



The College Selection Process, *From Start to Visit...*

PREPARING FOR THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

Selecting a higher education institution is a challenging, confusing and sometimes difficult task. When you toss in your aspirations to be a college level soccer player, it can quickly become overwhelming. The questions below are not intended to be the road to the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Only you and your family can find that road...and it takes a lot of time, effort and hard work. These questions are simply some of the things that you need to ask yourself during the process. Let them be a guide to get you started towards thinking about the right things and the correct way to approach the process.

The college search is a process that requires research, organization and thoughtful decision making. Don't do it all by yourself. Seek input from your guidance counselors, teachers, friends; High School Coaches, Premiere Coaches and most importantly your parents or guardians – Your Selection Team. A critical part of this process will be for you to pick your college selection team. They can all help and all want to help...it's only up to you to ask.

Begin by thinking about your search as a logical set of steps making up a definitive process. There are a number of things that you have to do in order to successfully research, find and select your higher education institution. As a start, define your goals – what do you want from higher education and where does soccer fit in that puzzle? Be conscious of the fact that these may change over the years. Putting it to paper will dramatically increase your chances of success. Once you understand your goals, think about this high level **seven step approach**:

1. DEFINE WHO YOU ARE: **Profile yourself.** Figure out who you are and what you really want:
 - a. What do you want to do after college?
 - b. Is soccer a career, a hobby, a dream, a passion or just a game you like to play?
 - c. What are your personality traits – hard worker? Academics come easy? Level of play? Free spirit or home body? Like big school atmosphere or small? Etc.
 - d. Don't assume you're the expert. Validate it all by seeking input from friends, family, coaches, teachers and people you respect. Be prepared, as you may be surprised.
 - e. Consider other aspects – what you can afford, achieve academically and athletically.
 - f. **Create your "Selection Team"** – it must include yourself, your parents or guardians, your guidance counselor and other trusted advisors that you select.
 - g. Again, put it on paper – continuously come back to it, review it and update it.
 - h. Use the NEU Personal Profile Tool to help you out.

2. PROFILE YOUR IDEAL SCHOOL: Profile the type of school that fits you:
 - a. All schools are different based on a number of factors – geography, size, academic focus, level of play in soccer, look and feel, student to teacher ratio, etc.
 - b. Considering the data in your personal profile, also do a college profile. Put it on paper and seek input from your team.
 - c. These two profiles will be the base for moving forward.
 - d. Use the NEU School Profile Matrix



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3. RESEARCH THE RECRUITING PROCESS /QUALIFICATION PROCESS: research, research, research:
 - a. Understand that the NCAA requirements and qualifications to compete at the next level are extensive and complicated.
 - b. Log onto the NCAA website
 - c. Log onto the NCAA Eligibility Center
 - d. One word can help you be successful here....Google! Tons of free information out there!
 - e. Notify your guidance counselor immediately about your desire to compete in college
 - f. Revisit your profiles.

4. 'MARKET ME' - BEGIN TO MARKET YOURSELF: get your name out there:
 - a. Build a bio and/or resume – everything that you've accomplished in soccer.
 - b. Don't forget your academics and citizenship – think on and off the field. They all count!
 - c. Complete the NEU Profile and other online profiles.
 - d. Consider registering at recruiting websites. Visit and evaluate them first. Some cost money – be smart and look for FREE stuff!
 - e. Attend College Showcase Tournaments and Camps. This may be one of the best places to get looked at, determine your real level of play, evaluated by a coach and to just meet and interface with coaches.
 - f. Begin to draft e-mails and messages that you may send to coaches once you identify the right ones. Build an introductory and an invite e-mail.
 - g. Revisit your profiles.

5. RESEARCH PROFILED SCHOOLS: find schools that fit your profile.
 - a. Use tools from your High School – databases, websites, etc., Guidance Counselors, teachers, teammates that graduated previously, your soccer network.
 - b. The Internet is full of available resources. Be careful – many are free, but some do cost money. Make sure you have references and guarantees before committing money.

6. CREATE YOUR SHORT LIST – use available data to select a number of schools to visit.
 - a. Narrow your choices to a definitive set of schools that fit you and your profile.
 - b. You can't visit them all, so research becomes important. You can get a pretty good feel by doing your research. But you'll never know for sure unless you visit, meet administrators, students and coaches. Don't attend a school that you haven't visited.
 - c. Create a primary list and secondary. As schools fall off of your primary list after visits – consider others on the secondary list.
 - d. Consult your "Selection Team".

7. PREPARE TO VISIT YOUR TOP CHOICES – visit schools.
 - a. Now you have a list of coaches to hunt down and convince that you can win them and their school a championship!
 - b. Develop a visit strategy – who, how, when you will visit.



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- c. Think about what you want to see on a visit – academics, classrooms, labs, auditoriums, building dedicated to your major, dorm rooms, practice facilities, weight rooms, coaches, the field you will play on, etc.
- d. Evaluate based on what's on paper, what's in your head and what's in your heart.

Spend some time thinking it all through after your visits – this is important – put it on paper. Make sure it's really you and you have all the data. When you're done thinking...spend some more time thinking it all through. Seek guidance again from your family and network of trusted advisors.

Now the fun part starts, you're ready to do some serious visits...

Homework is done, visits are done and it's all documented...

It's now up to you...

Evaluate based upon what's on paper, the advice of your selection team, what's in your head and what's in your heart!

