

## ... and You think you have problems getting noticed by college coaches ?



Pat, shown here being inducted into The Hall of Fame, is a regular Student Athlete magazine columnist.

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Pat has personally helped more players get to college, and on the team ... many with full scholarships ... than anyone on this planet.

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In April 1996 the phone in our Northport, Long Island home rang and a voice announced, "Hello, I am Floris De Klerk from Lelystad, The Netherlands." Quickly I thought, "I think this means he's from Holland." In perfect English, Floris said he wanted to play soccer in the USA, win a scholarship, major in International business, tourism and public relations.

Straightaway I asked him how he knew of my services and he explained that Bob Collins of The Student Athlete magazine had suggested that he call me. I was very impressed that I was talking to someone so far away, and flattered that he had was seeking my help.

It was late in the college recruiting season and most scholarship money would already have been awarded; but we agreed to go ahead with the search. I sent him a packet of information including my College Work Sheet for personal data, desired course of study, academic information, varsity and club soccer experience, honors and awards, camps, special instruction, tournaments, a self-evaluation and references.

Usually, I convert their College Work Sheet data into their Athletic-Academic Profile, prepare cover letters and then send the several sets by Fedex for their signature and distribution to the soccer coaches and Directors of Admissions; because of Floris's location, I elected to do his mailing for him.

As soon as Floris' College Work Sheet arrived, I surveyed my college database and isolated 30 colleges offering his major and his level of soccer.

Exactly what was his level of soccer? This was why The Student Athlete magazine had referred Floris to me. Although Floris had a brilliant record (33 goals, 8 assists) as a foreign exchange student at Illinois' Manteno HS in 1995, his outstanding performance (MVP '94, '95, '96) playing on Holland's famous sv Batavia A1, was meaningless to most American college coaches.

My approach was to add a third condition to my search of colleges, i.e. to select only college coaches of European extraction who were familiar with Northern European Club soccer. It worked! Soon my computer was printing

out all the details on the 20 colleges that best satisfied Floris's requirements. Many coaches I located were interested in Floris, but explained that their scholarship money was committed because it was so late in the '96 recruiting season. By now it was early May. I was getting worried.

Floris was negotiating with two schools, Dominican College and Davis & Elkins; they both were interested and seemed to have money available. Fortunately, Floris' excellent grades enabled colleges to consider merit scholarships and grants in addition to athletic scholarships. Non-US citizens of course, are ineligible for government funded grants and loans. All foreign students do have take SAT, TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) and submit the NCAA Clearinghouse form. I recommend that foreign candidates begin planning very early as the opportunities to take SAT tests in Europe are limited and processing of scores creates further delays. In addition, I suggest that foreign players invest in a good video of themselves playing.

Floris and I and his parents were communicating by e-mail. And we would both copy The Student Athlete magazine to keep Bob informed of our progress. Then one day in June, when negotiations with both colleges seemed to have reached a standstill, my daily e-mail message read, "Dear Mrs. Grecco, yesterday morning, 8/24/96, Floris went to the USA to play soccer for Davis and Elkins college in West Virginia."

Floris' good grades together with his soccer skills had made it possible for Coach Mark Stollesteimer to offer a financial package composed of merit and athletic scholarship money. Mark is well aware of talent that the European soccer club system produces, and was pleased to have Floris join his team. Mark played at the University of Richmond and in 1996 was promoted to the Head Coach position. D&E is a now a Division II college, offering 5.5 soccer scholarships. Formerly NAIA, they were National Champions in 1968 and 1970 and had NCAA Div II National Tournament appearances in '83-'86.

Floris' own words in the self-evaluation section of his Athletic-Academic profile best describe this serious, European-bred player, "I have been described by my coaches as cold-blooded and relentless around the goal."

I finally got to meet Floris last Fall when his team played Dowling College. He is an exceptionally nice young man. We continue to e-mail each other. He is very happy with college life and soccer, but of course, misses his family. The first year of college is always a challenge. Add to that the pressures of a very competitive soccer program, a different language and different culture and you begin appreciate the degree of Floris' commitment.

I am really pleased that we were fortunate to help Floris, even though we started so late. Word of our success continues to spread around the globe, and I am now working with a young man from Northern Ireland and a female player from England, in addition to several American clients.