



COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS SUGGESTIONS

RAGE is among the top clubs in the nation, partly because of the great success our players have in making college teams. The process of college selection is complicated. This not so brief document definitely will not answer all your questions, but hopefully it will get you started in the right direction. There are probably 100 RAGE girls in some phase of this process now. It is up to you (parents and players) to access the many sources of information and to initiate communication with RAGE staff as you develop your strategy. It is your responsibility to know the NCAA/NAIA rules about contacting coaches and campus visits, which you can find at www.ncaa.com and www.naia.org.

The college experience is likely to represent four of the most enjoyable and personally rewarding years of your life. We hope that soccer will be a major part of your college life and that you will maintain friendships made through soccer for the rest of adulthood. Yet there are realities that you need to address before making a decision about college that will help to make those four years even more rewarding. That said, the tone of some of this document may seem a bit somber, but the work you do now should provide huge satisfaction in the long run.

KNOW YOURSELF

This may sound obvious, but you need to reflect on some serious realities before you go much further, beginning as a high school freshman and continuing through the entire process. Your understanding of yourself is bound to change several times over the next few years. Plan to revisit this topic at least once a year. Write down your feelings. Why do you want to play college soccer? Is it for the scholarship money? This may be one of the worst reasons to pursue a soccer college career.

Maybe the best way to answer that question is to honestly state why you played high school soccer. Possibly it was for the pride you had in representing your school (and maybe for the letterman jacket) and for the prestige you felt you had attained and because you wanted to be a part of a team. The same might be true for college play. You might want to represent your college, you are proud to be a part of it, you are looking forward to the college experience and want to excel in a sport you've loved, and for the next four years to play with and for people you admire and respect. Sure, it would be great to get a full ride at a big name school, but the reality for most is much different.



However, your soccer abilities **will** give you access to a broader spectrum of colleges. At the same time though, thousands of other club soccer players will be thinking the same thing. There are 300+ D1 colleges, which means there are about 2000 spots for freshmen. Have you distinguished yourself to the extent that you can be sure of a place in D I or should you also consider the hundreds of D II, D III and NAIA schools? One measure of distinction is your participation in ODP or the US Club Soccer iD2 efforts. If you have been selected for one of these teams, you will be on many college coach's radars. Your RAGE team's success will play a role as coaches will tend to focus on State Cup winners, Surf winners, etc. Our participation in ECNL should provide good exposure even if you are not in the ODP program or if your RAGE team struggles in league.

MORE REALITY QUESTIONS

How would you deal with being a substitute in your college freshman year, maybe as a sophomore or even for four years? Would you prefer to be a starter at another school? Can you balance the time requirements to play at a top school: 6 AM weight training, twice a day practice, missing classes to travel, pressure to perform or never make mistakes from possibly more competitive and skilled peers? What if you are cut from the team or injured in your freshman year (which might mean you could lose all your financial assistance)? Is this the right college for you in the event you can no longer play soccer? Please take the time to think about these issues and write down your answers.

PLAYERS GETTING STARTED: FRESHMAN YEAR

1. Buy a loose-leaf binder. Decorate it in a way that will make you want to use it.
2. This is a huge undertaking. At an early age, and certainly no later than U15, players and parents must do some soul-searching. Entering High School is a major life-changing time. For girls who play soccer you have now at least four time and energy demanding dynamics to balance: GRADES, the social aspects of high school, high school soccer and club soccer. GRADES are by far the most important consideration as they will determine access to colleges. **Nothing should stand in the way of a successful academic experience.**



3. Give some thought to your college major. This will probably change, maybe even several times before you even get into college and maybe several times after you are there, but having an idea or goal is important as not all schools will offer the curriculum you may need.
4. Review the ideas in the KNOW YOURSELF and MORE REALITY paragraphs above. Girls, you should write down your impressions in your binder.

PARENTS GETTING STARTED: FRESHMAN YEAR

Parents probably will be the initiators at this stage.

1. Parents, you will be investing perhaps \$200,000 for your daughter's education. She will be investing four or five years of her valuable time in college. You know how critical getting the right education is. Having your 14 or 15 year old focus on college may be a daunting task, so start slowly. You may need to be the one to do much of the preliminary work, not she. **It is important to remember that there is no single right college, there are many right colleges.** By age 15, your daughter should have visited several schools, perhaps after tournaments or on weekends. Go to local colleges, maybe even on the spur of the moment or when you watch college soccer games, just walk through the campus. Recognize that perhaps your daughter would rather be texting, so exercise some patience with her receptiveness. The first few visits need to be fun so your daughter may even look forward to future trips.
2. Encourage your daughter to do some soul searching. One expert suggests the following extremely broad concepts: aptitude (what does she like or in what does she excel?), achievements (art, music, theater, soccer...of course), interests (possibly things she does just for fun), personality traits (what makes her different? How would her friends define her as a person?), values, goals. Maybe your daughter has other ideas to add to this list. Work with her, ask questions, share your own college experiences.
3. The right college environment is critical in most cases (big school, little school, dorms, dining facilities, co-ed or not, religious affiliation). Soccer will consume three or four months a year of the college experience. A girl who "knows" she wants to play soccer as she enters her college freshman year may become disenchanted by the coach, by the team, by her position on the team (I wanted to be a defender, but the coach has me at forward. Why?), numerous complications possibly including academic difficulties, boyfriends, injuries, lack of playing time, etc. The player must be comfortable with the college. Define what is important about colleges. Are there extracurricular



clubs that would be intriguing? Is skiing important, the beach? Museums? Heavy metal concerts? Write it down. Parental guidance and understanding are essential.

4. If we were to poll our RAGE U14 and U15 players, we would probably find that 90% either have no idea of where they would like to play college soccer or would automatically offer a list of California schools. There might be a few who want to go to the school one of their parents attended which might be in a faraway place like Colorado. California is home to a number of the best girls' soccer clubs in the country, which means the competition for spots on California college teams is that much more intense. It is essential that parents encourage their daughters to keep an open mind about location, even as you hate to think of your daughters leaving the local nest.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FOR PLAYERS

1. Prepare an e-mail to send to college coaches; just the basic facts (ask your RAGE coach and your parents to read the e-mail before sending it). Enter your player profile on the RAGE web site, gotsoccer, NCAA, etc. Keep it current. Send coaches an e-mail about ten days before tournaments, giving them the schedule for your games. Make sure you spell the coach's and the school's name correctly and keep the e-mail brief. You might want to make a short DVD of your game highlights or even create your own web site as marketing tools.
2. Take as many college tours locally as you can, even if you think you will really hate the school. This will get you acquainted with what campuses look like. Be sure you clearly define what it is about a school you love or hate, as this may be important information about future visits. Each college has a unique personality. After a visit, try to define that personality. Was there anything that surprised you? After the visit, was there anything you wish you had seen? Consider an e-mail to the coach or someone in the Admissions Department if you have a specific question. Remember, as a sophomore your contact with college coaches is severely limited by NCAA rules, which you need to have read.
3. Ask your parents what they thought of the tour. They might surprise you with their answers.
4. RAGE has girls at numerous colleges either still playing or not. Use them as a resource to gain a flavor of what their colleges are like and what is good and bad about their college teams and their college experiences. RAGE U17 and U18 girls are going through the college selection process. Use their experiences to advantage. Talk to them to see what worked and did not work for them.
5. Many colleges have virtual tours on the internet. Before visiting a college, take the virtual tour. See what you like and maybe don't like about the campus, academic curriculum, social life. Is the virtual tour one of substance or just sugar-coating? The tour may include information about the community. Remember what you wanted to be as a freshman? Is that goal still in place?



6. All schools will display a roster of their players. Make a copy of the roster (there may be archived rosters which will give hints at how many players last four years). Also, pay attention to those schools which may be deep in numbers of players at your position as that will play a role in determining your attractiveness to the coach. Most will show a very brief bio of each player. Read those bios and maybe print them for players who have your position. You may find that those players have awesome high school and club credentials. This may provide you with motivation to work extra hard in the next year or two as you check out colleges. Some web sites will include game stats, which will show who are the starters. That may tell you a lot more than just the bios. Read the coaches' bios. Some may include "mission statements" on the team web site.
7. When you meet a coach for an interview, be ready to answer the question, "Why do you want to play for me?" Show your personality (**make sure dad keeps a low profile**). An interview is a two-way street. You want to find out about the soccer program and school while the coach wants to see if you would be able to make a contribution to her/his track record. If you have done your homework on the school and the program, you will be able to ask good questions. But, do you have five minutes, or fifteen, or an hour? First impression may determine how much time you have, and maybe whether you will drop right off a coach's radar screen or rise to the top. The coach will have interviewed hundreds of girls before, so first impressions will be important. If you appear unprepared, distracted and unengaged, that will be apparent to the coach. Your job is to make him/her want to watch one of your games. There are dozens of questions which you and your parents might have, but here are a few which you might consider. Be sensitive to the amount of time the coach might have, by the depth of answers she/he might give to the initial questions. This is a great opportunity to impress the coach with your seriousness.
 - a. I play center back for club, but I see a lot of the girls you have recruited in the past two years were mids for their clubs but now play other positions (or similar, but only if true). Do you ever switch around players in positions? How successful has that been?
 - b. Please tell me a bit about your coaching style such as formations, whether you switch formations often during the game, move players around a lot during games?
 - c. Do you have a lot of invited walk-ons? How successful have they been in making the roster?
 - d. What is the graduation rate, transfer rate for freshman in the soccer program? How many freshmen remain on the team for four years? Why do they drop? What are you doing to increase that rate?



- e. Your parents may wish to know how closely the coaches are involved with the players in the off-season. Team meetings, monitoring of grades, etc. Are there disciplinary problems on the team? How are those handled?
- f. Financial aid is a huge topic, best left for later conversations, unless the coach wants to discuss it up front.
- g. What is the college policy toward sport/other scholarship awards for injured players.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FOR PARENTS

1. Prepare with your daughter a list of 20-30 colleges that fit the profile of a school that is attractive. Use CollegeBoard.com and other similar search engines. You don't have to start with 30 or even 20 schools, just keep an open mind as you do research. It might be a good idea to have a loose-leaf page for every school she and you identify, make sure she writes down likes and dislikes, impressions, notes from virtual or in-person tours, etc. It is essential that you be realistic in many of your choices, but there is nothing wrong with including stretch schools, academically, financially and soccer-wise. At some point, copy the list of schools for your daughter's coach and for Philippe. It would be helpful if she made a statement as to why she picked these schools. The more clearly your RAGE coaches understand what it is she (and you) seek in a college, the better they will be able to help you. Submitting a list of 20 schools with no explanation as to how they came to be on her list does not reveal her personality, academic goals, financial constraints, etc. Indicate "safe" and "stretch" schools, but be sure she says why she considers them to be such. Expect her coaches to encourage her in some cases and discourage her in others (try not to take it personally), as well as suggest some schools she (and you) have never considered or perhaps have ruled out. Creating this list is a very important homework assignment for you and your child.
2. You need to know that many colleges have soccer clubs, intramural or even inter-college clubs. It may be that the right academic school is the wrong varsity soccer school. Almost every parent would like her/his daughter to attend the University of XYZ and play for that great soccer team. If XYZ is the right college academically, but your daughter is not going to make the roster, perhaps she will be just as happy to play on an intramural team.
3. When you visit colleges, have your daughter ask her RAGE coach to arrange a meeting. A sophomore cannot be contacted by a college coach, so an intermediary is essential. Showing up at the office of a college coach unannounced is risky and could be seen as a sign of lack of seriousness. An appointment shows respect for the coach's schedule.
4. Do not make any verbal promises to college coaches too early. Do not allow yourself to be pressured by coaches.



JUNIOR YEAR FOR PLAYERS: YOU ARE NOW ON STAGE

1. RAGE is one of 40 clubs which make up the Elite Clubs National League. Beginning at U15, each team will participate in four national events which will be visited by hundreds of college coaches. These tournaments will be your stage for observation, so it is very important to play your best for the time you are on the field. But, what happens on the field is often dictated by what happens well in advance. **Write down two or three highly specific, simple goals you have for each game.** Review your goals realistically afterward, when you have time and quiet to think. When on the field, be aggressive, take some chances, but also have fun. If you make mistakes, remember that what you do after a mistake can tell a coach a great deal about your character and determination. If your team is winning and looking well, keep up the good work, but if your team is struggling against a tough opponent, your job is to double your effort and make a difference. That does not mean that you have to make all the right moves with the ball, but it does mean you have to work extra hard. If you make a good pass, it is also important then to make a supporting run. If your defenders are having trouble with clearing the ball, provide options. If you are on the bench, be vocal with tons of encouragement.
2. If you have not had any indications of interest shortly after the Las Vegas College Showcase of your junior year, it may be necessary to rethink your target schools. Look through your list for those colleges which need to fill spots where you can play. If your favorite schools do not need a ____ (your position) when you would be a freshman or sophomore, you should find some schools which will be graduating their starters. But do not give up on your favorite schools. Coaches will have developed their wish lists of candidates, but that certainly does not mean they will get their top choices. You may still be very much in the running. You might have your RAGE coach find out where you stand on the various wish lists, but in many cases your RAGE coach may say that is not the right strategy either. Patience and flexibility are probably even more important now.
3. Give considerable thought to summer camps at target schools, as these camps will offer several days of playing in front of the right coaches. Realize that these camps are to generate income for the coaches as well as to give visibility to prospects. It is also important to know if the right coaches will actually participate in a substantive way. Again, be realistic about your expectations. Use Philippe's and your coach's input from conversations they might have had at your favorite schools. Don't forget that you have academic plans, so you need to pick the camps at schools where there is a strong academic program in your prospective major. **It is important to remember that there is no single right college, there are many right colleges.** Also, you may **actually** visit and participate/train at



NAIA college trainings/camps. Their recruiting practices for NAIA schools are completely different from those of the NCAA.

4. By now, you will have had considerable experience interviewing college coaches. You should have a pretty good idea of how to sell yourself. After your meeting, be sure to follow-up with an e-mail or letter of thanks. Your RAGE coach might be able to provide you feedback about the college visit and how to proceed.
5. For the past several years, you have had evaluations from your RAGE coaches. Are you maintaining and enhancing your strengths? What have you been doing to improve your areas of weakness? Remember the old adage that, "It is what you do when nobody is watching that is important". Improve your speed and explosiveness, anaerobic capacity, work on agility, perhaps you should take highly targeted private training.
6. It might be a good idea to retake the SAT/ACT. A high SAT/ACT and GPA might be enough to tip the scales between you and a somewhat better soccer player with indifferent grades, who may not last more than the first season. A superior academic record may be enough to afford you "invited walk-on" status, which means little if any sports-related financial assistance, but at least an opportunity to try out for the team.
7. You must register after your junior year in high school with the NCAA to confirm your eligibility. Go to http://eligibilitycenter.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html. This is needed for NCAA schools, not NAIA status schools.

JUNIOR YEAR FOR PARENTS. Please support your daughter. She should become fully engaged and committed to securing her college future. Refocusing though may be in order from time to time. This also happens to be a period of INTENSE pressure for your child as she sets her sights on college: School drills this pressure, soccer coaches ask, parents ask, tests are being taken/re-taken, friends are talking about their processes and overall, they are immersed in it! Provide a comfortable open haven at home. Know when to NOT ask and when to talk about it...Remind YOURSELF that your child's best interests are where they will be happiest. Keep yourself grounded. Do what is right for your child, not what the other kid down the street is doing.

SENIOR YEAR FOR PLAYERS



1. If you have not had the indications you wanted, there is still time, but you will need to be very proactive. The best thing to do NOW is make an appointment with your RAGE coach and Philippe to discuss options. You should have a very clear idea of your academic goals and where you might achieve that success.
2. Your coach realizes this is a stressful time for you and will encourage you to **trust the process**.

SENIOR YEAR FOR PARENTS

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. File the form as soon as possible after January 1st of the year your daughter will enter college.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND USEFUL

High schools may be a great source of information: guidance counselors, libraries, perhaps even college fairs. Be sure you have taken or will take the right courses. The UCs require a different high school curriculum than the State Colleges. Private schools are another thing entirely.

http://www.pleasantonrage.org/pgsa_college_info.htm

Bound-for-College Guidebook by Frank Burnnett, Pleasanton Public Library, Dewey code 378.161

The Student Athlete's Guide to Getting Recruited by Stewart Brown, RAGE Library

U. S. News and World Report Ultimate College Guide (updated annually), RAGE Library

NCAA: www.ncaa.com

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegeview.com

www.princetonreview.com (a private company that offers SAT prep courses)

NCAA (Divisions 1, 2, 3) Eligibility Resource Center -- includes helpful guide with eligibility requirements and recruiting timelines and rules -- <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?ContentID=263>

NAIA Prospective Student Athlete -- includes guide -- <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/attend.htm>

Be Recruited website (one of many on line resources to make a profile) -- <http://www.berecruited.com/>

Contact RAGE alumnae



For College Recruiting Information, please see <https://sites.google.com/site/soccerrecruits/>

SENIOR YEAR FOR PARENTS

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. File the form as soon as possible after January 1st of the year your daughter will enter college.

Additional scholarships are available to low and middle income California students.

Visit www.calgrants.org.