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Guide to Post Secondary Golf Opportunities

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Introduction

Key Information for Aspiring Athletes

- Numbers
- Most aspire to play Collegiate Golf in the U.S.
- Misinformation, Myths, Misconceptions
- Choices – with long term ramifications
- Options:
 - US Collegiate Golf
 - Canadian Collegiate Golf
 - Alternative Options



U.S. Collegiate Golf

NCAA Div I, Div II, Div III & NAIA Programs

- Most high level Canadian Juniors are very interested in US Collegiate Golf Programs
- *Many* U.S. College Golf Programs present tremendous opportunities
- U.S. College Programs do not necessarily present the best possibility for *all* aspiring golfers however
- Athletes, Parents & Coaches be aware of the pros and cons of the U.S. Collegiate Golf System



Purpose of NCAA Golf Programs

- Universities are in the business of education
- They are not institutions mandated to train and develop professional golfers
- Most NCAA Programs will never produce a PGA / LPGA Tour Player
- Less than 1% of NCAA golfers will ever become a PGA / LPGA Tour Player
- NCAA Programs exist to provide student-athletes the opportunity to grow and compete while they earn their degrees
- NCAA golfers are “Student-Athletes”. Academics come first, athletics a distant second
- Junior Golfers must maintain high level performance in academics and golf throughout high school if they desire to play collegiate golf



Scholarships

- Athletic “scholarships” are essentially financial assistance “grants”
- Student athletes with high academic standing are encouraged to apply for any academic scholarships
- NCAA men’s golf programs have a maximum of 4.5 scholarships per team
- Women’s programs have as many as 6 scholarships to grant per team
- There are generally 8-12 players on each squad.
- Five players make the “traveling team” for each tournament
- Top ranked Canadian players are generally offered 50% - 75% scholarships as freshmen. Few players ever receive a “full ride” (100% scholarship)
- Many players receive no scholarship money



Cost of enrolling in an NCAA University

- Most top ranked junior golfers from Canada can anticipate a scholarship offer of approximately 50% if recruited
- Therefore, they will need to pay approx. \$7,500 to \$15,000 per year in addition to the “scholarship” that they have been awarded
- Due to the tremendous demands placed upon an NCAA student-athlete, it often takes more than four years to graduate
- It is not uncommon for a golfer with a scholarship to have accumulated a total of \$50K-\$75K (CDN) of student loan debt in order to earn a four year degree
- A significant financial commitment that not every family of athlete is prepared to make for a variety of reasons



Who Should Apply?

- Think of US Collegiate Golf as a potential job. Do you have what it takes to be hired? NCAA golf is a quasi-professional sport. There is pressure to perform on all of those involved. Coaches will give players with the following credentials and background strong consideration for the “Job”.
- Outstanding competitive golfers who have compiled a resume demonstrating that can qualify for and perform in top events at a scratch handicap or better
- Results – College Coaches look primarily at AJGA, Golf Canada, USGA and Provincial Golf Association results.
- Sound fundamentals and swing technique
- Pro-power and ball flight
- Advanced mental skills and emotional control



Who Should Apply? (Cont'd)

- Effective practice habits
- Razor sharp short games
- Competent students who have the academic background, and study habits
- Pleasant people with good attitudes and good interpersonal skills
- Players who have positive family support
- Mature Individuals who are capable of successfully making the transition from junior golf and high school, to life, responsibilities, and challenges presented to a collegiate athlete.





Academic Considerations

- Education is the #1 factor in upward mobility in North American Society
- Quality of education is directly linked to future potential income and quality of life
- Selecting a University is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make
- NCAA golfers have very busy and hectic schedules
- Athletes need to exercise time management skills in order to succeed on and off the course
- NCAA golfers typically attend classes in the mornings, and practice and train in the afternoons
- Subsequently, these students have to study in general programs.





Academic Considerations

Admission Requirements

- Obtain the “NCAA Guide for College Bound Student-Athletes” from www.ncaa.org
- Admission requirements vary
- Standards increase each year. Be aware of criteria
- Design High School curriculum to meet admission requirements
- Combination of GPA and SAT scores



Academic Considerations

SAT Test

- SAT Test is a prerequisite to registering for US Universities
- Consult your high school counselor for SAT prep
- Learn how to write the test effectively
- Research books, courses and websites
- Students encouraged to write in Grade 11
- You can re-write if needed
- Best result counts



Academic Considerations

Eligibility

- All athletes must register with NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Forms are included in “NCAA Guide for College Bound Student-Athletes”

Summary

- Need to have excellent organizational skills
- NCAA golfers have hectic schedules. They travel a lot and have tremendous time challenges
- NCAA golfers need to have excellent study habits
- Plan on potentially taking five years to complete a four year degree



Other Information

Recruiting Rules & Protocol

- It is your responsibility to understand and follow the rules
- Rules & Protocol are outlined in the “Ping College Golf Guide” – www.collegegolf.com
- Contact Golf Canada with questions relating to Amateur Status

Golf Resume

- Most athletes will be requested to provide a detailed golf resume to coaches
- Include major accomplishments – tournament results, OOM rankings, records
- Be accurate. Coaches will check
- Be brief, avoid irrelevant information
- The resume should highlight your qualifications as a Student-Athlete



Other Information

Scholarship Offers

- Understand any offer in its entirety
- Ask for a detailed written breakdown
- How much will you be responsible to pay to attend the school?
- Ask about any “hidden” costs
- Will you need a vehicle when you’re at school?
- Budget for trips home at breaks
- Inquire about academic aid if you potentially may qualify
- Remember all funds are in \$US



Other Information

Marketing Yourself

- As “foreign” students, Canadian players need to make US Collegiate Coaches aware of them
- Very few US Coaches actively scout Canadian events
- Use internet for research, and email to send your resumes to College Coaches
- Use the Ping College Golf Guide
- Seek advice from PGA Coaches and other college players
- Follow up letters and phone calls
- Be persistent
- Expect to hear a lot of “no’s” before you hear a “yes”



Other Information

Recruiting Services

- Some are better than others
- Can be expensive. Generally cost between \$1,000 and \$2,500.
- No guarantees
- Not all these services have expertise in US Collegiate Golf
- Many US Coaches do not look favourably upon recruiting services



Canadian Universities

- In many cases, the best possibility available to promising young Canadian players is to take advantage of studying and competing in Canada.
- Making a choice to study and compete in Canada as a collegiate level golfer should not be looked upon as “failure” or “second rate” but rather as choosing a different possibility for athletic and personal development.
- There are many excellent opportunities available in Canada to golfers who want to combine academics and competitive golf.



Canadian Universities

- There are numerous Canadian Universities and community colleges that field golf teams. Simon Fraser, University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, University of Calgary, Ottawa University, Carleton University, University of Manitoba, and Université de Laval all compete in some NCAA or NAIA competitions. Some are moving into NCAA Div 2 conferences as well.
- The inaugural Canadian University/College Championship conducted by Golf Canada was held in May 2003 and is now one of the premier amateur events in Canada.
- The top players in the Canadian University/College Championship qualify to represent Canada in the World University Games.



Canadian Universities

- There can be some distinct advantages for some athletes to opt to attend post-secondary institutions in Canada: cost, academic programs, proximity to family, job obligations and length of summer break.
- Student athletes who choose to attend Canadian universities can enroll in specialized programs such as journalism, engineering, or kinesiology if they so desire.
- At present, Canadian college and university golf programs do not have comparable budgets of their NCAA counterparts.
- Two of Canada's top players studied and developed their golf skills in Canada. LPGA Tour star Lorie Kane is a graduate of Acadia University and Wes Heffernan of Calgary, AB is a former University of Calgary student. Wes was the 1999 Canadian Am finalist and Canada's low individual at the 2000 World Amateur.



Canadian Universities

Application Process for Canadian Colleges and University Golf Programs

- Interested student athletes should contact the golf coach directly at any institution by email or telephone to learn about the specifics of the golf program. Consult the website of any college or university of interest for complete information.
- Athletes must apply to any institution of interest in the same manner as all other students. High school guidance counselors can counsel and provide resource information in this regard.
- Financial assistance (scholarship \$) does exist in some programs. The Golf Canada Foundation (www.golfcanada.ca/foundation) and many provincial golf associations also offer scholarship and bursary opportunities.
- Be aware that there is considerable competition for spots on Canadian college and university golf teams.



Alternative Options – Train and Compete Full time

Some players may choose the option to forgo becoming a student athlete at a post secondary institution and instead train and compete as full–time competitive golfers.

- This approach enables the athlete to focus on developing athletic expertise without the distraction of academic pressures and challenges.
- This is the path that many current world class players chose to follow. Examples of players who followed this strategy include: Aaron Baddeley, Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Rory McIlroy, Adam Scott, Sean O’Hair, and even the veteran Greg Norman.



Alternative Options – Train and Compete Full time

- Be aware that the odds are strongly skewed against top ranking players making it to the world class level.
- Those who choose this course of action are strongly encouraged to prepare an “exit strategy” so that they have a plan to channel their experiences as an athlete into a positive direction for their lives once they decide to move away from full-time competitive golf.
- Athletes who decide to choose this path may opt to return to a post-secondary institution at a later date or a golf management program leading to employment in the golf industry.



Next Steps

- Gather all of the objective data that you can. The decisions that you make in regard to post-secondary education are likely to have far reaching ramifications for the rest of your life. Don't be blinded by the romanticism that collegiate golf can present. Approach things with a cautious optimism.
- It is highly recommended that aspiring juniors and parents align themselves with a professional golf coach who specializes in developing high performance athletes. There are Provincial and Golf Canada coaches across Canada who are trained to serve such athletes.
- Consult GolfCanada.ca and your provincial golf association for further information.
- The opportunity to combine post secondary education with intercollegiate golf is extremely exciting to deserving athletes. Train and prepare yourself as best you can. Set your sights high.

