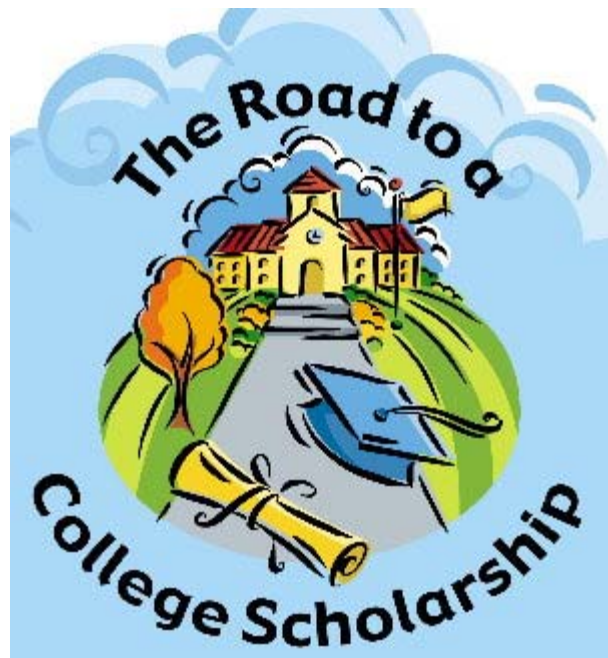


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**The recruiting process for college women's gymnastics scholar-ships is not quite as easy as it used to be. Helping high school-age gymnasts (beginning freshman year) to prepare for college and procure a scholarship has become an extremely time-consuming, extensive, and complex task. Organization is a must!**



Although the old road to recruiting seemed much easier years ago, it lacked thoroughness and accuracy.

Today's access to modern technology and the highway of information are invaluable tools of research for making that perfect match between a gymnast, a college, and that college's gymnastics program. The old road garnered much less interest and popularity than it does today. Attitudes were different, competitive and difficulty levels were average at best, and the general quality of college gymnastics was limited. Highly trained club gymnasts often felt either "too old" and chose to retire before college, or felt that they could perform easily at an unchallenging college level. They looked at only a few interesting schools. The NCAA or AIAW coaches did all the work looking aggressively for candidates who would be the right match for their programs and institutions.

Now in the new millennium, the dynamics of the road to a scholarship are very different:

- a. Increased number of qualified high-level gymnasts
- b. Increased number of available scholarships and monies
- c. Increased need for organization and high tech marketing
- d. Tendency for more uninformed gymnasts to be passed by due to lack of aggressive research, promoting, and presentation
- e. Need for club coaches to be willing to play an integral part in helping their athletes become attractive prospects to college coaches
- f. More parental involvement
- g. More skepticism among gymnasts, parents, and coaches as they attempt to absorb and deal with the onslaught of information they are given

To the best of my knowledge, there are currently 116 colleges offering women's gymnastics programs, and a few more to be added soon to the list. There is a place for almost every athlete with good gymnastics and good academics. It just takes time and work to find a match.

From my experience, to successfully find that match I recommend that the gymnast should be competing at least Level 9 at the Regional level or above, with

a 2.5 or better GPA. Logically, the top Elites and National Level 10's require less work to place, yet I was amazed to see at least 15 gymnasts standing at J.O. Nationals last year with no commitment to a university! This should NOT happen.

There are many great colleges across the country providing the best in education and gymnastics with money available from scholarships and other sources.

After years of fielding recruiting calls and answering questions from coaches, athletes and their parents, I feel it is time to share a successful marketing method for promoting gymnasts wanting college scholarships.

Knowing the time commitment and the importance of effective networking, I have become involved with Sports Scholarship Consultants (SSC)—a professional marketing service which, for a one-time fee, will do all the work necessary, step by step, to match athletes with compatible colleges offering scholarships. SSC takes all the guesswork out of the recruiting process.

If you are interested in more information contact Sports Scholarship Consultants, see below under "Helpful Information."

### **Timeline for the High School Gymnast**

Below is a sample of the timeline we have followed in securing over 40 scholarships for our athletes. And although this is not 100% perfect, it is nonetheless a valuable guideline for planning and executing the necessary work ahead. Encouraging gymnasts to stay in the sport is so important because the rewards can be outstanding!

#### **FRESHMAN YEAR**

- Counsel gymnast
- Encourage them to stay with it
- Gymnast becomes aware of college gymnastics programs
- Plan a track for college skills
- Discuss academic requirements—grades are important!
- Gymnast begins working on resume & bio
- Encourage extracurricular activities and community service so athlete becomes well-rounded

#### **SOPHOMORE YEAR**

- Discussions on colleges of interest, location, weather, distance from home, affordability (if a full scholarship is not available), gymnastics programs
- Gymnast makes and shows list of schools of interest by academic & location
- Begin compiling video footage for recruiting tape
- Gymnast takes PSAT/PLAN
- Gymnast works on and produces résumé & bio-make yours stand out among the hundreds

#### **BETWEEN SOPHOMORE & JUNIOR YEAR**

- Learn facts about different colleges on gymnast's list
- Add to and edit recruiting video tape-enhance strong points but don't scam
- Try to attend a college meet
- Gymnast should attend a Regional or Conference Championship to observe
- Gymnast narrows down list to Top 10 choices
- Contacts, phone #'s, emails, etc. are compiled
- Gymnast adds to and edits résumé & bio

## **JUNIOR YEAR**

- Final video tape approved
- Gymnast/club coach finalize resume & bio; include letters of recommendation
- Videos/résumés sent by Nov-Jan
- Research schools:
  - How many graduating seniors?
  - What are their current strong/weak events?
  - Academic requirements?
  - What is the coaching style?
  - If you could not do gymnastics, would you still be interested in this school?
  - Do you feel that you would fit in?
- **Club coach:** It is very important to be knowledgeable of college programs & coaches, and know where gymnast will have the best opportunities to compete.
- Representative or club coach begins to call college coaches\*
- Assess skill level to evaluate best fit
- Note: A high level gymnast can safely be considering 3-6 colleges; a less experienced gymnast should be considering 7-10 colleges
- Gymnast begins taking SAT/ACT
- File for NCAA Clearinghouse

## **BETWEEN JUNIOR & SENIOR YEAR**

- Set up recruiting trips
- College coaches may observe practices  
*Note:* Division II schools allow prospective candidates to visit and train with their team
- Gymnast compiles list of questions

## **SENIOR YEAR**

- Gymnast takes recruiting trips—may or may not be paid for
- Second video (customized) sent to top 3 choices if requested
- There are scholarships—look, work, apply, keep listings like USECA
- Apply to colleges: two "for sures" (ones you know you can get into), two "dreams" (ones you would love to get into), and a few "in-betweens"
- Gymnast makes selection, contact college coach
- Sign letter of intent!

\* *Note:* Most of the college coaches are very easy to communicate with and want you to be very honest about your athlete.

## Helpful Information

1. **NCAA- Guide for College Bound Student Athlete**  
(800) 638-3731  
[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)
2. **NCAA Clearinghouse**  
1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Dr. ; Indianapolis, IN 46202  
(800) 638-3731 or (317) 917-NCAA
3. **NCAA Hotline for Academic Eligibility & Recruitment Rules**  
(800) 638-3731
4. **National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches/Women**  
Excellent resource for NCAA rules and also has links to all the university gymnastics program web pages.  
[www.collegegymnast.com](http://www.collegegymnast.com)
5. **"College Gym Fans"**  
[www.collegegymfans.com](http://www.collegegymfans.com)
6. **United States Elite Coaching Association- Women (USECA)**  
C/o Natalie Duke, 10 Quail Point Place; Carmichael, CA 95608  
(916) 487-3559
7. **"Gym Info"**  
The official NCAA rankings for Collegiate Men's and Women's Gymnastics  
  
[www.troester.com/gym/default.htm](http://www.troester.com/gym/default.htm)
8. **USA Gymnastics**  
[www.usa-gymnastics.org](http://www.usa-gymnastics.org)
9. **"Inside Gymnastics Magazine"**  
[www.insidegymnastics.com](http://www.insidegymnastics.com)
10. **"International Gymnast" magazine**  
[www.intlgymnast.com](http://www.intlgymnast.com)

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