

ARLINGTON TRAVEL SOCCER – June 6, 2006

Coaches & Players Information Exchange

“INSIDE SCOOPS” on COLLEGE SOCCER from our PANELISTS
FROM ATSC: A great big “Thank You!” to the PANEL

FIRST: THE PLAYERS’ VIEW of RECRUITING

OUR CASE STUDY: “WHAT IT TAKES” -- for one college player
REBECCA ZIMMERMAN – Ex-ATSC/Braddock Road player,
rising sophomore at VCU (Div. I), also current player on a WPSL
team

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Rebecca’s player’s story offers an unusual example of a proactive planner. She was a standout at high school (Wakefield), and on her club team. But success now comes from her early start in her college selection process -- in fall of junior year. By New Year’s, she was contacting coaches and programs, and entered VCU thru early decision steps.

- 1) Get on the best club team you can and play in BIG tournaments** as often as possible -- even if you’re “guest playing” with many teams. Your high school team experience does not matter (certainly not in Div. I)!
- 2) Decide where you want to go:** Factor in distance from home, school size, city vs. rural, academic level, soccer level/division. These are very tough decisions to make.
- 3) Download and read ALL NCAA regulations.** If you don’t understand any one of them, ask coaches to help clarify. Don’t lose a year of eligibility through ignorance.
- 4) Contact coaches at the schools you are interested in.** Remember: Email is less regulated than phone conversations. Give coaches as much information as possible (what teams/coaches you've played for, tournaments you're in, how to reach you/your coaches).
- 5) Watch college teams as much as you can...**the more interested you are, the more games you should watch. Answer: “Does their style of play suit me?” (Rebecca saw her VCU team in action nearly 10 times, and was able to decide easily about the program.)
- 6) Make many unofficial (and official) visits.** Even if you’re going to a school far away, check out schools near you. Warning: You may think you want a small school (5,000 or fewer), but when you visit, you may find it's actually too small.
- 7) Never be afraid to ask questions.** If a coach can't be up front when answering your "tough" question, it tells you something about the coach. If any one thing about a campus is important to you (even if it seems small, like food options on campus), just ask and expect to get an answer.
- 8) Don't pick your college for just one reason.** Even if soccer is all you care about in college, be sure you're happy with the campus and classes. Otherwise, you won't enjoy yourself off or on the field. (Plus: It's tough to transfer, and there are strict regulations and restrictions). Remember: Coaches might leave, even if it wasn't their intention when you signed to play for them.

*Remember: To play at a high level, the fitness packet they hand out – it may be 4 pages, or 47-plus pages -- should look demanding if you're serious about soccer. If it seems easy, it's probably not as high a level as you want.

OUR COACH PERSPECTIVES

BRANDON PRIDEAUX – Defender, DC United (MLS) and Kansas City City Wizards (MLS). Head Coach - ATSC Warriors – U-16 - Division 1 Boys. College All-American, University of Washington.

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Brandon Prideaux's story: A success as a pro (and a success on his travel team earlier), he wasn't highly recruited. The UW coach came to watch his team, and a teammate play in a tournament. Instead, the coach became impressed with Brandon. One week later, Brandon signed a UW letter of intent, and didn't look back. He was in position to benefit from this (his club team was state cup winner twice), but luck had a role in this particular college selection process. Brandon now stresses the value of creating options for college, and doing it early in high school.

Brandon Prideaux

1. My College Soccer Experience

- Some of the best experiences of my life.
- Learned life lessons I always remember.
- Some difficult times as well.

2. KEY: Take time to figure out what you want!

- Big question: What are your long term goals? Tough to set, but needed.
- Set short term goals so you can accomplish the long term goals.
- Take action daily and start now! Practice daily on your own – can't avoid it.

3. Learn from my Recruiting Experience

- Received a “partial” scholarship right away to the University of Washington.
- Saw that “package” as right for me – for academics, athletics, and social factors.
- Guide - Do more than I did: Stay proactive, contact many coaches, create options.

4. How I succeeded in college

- Big point: I found the right “balance” between academics and athletics.
- Compromise: I sacrificed socially so I could succeed as a student athlete.
- NOW: NO REGRETS. I am still playing the game I love and I have a college degree.

NAOMI HINES – Assistant Coach-Women's Soccer, Georgetown University, Regional All-American (NSCAA), goalie coach for national youth champion Bethesda Excel, player (W League).

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NOTE: Naomi focused on the coaching at a selective private school, where much of the recruiting is national, and the academic demands are strong before and after you get in.

1. Prepare for college academically, athletically, and socially.

- a. Keep your grades high, take challenging classes, prepare for the SAT early
- b. Play at the highest level possible on the best team you can play for.
- c. Make smart life decisions and remember that you represent your family, your team and your coaches.

2. Do your research

- a. Figure out what you want in a school (size, academics, location, student life)
- b. Look up schools that match what you want and start to make a list.

3. Contact coaches and do it early

- a. Take personal responsibility to email or call the coaches you are interested in.
- b. Give them all your information - more is better (mailing, phone, email address, team played for etc.)
- c. If the school is far away and they can't see you, send DVD or video.

4. How to get seen by top coaches

- a. Tournaments & more tournaments. Go to the best, and if your team isn't attending guest play.
- b. Personally send the coaches your schedule before the tournament or game.

5. Visiting the campus

- a. Visit as many schools as possible early in your Junior year or Sophomore year. Even if you aren't interested in the school you can get an idea of what you like and do not like.
- b. Try to watch local college teams play to give yourself an idea of level of competition and where you may fit.
- c. Before your visit set up to meet with the coaches if possible.
- d. Do your research online first so that you can spend your visit talking about questions that can't be found online.
- e. Write out a list of questions that you have, don't be afraid to ask the tough questions.

6. Making your decision

- a. Don't base your decision on one factor, be sure to balance academics, athletics, and student life. Where do you want to spend four years of your life?
- b. Take your time and make sure you are happy!

KEITH MOSER – Head Coach-Men's Soccer, Marymount University, formerly Head Coach ATSC's U17 Div. 1 Boys team champion. College Soccer All-American on UNC-Greensboro (NCAA Champion) CONTACT INFO: TEL: 703-284-1514 EMAIL: william.moser@marymount.edu

Keith, coach at a Division III school, made the case for considering colleges in this division – which emphasizes participation (more than Div. 1, which has some emphasis on bringing in revenue thru tickets, and a fan base). Keith offered views on top prospects:

- 1 – **Big questions: What’s your character on the field?** Are you someone who when you lose the ball, you’ll double back and get it back? That’s what coaches look for.
- 2 – **More questions: Do you leave gaps in the midfield or back,** or work to fill them in? Are you conscientious “worker” as a player on the field? We want players who are.
- 3 – **Interviews:** In one-on-ones with a candidate, people should understand what your expectations are as a player. And as coach, he also wants to know what you’re looking for, since you and he will spend 4 years together. Be ready to make a case for yourself.
- 4 – **Key Example of “top prospect”:** “We have a forward this fall, and he fills a need since we’ve lacked a natural forward for a year. With size and good strength in the air, he can finish, plus hold the ball. Bonus: Academically, he’s very solid, and we won’t have to babysit him. He fits the bill on the field, in the classroom, and as a player.”
- 5 – **Finally: Consider Div. III schools when the “shoe fits.** We offer a participatory level of play that you won’t find elsewhere as easily.”

GREG ANDRULIS – Head Coach-Men’s Soccer, George Mason University. Formerly Head Coach, Columbus Crew (MLS), and “Coach of the Year” (MLS, 2004), College Coach at Div. I, II, III
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NOTE: GREG has one of the most wide-ranging resumes anywhere (all divisions of college soccer, plus pro). He focused on what make a player a good candidate for him.

1 - **KEY POINT: Character Counts – in all parts of your life.** It’s there in how you act as you present yourself to coaches at recruiting meetings, how you work on any team, even how you interact with your parents – with your mom or dad. Character counts – and people see it.

2 – **“Character is what shows when no one is watching”** – In the showcase tournament at Potomac, Greg went to see a player he was recruiting. The player was complaining even about calls that went his way. Then, when he came off for a sub, he took his jersey off, and threw it under the bench. (GMU’s interest in this player waned.)

3 – **”There’s a college out there for every kid trying to get in”** – just look hard.

RICHARD BROAD – Head, American Soccer Programs, formerly Coach-Men’s Soccer, George Mason University.

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Richard offered this “4 P’s APPROACH” for PLANNING:

1) **PREPARE:** This is the first truly important decision in your life. Treat it as a large investment. **Think of the college selection process as an additional academic subject.** How big an investment of time and effort is it? A men’s soccer program may offer scholarships worth \$20,000-\$30,000 or more. With that, you can buy a nice car, or pay for the college you’ve set your heart on.

Remember: A Division 1 school is allowed 9.9 scholarships for men, 14 scholarships for women. The number of “full rides” is small, but help is there.

2) PROMOTE: Begin early and proceed to promote yourself in an organized, systematic manner. There are many aspects to the process. We’ll cover the main ones.

3) USE CAREFUL PROCEDURE for BIG DECISIONS: It’s YOUR decision, not your parents. They have a vested interest in you, but YOU are deciding where to spend 4 years of your life. Your decision impacts your entire life. Learn **how to make big decisions**. Do you know how to start?

4) STAY PROACTIVE in this PROCESS. Expect obstacles and ask “veterans” (players, coaches, others) about them. Learn from coaches and players available at College Night. Get tips from anyone who’s hurdled the obstacles of recruiting. Some resources can help: parents’ friends, your coaches, guidance counselors, professional services pros. Ultimately, the responsibility for your future is yours, and it’s a tough one. Start tonight. Make calls, do Google searches, talks with coaches and others. **You’ll see the effort pay off 6 months from now.**

ADDENDUM for the PARENTS READING THIS

FINAL NOTES FROM MARTA CAHILL - former President of ATSC, parent of 3 soccer players, 2 that later played in college and one that did not. (Marta is also a soccer player.)

1 – Your son or daughter must be the one to take the initiative in contacting the coaches, especially in Div. III (versus Div. I). Encourage him or her to do it early.

2 – Set up a time for meeting with every coach on every campus you tour – no matter where. (Most meetings will exclude parents.) This approach offers practice in posing good questions, and leads to good decisions.

3 – Your big role: Help your son/daughter develop a soccer resume plus good questions for the coach visits and contacts.

4 – Learn and use all the NCAA regulations. They’re vital in Div. 1.

5 – Find a college you want, and THEN let soccer be the bonus. That way, you’ll get the best of both worlds. Otherwise, your child can break a leg, suffer an ACL injury and wind up being stuck on a campus that offers too little for the future.

6 – There are few resources out there by way of books. Most work is just research and more research, and talks, and more talks with people in actual soccer programs. That’s why this is a tough process, and why you must start early.
