



"creating academic and athletic success"

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The College Selection Process: Finding the academic and athletic “best fit” institution.

Upon beginning college research, successful students look at a variety of factors to determine their best path.

Many factors go into the college selection process as students consider specific institutions. Location of the school, student population, academic majors, SAT/ACT requirements, and graduation rates may be but a few of these factors. As a prospective student-athlete your concerns are much wider. You need to investigate both the *academic* interests of the institution *and* the *athletic* opportunities, pairing these two environments together to determine the “best fit” for your personal goals and your golfing talents. This is a daunting task and one which can be overwhelming without a plan of attack.

First and foremost, you need to determine your academic interests. Areas of interest for potential study can direct you to certain schools and away from others. Don’t worry if you cannot choose a specific major at this point in your education. Colleges often require a General Education Curriculum which allows you to try different courses and majors in your first two years. This will allow you to take stock in your interests and make an informed decision about a major when the time comes. Another method is to note subjects you *don’t* like or *don’t* have much interest in studying. Also, broad categories (do you like the sciences? business?) help narrow your focus and point to specific majors.

Once you have determined a potential path for your educational career you can then begin investigating specific schools. Interested in going to Law School after college? Then you may want to look at schools with Pre-Law programs in Political Science, English, History, or Philosophy. These majors develop skills in critical thinking, research, and writing, all necessary elements in a successful law student. Therefore, perhaps a liberal arts school (i.e. Davidson, Seattle University, or College of Charleston) would suit you best. Interested in a preeminent International Business program at a school with a large athletics program? University of South Carolina is an excellent choice.

As a prospective student-athlete, determining your academic goals is only half the equation. Accurately assessing your athletic abilities and determining your future golf goals is of equal importance. Once you have set your academic goals and have a sense of your athletic strengths, begin researching potential “best fit” colleges that meet as many of these goals as possible. Research specific schools that have academic programs which interest you and that have collegiate golf programs which provide the best opportunity to play right away. Matching your academic and athletic talents will enhance your college experience, while being unhappy academically or athletically will dampen your college experience.



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In looking at potential athletic environments ensure that your range of research is quite broad. Many players keep their research limited to Division I programs and fail to see other options in Division II or III which can offer a combination of strong academic programs and competitive golf environments. Remember, only about 35% of all collegiate golf programs are at the Division I level. Also, many other things should go into a decision about where you plan to play golf for four years. How does the coach select his/her traveling team? What facilities are available for playing and practicing. And, another important question, where are the playing and practicing facilities? An hour drive each way to the facilities in heavy traffic will impact your academic life!

Golf is an individual sport and success relies on the individual getting better through practice, playing, and performing in competitions. No collegiate golf program guarantees you will make it to the PGA Tour. However, understanding the connection between an enjoyable academic experience and a successful athletic career is important. Therefore, in researching colleges and eventually selecting a collegiate golf programs, bring as many variables into the process possible to ensure an informed decision is made and that that decision will make you happy for four years. Attending college is a great experience and playing collegiate golf only enhances that experience. Take the time to figure out how you can best enjoy this experience!

Good Luck.

Dr. Fleming

Dr. Bruce Fleming is the founder of Play Collegiate Golf, created to mentor young women and men interested in continuing their competitive golf careers at institutions that support their academic, athletic, and personal goals.

For more information please visit playcollegiategolf.com

Four Things Successful Students Do At College

College Survival Tip



1. **Be Organized** - Keep a daily planner. Mark all important dates (tests, papers, practice, tournaments). Refer to it regularly so you know what is coming up in your academic and athletic schedules.
2. **Be Familiar** - Become familiar with your campus and the various resources available to you. Location, hours, and what each office does can be important information when you need help!
3. **Set Goals** - Establish goals that are specific, realistic, and measurable. Write them down and post them where you see them daily. Evaluate your progress towards your goals at mid-term and revise them as necessary. Reward yourself for accomplishing your goals.
4. **Be Prepared** - Prepare before you go to class. Read your textbooks so that you can relate to what is being taught to you during class. Turn work in on time. Keep up with your studies because falling behind can be overwhelming, especially if you are trying to maintain a successful athletic career.