



College Soccer Recruiting Roadmap

A 4-Year Game Plan — From Freshman Foundation to Commitment Day

Development

Highlight Video

Coach Contact

NCAA Eligibility

Campus Visits

Academics

Commit

Freshman · Sophomore · Junior · Senior | NCAA · NAIA · NJCAA · CCCAA



Freshman Year — Build the Foundation

Focus on Development · Start Good Habits · Earn Playing Time · Begin Research

Fall

Aug–Nov

- ✓ Focus on your individual player development within team goals/method
- ✓ Start researching college programs — list **10–15 schools** you like
- ✓ Tier your list **reach / match / safety** — athletically *and* academically
- ✓ Start tracking your **16 NCAA core courses**; confirm your HS classes are on its approved list
- ✓ Create a simple highlight video — lead with your 3–4 best clips & spotlight your jersey number

Winter

Dec–Feb

- ✓ Play high school — compete hard and stand out
- ✓ Focus on earning a starting role and building confidence
- ✓ Work on individual skills apart from team training
- ✓ Build relationships with your HS coach for future recommendations
- ✓ Maintain strong academics — GPA matters to colleges!

Spring

Mar–May

- ✓ Compete in spring club league games — show consistency
- ✓ Visit a few college campuses to get a feel for environments
- ✓ Research NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA & CCCAA differences and eligibility rules

Summer

Jun–Jul

- ✓ Compete in club showcase tournaments
- ✓ Attend 1–2 college ID camps to learn the camp environment
- ✓ Update highlight video with your best clips
- ✓ Build physical development: speed, strength/power & fitness
- ✓ Prioritize **injury prevention** (ACL/knee work), nutrition & sleep

NCAA Notes — Freshman Year

- ▶ No official contact from Division I/II coaches until **June 15 after sophomore year**
- ▶ Coaches can attend your games (evaluation period) but cannot speak to you yet
- ▶ You **CAN** email coaches and initiate contact at any time
- ▶ Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (Academic & Amateurism Certification Account; D1/D2 only) — start early!
- ▶ Keep your GPA strong: most programs want a **3.0+ core GPA**
- ▶ Academic eligibility is based on your **GPA across 16 core courses** — keep making steady progress through them as you advance each year
- ▶ Have your counselor upload an official transcript to the Eligibility Center after each school year





Sophomore Year — Get on the Radar

Contact Coaches · Highlight Video Ready · Compete at Top Level · NCAA Eligibility Center

Fall

Aug–Nov

- ✓ Register with NCAA Eligibility Center if not done (Academic & Amateurism Account; D1/D2)
- ✓ Update & upload your highlight video to YouTube or Hudl — include a link to full-match footage
- ✓ Clean up your **social media** — coaches check your profiles
- ✓ Begin sending personalized emails to coaches (include video link/references)
- ✓ Attend college fairs and information sessions
- ✓ Attend/watch college games and/or practices (all levels)
- ✓ Narrow your school list to **20–25 programs**

Winter

Dec–Feb

- ✓ Aim for a starting varsity role and team leadership
- ✓ Invite college coaches to watch your high school games
- ✓ Improve academics — take challenging courses (AP/Honors)
- ✓ Film as many games as possible for your highlight video
- ✓ Ask your HS coach to reach out to college coaches for you

Spring

Mar–May

- ✓ Compete in high-profile club showcases
- ✓ Schedule unofficial visits to your top schools
- ✓ Follow up with coaches after every major performance

Summer

Jun–Jul

- ✓ Attend 2–3 college ID camps — demonstrate your ability directly to coaches
- ✓ **June 15:** D1/D2 coaches may now officially contact YOU — be ready!
- ✓ Respond professionally and promptly to all coach communications
- ✓ Take unofficial visits to your top 5–8 schools
- ✓ Compete at national-level showcases and tournaments
- ✓ Begin studying for SAT/ACT — aim for a first attempt this summer
- ✓ Keep a recruiting journal of all coach contacts and impressions



NCAA Notes — Sophomore Year

- ▶ **June 15 after sophomore year** is the key contact date for D1 & D2 coaches
- ▶ Unofficial visits (you pay) can happen at any time — take advantage!
- ▶ Official visits (school pays) cannot happen until **August 1 of junior year** for D1 if offered
- ▶ Signing Period (D1) is in November of senior year — decisions can come fast
- ▶ Start taking SAT/ACT if needed to meet individual university admissions requirements





Junior Year — Accelerate Your Recruitment

Regular Coach Contact · Unofficial Visits · SAT/ACT Scores · Narrow Your List

Fall

Aug–Nov

- ✓ Narrow your list to a **top 8–10 realistic programs**
- ✓ Retake SAT/ACT if needed to hit academic requirements
- ✓ Schedule unofficial visits during holiday and winter breaks
- ✓ Attend/watch college games and/or practices (all levels)
- ✓ Communicate regularly with coaches — build genuine relationships
- ✓ Ask coaches directly: your **projected role & playing time**, roster needs at your position, graduation rates & your spot if injured

Winter

Dec–Feb

- ✓ Lead your varsity team — coaches value leadership and character
- ✓ Invite top coaches to your games with formal email invitations
- ✓ Film every game; update highlight video with best junior clips
- ✓ Begin asking teachers/coaches for recommendation letters
- ✓ Keep your grades strong

Spring

Mar–May

- ✓ Compete in top national showcases — prime exposure season
- ✓ Take unofficial visits to your top 3–5 schools
- ✓ Begin working on college essays (Common App opens Aug 1)
- ✓ Send updated highlight video to new schools on your list

Summer

Jun–Jul

- ✓ Attend 2–3 ID camps at your most-wanted programs
- ✓ Compete in top summer showcases
- ✓ Take final unofficial visits; evaluate each school holistically
- ✓ Consider a verbal commitment if your top choice offers
- ✓ Begin filling out Common App and college applications
- ✓ Complete final SAT/ACT attempt if needed before school starts
- ✓ Finalize highlight video — approx. **3 minutes** of your best moments

NCAA Notes — Junior Year

- ▶ Verbal commitments are **not binding** — you cannot sign until senior year
- ▶ Official visits are fully funded by the school: travel, lodging, meals & entertainment if offered
- ▶ Many top D1 programs fill their classes during the junior-year cycle
- ▶ **House settlement (2025)**: D1 is shifting to **roster limits** — ask coaches how it affects your spot
- ▶ Keep the NCAA Eligibility Center updated with transcript and test scores
- ▶ NAIA and D3 programs can make binding offers earlier — explore all levels!



Senior Year — Sign, Commit & Celebrate

Sign Athletic Aid Agreement · Official Visits · Applications Due · Make Your Decision

Fall

Aug–Nov

- ✓ Keep playing your best — coaches watch committed classes closely
- ✓ **Signing Period opens (D1):** typically mid-November — be ready!
- ✓ Review and sign your Athletic Aid Agreement with family if offered
- ✓ Submit applications (Early Decision/Action: Nov 1–15)
- ✓ Attend/watch college games (all levels) if not yet committed
- ✓ Follow your college program during the fall season if committed
- ✓ Submit the FAFSA (opens Oct 1; apply ASAP — funds are limited)

Winter

Dec–Feb

- ✓ If unsigned, keep actively marketing yourself to coaches
- ✓ Late D1 signing period continues — don't panic if unsigned
- ✓ Submit remaining college applications if needed
- ✓ Compare **full aid packages** (athletic + academic + need-based), not just the athletic offer
- ✓ Request official transcripts be sent to your chosen college
- ✓ Stay in contact with your future coach — build the relationship
- ✓ Keep grades strong! Offers can be rescinded for academic decline

Spring

Mar–May

- ✓ Continue club season — finish strong, show commitment
- ✓ If uncommitted, attend spring showcases and keep recruiting outreach
- ✓ Connect with future college teammates on social media
- ✓ Request fitness and pre-season training plans from your coach
- ✓ Celebrate your commitment and begin college preparation!

Summer

Jun–Jul

- ✓ Train hard — college preseason begins in August and is intense!
- ✓ Follow your coach's summer training program precisely
- ✓ Attend any optional team workouts or summer sessions
- ✓ Complete academic orientation, housing & enrollment requirements
- ✓ Mentally prepare for the jump in speed, physicality & competition
- ✓ **Congratulations — you've earned your spot. Enjoy the journey!**



NCAA Notes — Senior Year

- ▶ The Athletic Aid Agreement is a **binding** agreement to attend a school if offered
- ▶ **All sports are now equivalency** — most athletic offers are **partial** and can stack with academic *and* need-based aid
- ▶ D1 signing period for soccer is typically the **second week of November**
- ▶ D2 and NAIA have their own signing dates — confirm with your specific school
- ▶ D3 schools do not use Athletic Aid Agreements — admissions acceptance is the binding commitment
- ▶ Maintain your GPA through graduation — final transcripts are required for clearance





Pro Tips

Always verify current NCAA contact rules at [ncaa.org](https://www.ncaa.org), as they are updated periodically.

Remember — **D3, NAIA, NJCAA, and CCCAA all have different timelines and rules**, so cast a wide net and explore every level that fits you.



Key Terms & Reminders

- ▶ **Scholarships are usually partial.** All sports are now equivalency — a roster splits limited aid, which can stack with academic and need-based aid. Compare total cost, not just the athletic percentage.
- ▶ **NIL & the House settlement.** NIL now exists in college; new roster limits may tighten spots. Never take pay-for-play *before* college — it can cost your amateur eligibility.
- ▶ **Protect your digital footprint.** Coaches check social media — keep it clean, positive, and recruiter-ready.
- ▶ **Tier your list.** Reach / match / safety, athletically *and* academically. Pick schools you'd happily attend even if soccer ended.
- ▶ **Stay on top of eligibility.** 16 core courses on the approved course list, with steady progress each year; send transcripts to the Eligibility Center each year and a final transcript at graduation.
- ▶ **Goalkeepers & specialists** recruit on a different timeline — start outreach early and target camps where you'll actually be seen.



Fall (Aug–Nov)



Winter (Dec–Feb)



Spring (Mar–May)



Summer (Jun–Jul)



NCAA Notes

College Soccer Recruiting Roadmap · Freshman → Senior · Development · Exposure · Academics · Commitment

