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What student-athletes need to know about college recruiting

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Prep Sports

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By Olivia Hagerty
Student Reporter

ROCKFORD – High school athletes are frequently faced with the big question: Do you plan on continuing in college?

Guilford athletes are pushed beyond the limit every day to not only become better for their season, but for their future. Guilford coaches and sports programs have built a solid base when it comes to preparing athletes for college athletics.

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"I appreciate what Guilford has provided me," third-year varsity swimmer Alex Marshall said. "They have given me a starting point. They have provided me with coaches and support of knowing that I can do what I love at this school. Am I excited? Very, but I am scared. I only have one more year after this one to make myself presentable to colleges."

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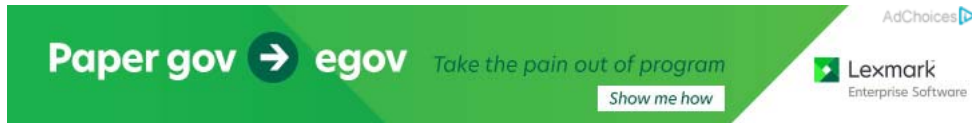
The college recruitment process can put an athlete through an emotional and exciting ride. Here are some helpful points to prepare athletes who are beginning or seeking help when it comes to playing at the collegiate level.

HOW IT WORKS

The process usually begins around an athlete’s sophomore or junior year. Being proactive and starting early is always the best way to go. Keeping up with grades and being involved in school is impressive to colleges. Schools pursue athletes who are not only talented at their games but in the classroom as well.

THE PROCESS

With thousands of colleges in the United States, it is an athlete’s job to market himself. Colleges look for highlight videos and resumes, or athletes can fill out recruitment forms online. Online tools like CaptainU, Hudl, NCSA Athletic Recruiting and NAIA Eligibility Center are a great way for athletes to communicate with colleges.



“You just have to play your hardest,” said Guilford girls basketball player Crystal Mathis. “Coaches started sending me letters, and it was an exciting moment. I began to get in touch with the coaches when I saw they were interested in me. I would email them, tell them about myself and send them highlights.”

When it comes to personally contacting a college coach, it is important to make a specific list of schools in order to stay organized through the process. When it comes to emailing, make it simple and sweet. First, athletes should introduce themselves and a few aspects of their game. Secondly, one must tell a coach why he or she is interesting in the college. Finally, a resume and video footage can be attached to show coaches what athletes are capable of doing academically and athletically.



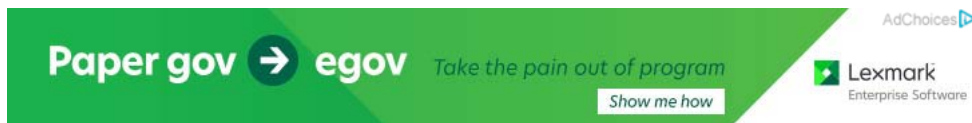
Another helpful way athletes can become serious about playing in college is playing club sports. Playing on a travel team provides exposure to colleges coaches, who also travel to the tournaments and showcases.

“Playing AAU basketball helped a lot,” Mathis said. “Going to tournaments where there were coaches who would watch me was a plus.”

ABOUT DIVISIONS








As athletes begin to search for colleges, it is important for them to figure out in which division they would like to play. An athlete can talk to a coach, athletic director or counselor to see which level is the best fit.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is made up of three divisions: NCAA I, NCAA II and NCAA III. Division I and Division II can offer athletic scholarships. Schools at the NCAA III cannot. An athletic scholarship is an award given by a college or university to an individual based predominately on his or her athletic ability. At the NCAA III level, only academic scholarships, rewards for academic and school accomplishments, can be given by colleges.



The other governing body for college sports is the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). It is an athletic

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association that organizes colleges and university-level athletic programs among small to mid-size institutions. The NAIA is made up of two divisions, NAIA Division I and NAIA Division II. Athletic scholarships are awarded at both levels.

Olivia Hagerty is the co-editor-in-chief and sports editor of the Guilford High School newspaper, *The Voyager*.



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