



Want to Play in College? Meet with a Coach on a Campus Visit.

Is practicing your sport and being part of a team one of the best parts of your high school experience? Do you have the drive and the skill to play in college?

If the answer is "yes", this article is for you. In it, Go See Campus discusses how to meet with a coach during a campus visit. So that you can be prepared, it breaks down the process into several steps:

- Know the rules of the association or conference
- Prepare before you meet with a college coach
- Make the most of your meeting

Read on to find out more!

To Play in College, Know the Rules First

Most colleges with athletic programs belong to an association or conference. Early on in high school, learn the conferences of the colleges you are considering. You may be familiar with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (<http://www.ncaa.org>), the largest and most influential of these groups, but there is also the NAIA (<http://www.naia.org>), the NJCAA (<http://www.njcaa.org>), and others.

Each conference oversees regulations about recruiting and eligibility. For example, NCAA Division I colleges split on-campus visits into two categories: **official visits** and **unofficial visits**.

NCAA I schools can cover expenses related to an official visit, which helps students who want to play in college with the burden of traveling to and seeing the campus. However, there are rules about which expenses are permitted, the number of official visits a student can make, and more. Unofficial visits place fewer restrictions on high school students and colleges.

Just by looking at campus visits, you can see that earning a spot on a Division I team can be a complex process, and mistakes could cost you the ability to play in college your freshman year. The good news? The conference can support you along the way. Explore information on the websites linked above. Then, sit down with a parent or advisor, and make a plan for when to contact colleges and meet with coaches.



Prepare Before You Meet with a College Coach

The information below assumes that you are following guidelines provided by the conference or association to which the college belongs. Guidelines change from year to year. So, if there is a conflict with the advice offered below, follow the conference's guidelines.

Who should you contact?

When you want to arrange a campus visit to meet with a coach, consider starting with admissions. Generally, admissions officers are familiar with the best athletic contacts for students who want to play in college. Also, they can support you in making plans for your time on campus, including tours, information sessions, and other activities. Remember that you are selecting both a college and a team. Our article on visiting and choosing schools may help in your decision (<http://goseecampus.com/Go-See-Campus-When-Choosing-a-College>).

When should you visit?

It can be very difficult to schedule with a coach when he or she is in season. The only availability may be during a time when college students aren't on campus, such as summer or winter break. This can be a problem because you will also want to see the college while classes are in session. Try to meet with a coach when students are on campus, and if it isn't possible, consider making two separate visits.

What should you plan to do while on campus?

- Speak with the coach responsible for your position.
- Get to know some of your future teammates.
- If you can, stay overnight with a current freshman. It can help you get perspective about what it's like to play in college as a first-year student.
- Meet with the academic support team to learn about your coursework.
- Tour the training, practice, and game facilities.
- If you have a choice between attending a game or a practice, choose the practice. It's a good opportunity to see if the coach is someone for whom you want to play in college, whether players are benefiting from their instruction, and whether the team is a fit for you.

Make the Most of Your Meeting with a Coach

Getting ready for a discussion with a college coach is similar in some ways to preparing for an interview or speaking with admissions (articles on both are



available at <http://goseecampus.com/college-advice>.) Here are some general guidelines:

1. Know about the athletics program. If you haven't been following the team's performance, now is a good time to do research. The school's website, the local newspaper, and the college's student paper may all be good sources.
2. Show your personality and interests in the course of the discussion. You can talk about your experiences on campus, feelings about your past season, why you hope to play in college, and more.
3. Respond to questions in a polite, straightforward way. This is easier to do if you have had some practice. Have a parent or friend sit with you and pretend to be the coach. They can ask you questions like, "What do you like about your sport?", "Why are you interested in our school?" and "What are your goals in playing with us?" Most coaches are excited about finding high-quality student athletes, and answering questions is your way of showing them you are who they want.
4. Prepare a list of questions you want to ask. This conversation is as much about your interest in the team as it is about the coach's interest in you. Below are questions you might consider asking.
 - a. What is the weekly time commitment the coach expects from athletes (practice, workouts, and games)?
 - b. What should you submit to be considered for a chance to play in college (videotapes? statistics? awards won?)
 - c. What role does the coach see you playing in the short-term and in the long-term?
 - d. What are the team rules for conduct outside of practice and games? For example, are there dietary restrictions, dress codes, or requirements on where and with whom you live?

By knowing the rules for your conference, preparing well for your meeting with a coach, and following these guidelines, you can give yourself a better chance to play in college. Just as importantly, you will be in a better position to decide which program is a good match for you.



go see campus

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