

## Transferring Issues and opportunities the College Student Athlete



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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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The NCAA defines a transfer student athlete is an individual who, after having established himself or herself as a student and as an athlete in a collegiate institution, transfers to another institution.

The rules set forth by the NCAA and NAIA are numerous and complicated. I have observed rule changes, rule discussions, rule misinterpretations... and on and on ... speak with your coaches and NCAA or NAIA advisors.

Transferring from a two year college to a four year college is the most common. You may transfer after one full year, but you must be what is called a "qualifier" or student athlete who has spent at least two semesters or three quarters in residence (excluding summer sessions) at the two year college. And you must have a minimum of 24 semester hours with a minimum GPA of 2.0.

Ordinarily, students transfer to four year colleges after having received their two year (Associate) degree, using "JUCOs" as a stepping stone to a four year degree. By living at home and/or winning a scholarship to a JUCO, players can cut the total cost of a four year degree in half.

**Example:** Christine was a strong high school student and a club team player, but was unable to obtain the necessary SAT score required to play at the Div I or II college level. I helped her select a strong NJCAA program where she could study in a helpful academic environment and with a coach who was very supportive of her, both on the pitch, and in the classroom.

She was selected as an NJCAA All-American and her team won the national title. She was able to transfer to a four year college with a scholarship.

There are nearly 500 JUCOs in the USA offering soccer today; over half of them offer soccer scholarships. Steve Sampson, Former Head Coach, USA Men's National Team, is a JUCO graduate.

**Example:** Don was a freshman Div. I college player at a very competitive program getting little playing time. He achieved a lateral transfer to another Div. I team where he was allowed to play, fortunately, without having to "sit out" for a year, a penalty which can sometimes be invoked. More about this trap later.

**Example:** Successful both in the classroom and on the soccer field, Holly, was a sophomore, at a small Div. II program. Holly decided that she wanted a larger school with a more competitive academic program.

Holly and I created her Collegiate Transfer Resume, and mailed it to colleges that met her objectives. Our package was tailored to highlight her accomplishments as a college soccer player, and her B average in college courses. The coaches targeted to receive her proposal, were subtly reminded that, unlike high school seniors, Holly was proven, college-level student athlete. She is currently making her selection from several offers.

The process must begin with your college coach. Always be honest and never go behind his back to another coach. Communication is the key. Although your coach may initially be hurt by your decision to leave, eventually he will understand your desire to make a move. With his written release, you may begin to contact other colleges. A hostile coach cannot block your transfer, but may be able to force you to "sit out" an entire season on your new team. Diplomacy is better than war.

Conversely, JUCO coaches are generally very supportive of transfers and, in fact, take great pride in helping their graduating players explore scholarship opportunities. Many JUCOs have an All Star Games Tournament, at the conclusion of their soccer season, to showcase players for four year college coaches.

It is not unusual for college students to change their majors and/or their colleges. The explosive growth of college soccer teams, 600 in 1993 to more than 2000 today, means programs need players. New programs attract seasoned players with scholarship offers, but the rules prevent them from initiating those negotiations.

You must do your homework. First, to be conscious of all the rules regarding transfer. Write to the governing authority NCAA, NAIA or NJCAA. Ask questions about how your semester hours will be accepted at the new college. Clearly understand the deadlines of financial aid and calculate the total costs of attending the new college. Compute your remaining years of eligibility, the number of years you have left to play. Eligibility depends upon your age, number of years you have played college soccer and the new college's rules. As an example, NCAA Div. I college players cannot exceed 25 year of age nor have played more than 4 years in college.

Transferring, for a student athlete, can be a mine field. Unlike the ordinary college student, who is a customer buying education, and then decides to take his business somewhere else, the student athlete's world includes his coach. And coaches, as we all know are complex personalities. Coaches fulfill many roles including, winner, leader, father figure, psychologist and financial advisor, to name a few. None of those roles appreciate being told that their services are no longer required. And, if the news is brought to them by a competitive coach, and arch rival, ... "Hell hath no fury like a college coach once scorned..." You get the picture.