



## ***Myths and Realities of the College Golf Recruiting Process***

*Challenges of the recruiting process and how understanding them can help during the search for the "Best Fit."*

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There are a lot of myths associated with the college golf recruiting process - more than can be written about in this month's column. However, in concentrating on four myths that continue to pop up in conversation after conversation, parents and junior golfers can get a head start on the recruiting process and best position themselves as the Spring signing period nears in April. The biggest myth is that the best opportunities are only at the Division I level. There are opportunities at all levels (NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA) and it is the responsibility of the junior golfer and his or her support environment to determine the best option based on academic and athletic talent. The goal, then, should be to attend an institution that meets *both* the academic and the athletic goals of the junior golfer. Research your different options with this in mind!

### ***Myth #1 - Coaches will find you if you are good enough***

- Recruiting is a global effort now and there is more and more competition for coveted scholarship spots on golf teams at all levels.
- Not all coaches have large recruiting budgets or additional coaching staff to see every tournament and, thus, may not find you.

The end result of this is that it is important for the player to *recruit* the coach and the college golf program. Make sure you send out introduction letters that are program specific. Do not send out mass emails that start off "Dear Coach;" rather, do your research and write a short introductory paragraph that talks about specific aspects of the program (recent tournament wins, facilities, and the institution in general). This will indicate your interest much more than something that looks like a blanket email to 100 coaches. Include a golf specific résumé and a short swing video. Follow-up within the week and ask how the coach recruits players as well as what you can do to best prepare for college golf. Show that you are interested in *that* college golf program, not just *a* college golf program!

### ***Myth #2 - Division I schools are stronger. Division II and III schools are weaker.***

- Division I, II, and III are classifications for NCAA athletics only.

The NCAA classifies its teams by division according to the number of sports that must be offered for both men and women. For example, Division I institutions must sponsor seven sports for men and seven sports for women (or six and eight) with two team sports for each gender. Division II must sponsor four sports for each gender with two team sports for each gender; Division III requires five sports for each gender. There are extremely competitive playing environments at all three levels - the best player at the number one Division II school, USC-Aiken, had a 73.05 tournament scoring average last year. As a junior golfer, your goal is to find the right athletic fit for your abilities and personal goals. That fit may be Division I. Maybe it is Division II or perhaps it is Division III. Alternatively, it may be a NAIA school. All totaled, there are over 1600 four-year college golf programs for men and women in the US. Find the right fit for you!

### ***Myth #3 - All colleges offer athletic scholarships to incoming student-athletes.***

- May offer athletic scholarships:
  - Division I, II, NAIA, NJCAA
- Do not offer athletic scholarships
  - Division III

Though schools are allowed to offer a set number of scholarships (Div. I = 4.5 men; 6.0 women; Div. II = 3.6 men; 5.4 women), they may not be able to provide the allotment based on budgets. As you are recruiting a coach and being recruited a great question to ask is what a typical scholarship amount for an incoming first year student is on the golf team. This is important information as you think about financing your college experience. It is rare that any college golfer receives a “full ride” scholarship; expect something in the 20% range as a first year player.

### ***Myth #4 - Coaches can get students into the institution.***

Academics are extremely important! The basis for your academic success is developed in high school and then refined during the college experience. Coaches will shy away from a recruit with poor grades because there may be a fear that s/he cannot succeed academically in college. With small recruiting budgets and even less time to recruit, it is critical that coaches make the correct decision for their teams; grades may be one reason that one player is selected for a scholarship over another player of equal talent and ability. And, coaches do not make admissions’ decisions, admissions’ counselors make admissions’ decisions. In reality, then, academics are extremely important for many reasons, not just entrance into the institution, but how you are valued as a recruit.

These are just four of the many myths associated with the college golf recruiting process. Take your time to research and understand the college golf recruiting process and let me know if I can help.

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.*

### **Pick a Major That Interests You!**

#### **College Survival Tip**



College is all about learning; find a major that you enjoy learning about. Most students select a major based on misperceptions (certain majors make lots of money, for example). The skills you develop during the learning process will make you successful in life, not the degree itself!

Spend time researching a major and ask students currently in that major how they like it, what the workload is like, what kind of papers, projects and presentations they have to complete. Use your General Education Requirements to take a class or two within that major so that you can make an informed decision when it is time to declare. And, colleges do not make you select a major your first year so don’t feel odd if you haven’t selected a major yet. Students need to declare by the start of your Junior year (at 60 credits), so take your time and make the correct decision for you!