want to go, then wait until the spring to decide. Give yourself more time to think over the decision and make the one that is right for you. Your high school guidance counselor can help you through this process too. They can help you with financial aid information, getting your test scores and grades sent to colleges before your official visits, and may also have resources to tell you about the academic reputations of the schools you are looking at. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get help! The more informed you are, the more easily you are going to make the best decision for yourself!

Talk to your coaches about your process and let them know if you have any questions.

Good Luck!