

## Questions to Make Sure You Ask

### Program Structure

1. What division are they? DI, DII/III, club? How long have they had that status?
2. If it's a club team, what is the organizational structure? What role do the athletes play in running the team? What department oversees the team– i.e. recreational sports, athletic?
3. Where do incoming freshman with experience fit into the team? Do they row as novice, varsity, switch back and forth, or is it evaluated on a case-by-case basis?
4. Are there any cuts?
5. How many athletes are on the team? Varsity vs. novice? How many novices start in the fall vs. how many finish out the year vs. how many return as varsity rowers?
6. What is the average erg score for recruits? The novice class? For the varsity team?
7. Do they have lightweights or just heavyweights? Frosh lights?
8. What other teams does the school have– i.e. men's, women's, lightweight, club?
9. How many coaches are there and how are they divided up? How long have they been there? What is their employment status: full-time, part-time, volunteer? What is their past/other experience?
10. Does it cost anything to row? Are there dues? Are uniforms included or is the athlete responsible for paying for unis, jackets, sweats, etc.? Are athletes responsible for any travel expenses?
11. How much and what kinds of fundraising is done? What are the athletes responsible for?

### Racing & Training

12. When are practices typically held? (AM or PM or both?)
13. How many practices per week? Additional? "Optional"? Lifting?
14. What races are typically on the schedule?
15. How much school is missed for races?
16. What is their major race of the year (championship race)?
17. What kind of racing results has the team experienced in the past 4 years?
18. Do you have to return early in September or January for training?
19. Does the team go on any away trips for either training or racing? If so, does the whole team go or just the varsity?
20. What is winter training like?
21. What kind of regular testing is done? Erg, lifting, run, body composition?

### Facilities

22. What are the boathouse facilities like? What body of water do they row on and what other teams are there?
23. What are the land training facilities like? Ergs, tanks, weight room, track, stadiums, etc? Are these facilities on campus? If not how far away?
24. How do the athletes get to practice?
25. What kind of equipment do they have and how often is it turned over?

### Athlete Services

26. What services are available to athletes– i.e. free tutoring, nutritionists, lifting coaches, counselors, mandatory study hall, trainers?
27. Is academic progress monitored by anyone? A coach or athletic academic advisor?
28. Do athletes get additional help with housing, car on campus, etc.?
29. How is class scheduling handled? Do rowers get preferential scheduling to avoid conflicts with practice?
30. What percent of athletes graduate in four years? 4.5 years? 5 years?

### **Recruit Opportunities/Admissions/Financial Aid**

31. What information does the coach need? Do they have a questionnaire for you to fill out?
32. Can you come for a visit and stay with an athlete (official or unofficial NCAA visit for girls)?
33. If you can't stay for a weekend visit, can you attend practice and visit the facilities?
34. Are there any races close to where you live or that you will be at that you can meet with a coach?
35. Do they have specific weekends that are better for recruits to come?
36. Are any athletic scholarships available? If so, are they given for four years or re-evaluated each year?
37. What academic scholarships are available and what requirements do they have?
38. Can the coach work with the financial aid dept to improve a financial aid package? Is work-study an option?
39. Can the coach get you an early read on your financial aid?
40. Are admissions standards lower for athletes? If so, what are they?
41. What are the academic requirements to maintain eligibility? (To compete? To practice?)

### **Other Random Questions**

42. Are many of the rowers involved in other extra-curricular activities, i.e. fraternities, sororities, clubs, community service?
43. Are there any non-athletic team commitments that the rowers have- i.e. team community service, awareness seminars, attending athletic functions, etc.
44. What goals does the coach have for the team for this season? What goals do the athletes have for the team?

### **Questions YOU Need to Consider**

45. "Broken Back" Rule: if you were unable to row, would you still be happy at this school?
46. How are you REALISTICALLY going to fit into the program athletically?
47. How are you going to fit into the program socially?
48. Would your goals for rowing be met by the program?
49. Do you enjoy the team dynamics when you watch them together?

## NCAA Rules: The Basics

As you move towards your college decision, the recruiting process can get pretty hectic. We have listed a few basic NCAA recruiting rules that ALL Division 1 schools (Ivy League included) must follow. Please understand that breaking some of these rules, even on the college coaches part, can affect YOUR eligibility in college.

**Five Official Visits** – You are allowed FIVE official visits by the NCAA. An official visit is one in which the school pays for you to come and stay for up to 48 hours. You may take these visits any time after you begin classes for your senior year. It is usually best to take all of your allowed visits so that you can really make a fully informed decision.

**Unofficial Visits** - An unofficial visit may be made at any time, regardless of your year in high school. An unofficial visit is one in which you decide to visit a campus and nothing is paid for by the school. You must initiate unofficial visits on your own, but you may contact a coach to meet with or to watch practice while you are on campus.

**Signing Dates (NLI)** - The National Letter of Intent is used by the NCAA for scholarship offers from Division 1 colleges. It is not used as an offer of admissions only.

The NLI is the ONLY binding document or agreement recognized by the NCAA. You may change your mind about a school at any point up and until you sign an NLI with someone. After that point, you are bound to attend that school, and they are bound to honor their scholarship offer to you.

Currently there are two signing dates for Women's Rowing. One is in the middle of November and the other is in the middle of April. If you are going to receive a scholarship, you may sign during either period.

**One phone call a week after July 1** – After July 1, you will be considered a Senior by the NCAA. After that date, college coaches are allowed to call you or your parents. We may only call once per week though. If we talk to your parents on Monday, we cannot call your house or your cell phone until the following Monday. One of the great things is that you may call us WHENEVER you like, we just can't return your call if we miss you and have already called you that week. College coaches may also call you ONCE during the month of March of your Junior year as well.

Email and Instant Messaging are NOT restricted by year in school or usage.

**Contact with a coach in person** – At times it can be difficult when you want to contact a coach in person. You might run into them accidentally during the races or you might be searching for them after the regatta is finished. They might even come to watch one of your practices.

As a junior, college coaches are not allowed to talk with you in person at any location (except on an unofficial visit to a campus) until after July 1. The only exception is that a coach is allowed to meet you on your high school campus once in April. After July 1, when you are considered a senior, a coach may speak with you at a regatta ONLY after you are finished all of your races for the entire regatta and you have been released by your coach.

## NCAA Recruiting Guidelines

For complete recruiting guidelines, go to the student athlete eligibility and recruiting section of: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org). Additionally, request a copy of the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete. It has all the NCAA recruiting rules, as well as a clearinghouse application.

### Recruiting Timeline:

#### September of freshman year thru July 1<sup>st</sup> after Junior year

- A coach is not allowed to speak with you.
- They MAY correspond via email.
- If you go to the school to visit, they CAN meet with you to speak generally about the program.

#### After September 1<sup>st</sup> of Junior year

- A coach can mail you information about the school/program

#### Spring of Junior year

- A coach can call you ONCE during the month of March
- A coach can speak with you in person once during the month of April, but it must be on your high school's campus

#### After July 1<sup>st</sup> after Junior year

- A coach is allowed to call you as often as once per week. If they call and speak with your parents, that counts as their call for the week. You, however, can call them as often as you like. But remember, if you leave a message, they may not be able to call you back if you've already spoken to them once that week.
- They may email or IM you as often as they like.
- The day of an in-person visit, they can call you as often as they like, and the week of an official visit, they can call you as often as they like.
- You are allowed to attend a total of 5 official visits- one per school.
- If you see a coach at a race, they are not allowed to speak with you until after you have finished competing and have been released by your coach.

### Definitions

**Recruit:** a PSA (prospective student athlete) who has been contacted more than once by a coach, or has attended an official visit. A "contact" is a phone call initiated by the coach.

**Official Visit:** an on-campus visit that is paid for partially or totally by the school. The school may pay for your round-trip travel expenses, housing for you and your parents, meals for you and your parents, complimentary admissions to a sporting event, and up to \$30 per day in entertainment. They are not allowed to buy or give you any souvenirs or athletic gear. PSA housing is usually granted on-campus with an athlete. An official visit may last a maximum of 48 hours. If you are flying in from cross-country, usually the school will put you in a hotel overnight and the official visit starts when you arrive on campus. Prior to your arrival, the college must receive a copy of your test scores and transcripts OR a copy of your clearinghouse certificate.

**Unofficial Visit:** an on-campus visit that is NOT funded by the school. You may stay with a student-athlete. They also last 48 hours. Transcripts and test scores or clearinghouse certificates are not necessary.

**Dead Period:** these are periods where no contact is allowed with a coach/recruit -phone calls, official visits, in-person visits or evaluations. These vary depending on sport and division.

- April 12-15, 2004, (during the period Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the spring signing of the National Letter of Intent).
- November 8-11, 2004, (during the period Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the fall signing of the National Letter of Intent).
- April 11-14, 2005, (during the period Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the spring signing of the National Letter of Intent).

**National Letter of Intent:** this is a letter signed by the recruited PSA and the athletic director of a school. It acts as a contract that states that the athlete will attend that school for one year and the school will give the designated athletic aid. Basically it's a contract for recruits receiving athletic scholarships. Once you've signed a NLI, you may not talk to any other coaches, and you must notify them that you've signed with another school. Not all schools participate in the NLI program, and the letter is never mandatory. There are two signing periods, one in November, and one April-August. The particular dates depends on what division the school is. For more information, go to: <http://www.national-letter.org/>

- Early Period: November 10, 2004 November 17, 2004
- Late Period: April 13, 2005 August 1, 2005

**Clearinghouse:** the organization that authorizes athlete's eligibility. All juniors and seniors who are thinking about playing a sport in college should apply to the clearinghouse. Final eligibility is granted once they receive your test scores, grades, transcripts and notification that you graduated. Any athlete MUST be cleared in order to compete, and may only practice for 30 days without being cleared, so it's really important that you are cleared before you arrive at school. Especially with rowing, which has such a large % of the novice class walking on without clearinghouse eligibility granted. To register, go to: <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net/ncaa/NCAA/common/index.html>

## References

**USRowing** – Members can call 1-800-314-4ROW to get information

On the web site is a comprehensive listing of rowing programs, with the following info:

College/University Name

Location

League Affiliation

Club or Varsity status

Scholarships offered?

Lightweights

# of participants

Contact name, phone #, email

[www.usrowing.org/Membership/collegedirectory.html](http://www.usrowing.org/Membership/collegedirectory.html)

### **NCAA [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)**

Eligibility Hotline: 1-800-638-3731 (or via web site)

Clearing House Information: [www.act.org/ncaa/](http://www.act.org/ncaa/)

National Letter of Intent information: <http://www.national-letter.org/faq/>

**Irow.com** has a recruiting section for athletes to register with on their web site.

**Row2k.com** has very complete listing of programs and web sites on the links page.

Also by far the most comprehensive listing of race results

**Collegerowcoach.org** is the site for the CRCA– College Rowing Coaches Assoc– the organization for women’s rowing programs. Has an extensive list of schools.

**USNews Magazine** College Ranking Site – will rank colleges based on criteria you input.

[www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm)

## Personal Advice

A prominent freshman coach at a high level women's D1 rowing program asked her freshman team what they wish they had known about rowing in college, while they were still in high school. This is what they said:

"I think the biggest two factors are knowing that the school provides the highest level of education that you can get, and that the team is one where you feel comfortable."

"I think it's important to involve your parents in the decision, no matter how annoying it seems."

"Go with your gut feeling for a school if you just know you're going to be happy at the school even though other schools *seem* to be a better choice. You can row throughout your life, but college is only 4-5 years."

"I had no idea that I had a chance of participating on an intercollegiate sports team, let alone a successful division one team. Competing after high school seemed like a dream coming from a small town.... I knew that I had to get the grades in order to get into a good university and that was more of an obtainable goal. I can't imagine what my college experience would have been like without this team as such an important element of my everyday life."

"I wish I knew about the type of schedule I would have. What it's like in the fall, winter (NCAA rules during this time), spring racing season."

"First, I would really recommend that high school students come out to a school and see more than one practice. Definitely try to talk to a bunch of people too, to get a true picture (athletes, coaches, advisors). Find out the work ethic of the team, what a typical week is, if people on the team live together, what some of the people are majoring in. They should see if these things match what they want to be a part of. Also, I think it is really important that kids try to get into the schools on their own. It is great that the athletic departments can help athletes get in, but I think there is less stress knowing that you can get into a school on your own without depending on your sport."

"Be persistent about calling coaches if you are interested in going somewhere - don't wait for them to call you, and don't put it off. Don't be afraid."

"Make sure that you go visit the school and attend some practices, and make sure that you get along with the coach and team."

"When you visit, talk to any athletes, not just rowers. They can tell you lots about being an athlete on campus."

"Look at a wide range of schools in order to find out which one fits your needs best. Academically and athletically, the campus and the size of the school. Private schools v. public schools; benefits that the schools offer and how they take care of their athletes (individual attention, tutoring, etc.); how competitive the school is v. how competitive the athlete wants to be; the coaching style; and how happy the team is."