



COLLEGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM





Central Illinois United College Advisory Program

The Central Illinois United (CIU) soccer program is dedicated to providing the best opportunity to be recruited for our players that would like to play soccer in college. Our College Advisory Program (CAP) is CIU's program to help guide players and families through the recruiting process. While the recruiting process is different for each player, this program provides a general overview and a common road map of the recruiting process to our CIU families.

Section I - CIU CAP Process

1. How to enter our CAP:

- a. Our CAP Director is Pete Kowall and his email address is: petekowall@hotmail.com He will educate CIU players on the recruiting process by running zoom sessions and College Coach panel Zoom Sessions.
- b. We assume most CIU players would like to play soccer at the college level since they are playing in the CIU program. But we also understand that some of our players do not want to play in college.
- c. For those players that want to play in college please contact our CAP Director Pete Kowall at petekowall@hotmail.com
- d. Our CAP Director will then set up a virtual meeting or call with the player to discuss the player's basic info such as what major(s) they are considering, what division they would like to play at, what geographic area of the country they would like to play in, etc.
- e. Our CAP Director will then set up a plan for the player's recruiting and work with the player's coach to implement the recruiting plan.
- f. There will also be multiple opportunities zoom sessions each year with our CAP Director to learn more about the recruiting process. CIU will communicate those opportunities to our families as they occur.

2. CAP Director Goals

- a. Educate our CIU families on how the college soccer recruiting process works.
- b. To reach out to college coaches on our player's behalf to promote them to the college coaches.
- c. Provide team profile sheets to college coaches at events.
- d. Work with college coaches on their needs per recruiting class and attempt to match our players to those needs.



Section 2 - CIU CAP General Recruiting Information

1. Recruiting Etiquette

- a. CIU would like to maintain our standing as a respected club in how our players interact with coaches.
We will have many players contacted by coaches at colleges that they may not be interested in, but CIU would like our standard to be that our players are respectful and responsive to all coaches.
- b. If a coach contacts one of our players and the player isn't interested in that school, our CAP Director and CIU coaches can help the player craft a respectful reply to that school explaining that the player is not interested in that school at that time.
- c. We would like our players to never "burn a bridge" with a coach or college. That can happen via actions as well as non-action. Some players end up choosing a school that doesn't work out the way they hoped it would and if they burned a bridge with a college, that college likely would not be interested in the player transferring to them if that is where the player would like to move to. So, we would like our players to respectfully move away from colleges that they are not interested in initially because you never know what the future may hold.
- d. We also would like our players to be respectful of the college coach's time. If a player decides along the recruiting path that they are not interested in a school, it would be appropriate to respectfully notice the coach that the player is headed in a different direction so the coach can focus their time on other players they may choose to recruit.
- e. We would also appreciate if the coaches respected our players time and notice the player if they choose to go in a different direction also, but we can't control how the coaches handle those scenarios.

2. Trace Video Platform

- a. CIU uses the Trace video platform to record our games. The Trace platform provides full game video and CIU will provide game video to all players. Trace also provides fee-based subscriptions that create individual highlights for each player for each game and individual player metrics for each game.
- b. Trace also includes a valuable recruiting tool with their subscriptions, their Trace iD. The Trace iD allows the player to select and customize highlights from their games. The Trace iD can be sent to coaches and embedded/exported to recruiting service platforms and includes the player's bio information also.
- c. Each player with a subscription should update their Trace iD after each event to make sure their Trace iD always has their preferred highlights as coaches check the Trace iD's regularly.

3. Recruiting Services

- a. CIU has partnered with the top recruiting services in the country for our players. There are multiple recruiting services out there and CIU will help our players work with any service they may choose. However these are the CIU recommended services for our families:
 - i. Next College Student Athlete (NCSA) is the world's largest and most-experienced college athletic recruiting network and CIU has partnered with NCSA to provide a high-level recruiting service for our players.
 1. Each CIU player receives a free NCSA profile and CIU will work with NCSA to create each player account.
 2. NCSA will provide an initial complimentary recruiting consultation for each player. This recruiting consultation provides the high-level information on the recruiting process and explains how to get the most exposure via your NCSA account.

3. NCSA does provide paid services in addition to their free service. The paid services include NCSA actively working on your players behalf to contact college coaches based on the players preferences. Our club partnership provides a 20% discount on the paid services NCSA provides.
4. We have learned that players that want to play at a college within their home geographic area may be able to effectively handle their recruiting process and contacts on their own. A paid NCSA service may not make sense for those players. However if a player may want to play at a college outside of their home geographic area, an NCSA paid service that has NCSA working for the player nationally may make sense.
 - ii. FieldLevel is the athletic network where coaches and athletes connect to discover, create, and pursue opportunities at the next level.
 1. Athletes work with their coaches to build their athletic profiles, research schools, and target schools to attempt to get recruited by colleges.
 2. Athletes are required to have their profiles connected to at least one of their coaches. Athletes can't be discovered by college coaches unless they are on an active roster.
 3. To ensure the authenticity of each network, each team and coach is manually verified.
 4. Coaches are responsible for "certifying" their athletes. A certification includes an athlete evaluation, projection, and athletic measurements. Coaches are encouraged to update their certifications throughout the recruiting process as their athletes' progress.

4. Choose It Right

- a. While not a recruiting service, this service can help players narrow down the colleges they may be interested in. The service is not exclusive for student-athletes also.
- b. The Illinois Youth Soccer Association (IYSA) is currently a partner with Choose It Right and that partnership provides each player the Essentials Package complimentary, which includes your personalized Smart College Report.
- c. Choose It Right is a web-based, college search and selection system that helps high school students, student-athletes and their families find the right college that best fits their unique academic, athletic, and financial criteria.
- d. Student-athletes will receive Letter Templates that make it easy to contact and email college admissions officers, and Administrative Directory with the contact information of all the coaches from the top colleges that best match your preferences, you also receive an Athletic Directory with the contact information of all the coaches from the top colleges that best match your preferences.
- e. CIU's recommendation for the Choose It Right service is to wait until the player has a decent idea on what geographic area, division, and potential major they are interested in since you only get one free analysis per player. If you use the service without knowing the players basic preferences, the service won't be as useful for the player.
- f. If the player's preferences change and you desire another Choose It Right search, they provide fee-based options for running additional reports.

5. Expand Your Resume

- a. There are thousands of players nationwide starting the recruiting process the same time our players are. While soccer skill and academics will be the focus of the coaches recruiting our players, our players can attempt to set themselves apart from their peers by adding to their resume. Some things to consider to attempt to do that are:
 - i. Volunteer work, community service and mentorship options.

- ii. Extracurricular activities, school clubs, and leadership programs.
- iii. Taking introductory coaching courses.
- iv. Referee certification to improve soccer IQ.
- v. Taking part in employed or volunteer coaching/training/camps and programs at your club or park district.
- vi. Develop your communication skills for mature interactions with coaching staff and school officials.



Section 3 – Communication, ID Camps and Showcases

1. Email Address

- a. The CIU coaches and college coaches that the player contacts will often communicate via e-mail, so our players having their own e-mail address is essential to the recruiting process and that will be required for the player to enter our CAP.

2. Social Media

- a. Our CIU players typically already have a social media presence. However, if they do not have social media accounts, those accounts can be helpful in the recruiting process via posting highlights and providing another means of communication with college coaches.
- b. Social media accounts come with a responsibility of representing CIU appropriately, so the CIU coaches and staff will help the players with their social media presence where appropriate.
- c. College coaches review prospective recruit's social media accounts to see if there are red flags in how the player presents herself, so social media accounts can hurt a player's recruiting opportunities if they present themselves inappropriately on social media.
- d. The social media platforms that CIU recommends the player consider are:
 - i. X (previously Twitter)
 - ii. Instagram
 - iii. Facebook

3. Communication with College Coaches

- a. Each player should develop a script or use templates for communications with college coaches.
- b. The player needs to be prepared to ask questions of the coach to show the player is engaged and interested in that school. Suggestion for those type of questions would be:
 - i. Questions about the soccer team
 - ii. Style of play
 - iii. Soccer philosophy
 - iv. Roster needs – how is their recruiting class shaping up for the players graduation year
 - v. Off-season playing opportunities
 - vi. Campus life
 - vii. Academics
- c. Most colleges have recruiting questionnaires on their Athletic Department website. These questionnaires are an easy way to provide your basic info to the school and start the process to get on the schools recruiting radar.
- d. It is very important to contact head and assistant coaches at colleges of interest to invite them to watch you play in person at the events you attend.
- e. Each player also will want to provide the recruiting resources they have engaged in. This would include:
 - i. NCSA profile.
 - ii. Trace iD and any other video highlights the player may have created.
 - iii. Club/high-school schedules
 - iv. College ID camps attending
 - v. Interest in a college visit
 - vi. List DOC and coaches as references

4. College ID Camps

- a. College ID camps are very important in the recruiting process. Attending a college's ID camp is a great way to get on that school's recruiting radar.
- b. CIU recommends that our players attend local ID camps to get the experience of what an ID camp is.

5. College Showcases

- a. College showcases are a big part of the recruiting process. Showcases allow multiple college coaches to observe players from multiple teams at the same event.
 - i. College Showcases normally post the coaches that are attending the showcase on their website in advance of the event. So players should review that coaching list and contact the coaches of the colleges they are interested in to invite them to attend their games.



Section 4 - How to Choose a College

1. College Selection Process

- a. There are thousands of colleges/universities out there and determining the colleges you would like to engage in the recruiting process can be very daunting. So narrowing down the focus of the colleges the player may be interested in is imperative to the recruiting process.
- b. The typical starting points for narrowing down colleges are:
 - i. Major, if known.
 - ii. Geographic area
 1. Central IL vs IL vs Midwest vs West Coast, etc
 - iii. Size of the college
 1. Small, medium or large
 - iv. Division the college is in
 1. For D-1 colleges, determine if the players goal is a Power 4 big college or a Mid-Major college.
- c. While players may not know the major they would consider early in their high school career, the sooner that can be narrowed down the better for the player. For example, if the player wants to be a nurse but the college the player contacts on the recruiting path doesn't offer a nursing program, that may eliminate that college for the player.
- d. Identify colleges of interest based on soccer potential, major preferences and academic eligibility including GPA, SAT/ACT score requirements.
- e. There are multiple search options online to help with this process, sites like Mymajors.com can help narrow down potential majors.

2. College Testing

- a. Given the competition for soccer athletic scholarships, academic scholarships are very helpful for our players. As such, ACT and SAT test scores can be very helpful for our players.
- b. Players should research ACT and SAT testing dates, tutoring programs, and available study materials.
- c. Players may consider taking these tests early in high school in order to get an idea of where their scores land to know what they need to do in order to attain their desired test scores.



Section 5 - NCAA and NAIA Information

1. NCAA Eligibility Center

- a. You need to be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center to compete at a NCAA Division I or NCAA Division II school.
- b. Each player needs to create a Certification Account to be guided through the process.
- c. The Certification Account to make official visits to Divisions I and II schools or to sign a National Letter of Intent.

2. NAIA Eligibility Center:

- a. <https://play.mynaia.org/parents/>

3. NCAA Resources

- a. Find your high school's list of NCAA core courses:
 - i. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/10/6/core-courses.aspx>
- b. Make sure you have an academic plan to maintain your NCAA eligibility:
 - i. <https://www.ncsasports.org/how-do-you-get-recruited/college-recruit/ncaa-eligibility-center-clearinghouse-registration-login>
- c. NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete:
 - i. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/CBSA.pdf
- d. Create a free profile page with the NCAA:
 - i. <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
- e. How to request final amateurism certification
 - i. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/How_to_Request_Final_Amateurism_Certification.pdf
- f. Division I and II Recruiting Calendars and Guides
 - i. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2018/5/8/division-i-and-ii-recruiting-calendars.aspx>
- g. National Letter of Intent Signing Dates
 - i. <http://www.nationalletter.org/signingDates/index.html>



Section 6 - Year by Year Recruiting Goals

1. 6th, 7th and 8th grade years

- a. Walk campuses with your athlete to start the discussion on what type of college your player might be interested in.
 - i. Choose schools at every level.
 - ii. Great to do at away games/events.
- b. Ask guiding questions about colleges and let your player talk freely.
- c. DO NOT WORRY ABOUT RECRUITING.

2. Freshman Year

- a. Check in with your high school guidance counselor to plan your academic path.
- b. Research the type of academic, athletic and financial aid and what types of aid are offered at each division:
 - i. <https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/managing-recruiting-process/walk-on-vs-scholarship>
- c. Research if you can you combine academic and athletic scholarships?
 - i. <https://usatodayhss.com/2019/ncsa-can-you-combine-academic-and-athletic-scholarships>
- d. Continue to walk campuses.
 - i. Visit local campuses and/or check out online campus tours.
- e. Start creating highlight videos.
 - i. These should be between three and five minutes in length.
 - ii. Your athlete's biggest "wow" plays should be at the beginning of the video.
- f. Begin inviting coaches to games/showcase events.
 - i. Good practice for your sophomore year when the recruiting is in full swing.
- g. Make sure you have social media accounts created.
 - i. X (previously Twitter) is the most important.
 1. Follow teammates and @CentralILUnited.
 2. Follow these useful soccer recruiting accounts:
 - a. @ImYouthSoccer
 - b. @ImCollegeSoccer
 - c. @SoccerMomInt
 - d. @GAcademyLeague
 - e. @ECNLgirls
 3. Follow college soccer programs and their coaches.
 - ii. Stay active by posting your highlights and accomplishments.
 - iii. YouTube is likely the second most important social media platform because this is a great place to upload your highlights.
- h. The summer between freshman and sophomore year, attend one EXACT camp and one local school ID camp.
 - i. EXACT camp:
 1. contains great information, teaches some lessons about personal interactions with coaching staffs, lots of schools in attendance to help facilitate discussion about what type of college your child is interested in.
 - ii. School ID camp

1. Much more precise in training.
 2. Child gets to experience what it's like to walk a campus with a coach and/or existing players.
- i. Parent tasks:
- i. Start formulating what interests your athlete about a college campus.
 1. Examples of questions to ask to help your player start to filter colleges:
 - a. How far away from home would you like to be?
 - b. What campus setting (rural, city, college town) do you think you like most?
 - c. What size of school/campus interests you?
 - d. Is weather important?
 2. Understand that these answers may change their sophomore, junior, and senior year.
 - ii. Start researching what colleges you can afford without assistance.
 - iii. If you're on Facebook, join the "Educating Parents of HS Athletes on the College Recruiting Process" Facebook page.
 - iv. Register your athlete for the NCAA eligibility center.
 - v. You can sign up for the free account to receive a number for your athlete.
 1. Your athlete will start receiving generic camp invites. Use these as conversation starters about how to "research a school".

3. Introductory Email Structure

- a. Include this in the Subject line of your email:
 - i. Name – Graduate Year – Reason for Emailing (camp, game schedule, showcase schedule)
- b. Introductory paragraph
 - i. Include your name, graduate year of 20XX, your high school, and your GPA.
 - ii. Include your club team, club jersey number and position(s) played
- c. List the reasons that you are interested in their school and program
 - i. School examples: major, educational ranking, school size/location
 - ii. Program examples: coaching tenure, graduating ___ # of kids at your position, some tie to the program (previous teammate, coach, players from the GA conference).
 - iii. Keep this to a maximum of three to four sentences!
- d. If for a showcase:
 - i. Address of the complex the showcase is taking place at.
 - ii. List out each game on your schedule:
 1. Your team vs opponent – Field ___ @ ___:___.
 2. I am #___ and we are wearing "color".
- e. Summary
 - i. Thank them for their time and consideration.
 - ii. Tell them you are looking forward to finding out if you are the right fit for the program.
 - iii. End with a hashtag.
 1. Grab a hashtag they use on Twitter/X. For example, UIS uses #WeAreStars

4. Sophomore Year

- a. Really start researching schools.
- b. Does your athlete's soccer resume match the players on the college roster?
- c. What interests your athlete about the school and the program?
- d. Begin casting a wide net (several schools across all divisions) and email coaches.

- e. Tool to help find schools, in each state, at all levels:
 - i. <https://www.ncsasports.org/athletic-scholarships/womens-soccer>
- f. Invite coaches to games/showcase events.
 - i. At showcases, the earlier you send your schedule, the better chance you have of them showing up to a game.
 - ii. Coaches are going to map out what games they will attend.
- g. Two communication rules to remember:
 - i. JuCo, NAIA, D3 can talk to your athlete immediately but are likely not ready to talk to sophomores.
 - ii. If they do want to talk, have 2 to 3 questions ready.
 - iii. Until June 15th after your athlete's sophomore year, D2 and D1 programs cannot respond with anything other than a camp invite.
- h. Start targeting specific school ID camps.
 - i. Targeting the summer camps is a good idea, as after June 15th, they can communicate with the athlete.
- i. If you want to stand out after a camp, go old school and write a thank you card to send in the mail.
 - i. This can be sent to the athletic department with ATTN: to the coaches.
 - ii. Include something the coaching staff may have asked you to work on to show your attention to details.
- j. between your athlete's sophomore and junior year, they should be ready to talk to D1 and D2 coaches.
 - i. If your athlete is fortunate to start receiving phone calls on/around June 15h, have 2 to 3 questions ready to ask.
- k. Stay active on social media with updates to your highlights/accomplishments.
- l. Create a tracking tool to document which schools your athlete has contacted. For example, consider creating a spreadsheet that includes these type of fields:
 - i. School
 - ii. Location
 - iii. Division
 - iv. Coach(es)
 - v. 1st Email, 2nd Email, 3rd Email
 - vi. Email received from school?
 - vii. Call received from school?
 - viii. Camp dates
 - ix. Offer received?

5. Junior Year

- a. Parents and players: start preparing to hear the words "we are not interested" in some form because this will hurt.
- b. Start to narrow your target list.
- c. Continue to stay active on social media, especially Twitter/X.
- d. Be persistent in your communications with programs you are interested in.
 - i. During your junior season, a good rule of thumb is to send an initial email plus three follow up emails and a Twitter/X direct message or a phone call
 - ii. No response from the coach to these contacts may be a sign to move on from that program.
 - iii. If you are receiving emails or phone calls, always end the conversation with "what are the next steps in the recruiting process for me?".

1. Do not walk away from a conversation not knowing what to expect next.
- e. If the offers you are considering are from D1 and/or D2 programs, you'll need to upgrade your NCAA eligibility center to the paid version.
 - f. For college visits:
 - i. Dress "business casual".
 - ii. Print out one copy of your transcripts for the coaching staff and one for the admissions/academic advisor.
 - iii. The athlete should have "soccer focused" questions ready like "what intangible qualities are expected for players in your program?".
 - iv. Parents can ask "student focused" questions like, "what's the application process like, what happens if my child gets injured, etc...".
 - v. Do not discuss money during a visit even if an offer is received.
 - g. If you want to stand out after a camp, go old school and write a thank you card to send in the mail.
 - i. This can be sent to the athletic department with ATTN: to the coaches.
 - ii. If it is after a camp, include something the coaching staff may have asked you to work on to show your attention to details.
 - iii. If after a visit, just express thanks for having you on campus.
 - h. If you receive an offer, ask the coach what their timeline is for an answer to the offer.
 - i. If you need to ask for an extension, ask at least a week earlier than the end of the offer window.
 - i. Parent Tip - Net price calculators on the school website help with affordability!

6. Senior Year

- a. If zero offers, do not panic!
 - i. But it is time to widen your school list and to be aggressive with your recruiting.
 - ii. Try to get on the phone with schools immediately.
- b. Continue to follow the rules for your junior year.
- c. Do not attend camps randomly.
 - i. During your senior season, if you are not in communication with the coaching staff prior to camp, you have a very slim chance of getting their attention at camp.
- d. When you accept an offer, enjoy it!
 - i. Only 7% of high school athletes play collegiate sports and you are part of that 7%!



Additional Next College Student Athlete (NCSA) Resources

1. NCSA College Recruiting Guide:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting>
2. When can college coaches contact high school athletes?
<https://www.ncsasports.org/ncaa-eligibility-center/recruiting-rules#what-this-means>
3. The 5 most common traits of successful recruits:
<https://usatodayhss.com/2018/the-5-most-common-traits-of-successful-recruits>
4. How Division I coaches find recruits:
<https://usatodayhss.com/2017/how-division-i-coaches-find-recruits>
5. How do colleges recruit athletes?
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/how-to-get-recruited/college-recruiting-process>
6. Financial aid for student athletes:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/paying-for-college/financial-aid>
7. How to use recruiting questionnaires in the recruiting process:
<https://usatodayhss.com/2017/how-to-use-recruiting-questionnaires-in-the-recruiting-process>
8. How to contact college coaches:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/contacting-college-coaches>
9. Guide for students-athletes using social media for recruiting:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/contacting-college-coaches/social-media>
10. Phone scripts and voicemail templates to use on your calls to coaches:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/contacting-college-coaches/phone-calls>
11. NCAA Eligibility Center checklist:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/ncaa-eligibility-center/checklist>
12. Everything you need to know about official visits:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/ncaa-eligibility-center/recruiting-rules/official-visits>
13. The college application process for student-athletes:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/managing-recruiting-process/college-application-process>
14. Is it too late to get recruited during your Senior year?
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/managing-recruiting-process/unsigned-seniors>
15. What verbal offers and commitments really mean for your athlete
<https://usatodayhss.com/2017/what-verbal-offers-and-commitments-really-mean-for-your-athlete>
16. How to choose the right scholarship offer
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/managing-recruiting-process/college-cost-calculator>
17. How to negotiate your athletic scholarship offer
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/managing-recruiting-process/negotiate-scholarship-offer>

