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IMPORTANT April RECRUITING DATES

4-1: Football final signing date for National Letter of Intent

4-6: SAT late registration postmark date for May 7th test.

4-9: ACT test

4-13: Basketball initial signing date for National Letter of Intent

4-13: All other Sports initial signing date for National Letter of Intent

4-29: SAT registration postmark date for June 4th test

RECENT ADDITIONS TO CPOA Pennsylvania

Alex Vucelich – Football – Riverside

Mike Deems – Baseball – New Brighton

Vincent Damiani – Soccer – Vincentian

Ryan Walker – Baseball – Burrell

Jessica Mueseler – Basketball – Greater Latrobe

Madison Sepp – Soccer - Hopewell

NCAA News

Big-Name Schools Failing Academic Progress Report

Nearly half of the football and men's basketball teams in Division I are failing the NCAA's newest measure of academic success, according to a report published last month by the association. That includes last year's national champions in both sports -- the University of Connecticut in men's basketball and the University of Southern California in football.

In the NCAA's first "real time" assessment of athletes' academic success, nearly 1,200 teams out of the 5,721 in all Division I sports had an Academic Progress Rate of less than 925, which means that the team is on track to graduate less than half its athletes. The rate, calculated for the 2003-04 academic year, measures how many athletes are making adequate progress toward their degrees.

To no one's surprise, sports with traditionally low graduation rates -- baseball, football, and men's basketball -- have many teams falling short of the NCAA standard. Many more men's teams fall short than women's teams. According to the NCAA report, teams in all sports and at all kinds of colleges are failing to meet the rate of progress.

This report is merely a warning. Next year, teams will lose scholarships if, based on data from 2003-04 and 2004-05, they fail to meet the standard and athletes flunk out. Roughly a third of the failing teams have very small squad sizes, in sports like basketball, cross-country, and golf, and the NCAA estimates that those teams will meet the threshold once the new data are collected from them. Publishing the grades and a school's failing teams is the first phase of the association's new system for penalizing teams whose athletes are not making enough progress in the classroom. The standard to be reached essentially requires each student-athlete to complete 20 percent of the course work needed per year for a bachelor's degree to remain eligible for sports.

Of the 234 football teams in Division I-A and I-AA, 113 had grades below the APR cut line of 925. Among them were 9 of the top 25 in the final Associated Press poll for the 2004 season.

In men's basketball, the 65-team NCAA tournament field from 2004 included 25 that failed to make the standard, including the University of Connecticut, which won the national championship, and Oklahoma State University's Final Four squad.

If those teams do not make improvements, they will begin to lose scholarships for the 2006-7 season. The NCAA has said it will make exceptions for teams at institutions that serve "economically distressed segments of the population," but has not said how that would work.

In two years the NCAA will begin punishing teams that have chronic academic deficiencies. Starting in 2007, teams failing to meet the minimum rate will be re-ranked by sport. The NCAA will then establish minimum rates for each sport, and teams will be punished if they fall below that rate, the rate for all teams, and the Academic Progress Rate for their overall student bodies.

Programs will lose scholarships if they fail to meet the standards for two years out of four, and will be banned from postseason play if their athletes do not measure up for 3 years out of 10. In other words, teams that fail to meet the standards in any year must surpass the rates for the next three consecutive years to avoid punishment.

The NCAA is beating the academic drum loudly for now.

Time will tell if it the organization will penalize high-profile athletic teams or bow to economic pressure and change the benchmark standards.

Almost Two in Three Undergrads Receive Aid

Sixty-three percent of all undergraduates received some form of financial aid during the 2003-4 academic year, up from 55 percent in 1999-2000, according to a report released last month by the National Center for Education Statistics.

The report reveals in 2003-4 students received on average \$7,400 each -- up from \$6,200 in 1999-2000, the last previous year for which the study was conducted.

Three out of four students in graduate school or a professional program -- such as law, medicine, pharmacy, or theology -- received aid averaging about \$15,100 in 2003-4, according to the report.

The report was based on a sample of 80,000 undergraduates and 11,000 graduate and professional-school students who were enrolled at colleges across the country that are qualified to participate in federal financial-aid programs.

Among other findings:

• Fifty-one percent of undergraduates received grants, 35 percent took out loans, 8 percent received work-study aid, and 7 percent got other types of aid, including federal PLUS loans, veterans' benefits, and job-training funds.

- Undergraduates who received grants were awarded an average of \$4,000, those taking out loans borrowed on average \$5,800, and the average work-study award was \$2,000.
- Forty-six percent of undergraduates who received financial aid got some of it from the federal government.
- Twenty-seven percent of undergraduates received Pell Grants, and the average amount awarded was \$2,500. Full-time students who received the grants got, on average, \$3,100.

NCAA To Change “15,000 Attendance” Rule

A controversial rule that took effect in 2004 requiring Division I-A schools to average attendance of 15,000 fans at home football games to maintain top division status is about to be repealed.

The NCAA is expected to do away with the rule at its Board of Directors meeting this month. The presidents at the so-called “mid-major” conferences that were largely affected by the regulation argue that having an absolute attendance cutoff to determine Division membership is beyond their control and is not fair to their athletics departments. Losing I-A status would potentially cost these schools significant revenue from bowl games and prestige with alumni.

The board is debating two options: Maintain all of the requirements except the attendance standard, or, more radically, do away with the I-A and I-AA designation altogether. Division I football, alone of all NCAA sports, separates schools within the same sport into distinction divisions. Division I-AA, which has a 16-team playoff to determine a national football champion instead of bowl games, does not receive any money from the NCAA to subsidize its playoffs. The I-AA schools are also limited to 63 scholarships each season compared to the 85 available for I-A teams.

Important Title IX Clarification Announced

In one of the most important announcements in years concerning the Title IX policy designed to give female athletes more opportunities in college sports, the U. S. Education Department has clarified who is responsible for demonstrating that a college is not providing required opportunities.

In short, the new policy puts the burden of proof on students and government investigators to show that a college is not doing enough to accommodate women's athletic interests and abilities. And it says that all universities need to do to determine demand for a women's sport is to send out a survey by e-mail. Several women's advocacy groups have expressed outrage at the new clarification.

Most of us have a "working knowledge" of what the Title IX amendments are designed to do. In athletics, colleges must ensure that they do not discriminate against men or women in offering scholarships, program benefits like locker rooms and coaching, and opportunities to participate. Since 1979, the Education Department has used a three-part test to determine whether women have enough chances to play. Under that test, colleges may choose any one of these criteria to show compliance with the law:

- Having the same proportion of women playing sports as are enrolled as undergraduates.
- Having a history and continuing practice of expanding programs for women.
- Demonstrating that the women's sports program fully and effectively accommodates the interests of female students and potential students.

It is the third point above that is affected by the latest announcement.

From 1996 until now, the Federal Department of Education interpreted the third bullet point as follows: If a college had women who were interested in a particular sport, were talented enough to sustain a team in that sport, and had a reasonable expectation of competition, a college had to start a team if it wanted to comply with the third part of the test. The test was even extended beyond women currently enrolled in a college to high-school students in the college's recruiting region, members of amateur athletic associations, and community sports leagues.

But the new clarification is a 180-degree flip! The schools no longer are responsible for demonstrating compliance. Female sports advocates now have to prove that colleges are blatantly not complying. Further, all a college has to do to judge the "demand for a sport" is post an online survey that institutions can rely on as an acceptable method to measure students' interests in participating in sports.

Institutions can still use either of the other parts of the test to be in compliance but now using the third point will be easier.

The National Women's Law Center strongly criticized the clarification. "The survey is inherently flawed because it presumes a survey alone can accurately measure student interests," the law center said in a news release in late March. "The guidance does not require schools to look at other factors they once had to consider, such as coaches' and administrators' opinions or women's participation in sports in surrounding high schools or recreational leagues."

It's too soon to tell how much of an impact this ruling will have on women's teams and scholarship opportunities but so many advancements have been made over the past decade, especially in sports like soccer and golf, it is hard to imagine we will see a drastic rollback. But we will keep watching!

SAT News

New SAT Called an “Endurance Test”

High-school students who took the new SAT on March 12 agreed on the answer to at least one question: The three-hour-and-45-minute test was draining.

Approximately 330,000 students throughout the nation took the first crack at the revamped version of the nation's most widely used college admissions exam, which for the first time required students to write a 25-minute essay.

The first essay question chosen by the SAT asked test-takers to argue whether a majority rule was a sound way to make decisions.

Officials from the College Board, which owns the SAT, reported that many students expressed enthusiasm about the exam after finally putting their pencils down. According to a College Board spokesperson, few complaint calls were registered at the company's New Jersey office after the test.

But a national survey of test-takers by Kaplan Inc., a test-preparation company, suggests many students found test conditions grueling. On Saturday, Kaplan sent more than 100 employees to interview nearly 2,000 test-takers at 39 sites throughout the nation. Many of those surveyed complained that they had too little time to use the bathroom or get a drink of water.

Not surprisingly, many of the students surveyed complained about the length of the test. More than 25 percent reported running out of time before completing their essay. Fifty-five percent said their essay scores would not accurately reflect their writing ability. Despite concerns about the essay, however, 39 percent of the students told Kaplan that the critical-reading portion of the SAT was the most challenging section, compared with 13 percent who said the writing portion was the most difficult.

This spring the College Board plans to ask for feedback from the test-takers via an online questionnaire. It is possible that the organization will ask students to weigh in on the length of testing breaks, among other issues.

Popularity of ACT On the Rise

Although 330,000 high school students took the new version of the SAT on March 12, the officials that administrate its competitor – the ACT – say their test is gaining converts, especially in areas of the country where the SAT has for years had a stronghold.

For decades the SAT has been dominant on the East and West coasts, and the Iowa-based ACT was the favorite throughout the Midwest. Most colleges accept either one.

Our CPOA profile form is being updated to allow clients to report “new” and “old” SAT scores.

This year, ACT officials said, the number of East Coast students taking the February ACT increased 22 percent over last year - and in New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Vermont, the number more than doubled.

Does it matter which test a student takes? Most experts agree the majority of students will score about the same on both tests. But the anxiety-inducing features of the new SAT - the 25-minute essay, slightly harder math questions, and an overall length of nearly four hours - has set students and their advisers to exploring all their options.

Students have nothing to lose by taking the ACT because they can take the test as many times as they want and choose which scores, if any, to send to colleges - a calming option for students with severe test anxieties. In contrast, all SAT scores are sent to all colleges a student applies to.

There are some real differences between the tests. The SAT began as an aptitude test, designed to measure students' reasoning abilities. The ACT has always been more tied to curriculum, measuring what students have learned in the four areas it covers: English, mathematics, reading and science.

The SAT penalizes a test-taker for guessing incorrectly; the ACT does not. The new SAT essay is required, while the new ACT essay is optional. Just how many colleges will consider an essay, and how they will use what they get, is an evolving issue. But most guidance counselors advise students to complete the essay portion, even if they choose the ACT. In the first administration of the new ACT last month, slightly fewer than half the test-takers signed up for the essay, an ACT spokesman said.

"We are growing by leaps and bounds, and some of our greatest percentage growth is in the traditional SAT markets on the East and West Coasts," said Jon Erickson, ACT's vice president for education services. He attributed this growth in part to the optional essay and the score-choice option.

While half the states nationwide are SAT-dominant and half are ACT-dominant, more of the nation's graduating seniors take the SAT than the ACT - 1.4 million for the SAT and nearly 1.2 million for the ACT.

LOCAL CPOA NEWS

Congratulations to the following CPOA clients who have recently made their college commitments:

Ashley Solyan – Ambridge – Will be attending Lock Haven University on a partial Track and Field scholarship.

Brady Krebs – Hampton High School – Will be attending John Carroll University to continue his Wrestling career.

Michelle Dipaolo – Ringgold High School – Will be attending Wheeling Jesuit University to play Soccer.

Kathleen Andreone – Seneca Valley – Will be attending St. Francis University on a Soccer / Academic scholarship.

Video News

One common question the guys in our Video Department hear is, “What formats do you accept to prepare the video?”

Rob Davis provides this list of media that may be submitted by clients in order to have their evaluation video prepared:

***VHS**

***DVD**

***CD-R**

***DV-CAM**

***8-Millimeter**

***HI 8-Millimeter**

One format the video guys cannot accept is “Digital 8-Millimeter”. It seems the only way to play a Digital 8-mm tape is from a camera that shoots that format or a special player that is very difficult to find. We do not have access to Digital 8-mm playback equipment, so we must return any video received in this format

CONTACT SHEETS

Remember to keep track of all questionnaires, calls, etc from college coaches with the contact sheets found in your STUDENT PACKET. Email me at martin.rock@cpoapa.com if you need additional copies!

NCAA ELIGIBILITY CLEARINGHOUSE

Every CPOA PA Student-Athlete has received a NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete as part of the STUDENT PACKET you received when you joined the program. In this guide, you find instructions on how to apply for your NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse Number. Eligibility is based on what core courses have been completed, SAT scores and overall GPA in core courses. NCAA approved core courses, by high school, can be found at <http://actrs7.act.org/ahs>. STUDENTS APPLY FOR THEIR NCAA ECN AT THE END OF THEIR JUNIOR YEAR. HOWEVER, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO REVIEW ELIGIBILITY AS EARLY AS THE SOPHOMORE YEAR TO ENSURE THE CORRECT COURSES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED! For more information about the process, email

martin.rock@cpoapa.com for a NCAA Guide or call 888-ASK-CPOA (CPOA Program Members Only).

INTERNET UPDATES

If you have update information for your Internet profile, please forward to martin.rock@cpoapa.com. Remember that you automatically receive (2) two free updates per year. If you've upgraded your program to receive unlimited updates you can send updates every day/week if you'd like. Updates take approximately 72 hours to be made online.

REFERRAL PROGRAM

Do you know of a high school student athlete with the ability to perform at the collegiate level? A teammate from high school? Club team? From the newspaper? If so, contact your CPOA representative at martin.rock@cpoapa.com and if that athlete signs with CPOA PA, **you receive a \$100 referral fee!**

Season End Updates

Attention fall sport athletes, your season end update forms which were mailed to you are **now overdue**. There are hundreds of coaches out there awaiting an update on your stats, awards and accomplishments from the past season. Please complete these and return to your CPOA representative immediately.

RECRUITING SEMINARS

CPOA Pennsylvania is planning to conduct several recruiting training sessions over the next few months. These sessions will include the basics of the recruiting process, how to choose the right college, review of NCAA rules and regulations, and how to best navigate this important process of college selection. Please let us know if you have interest in hosting one of these sessions for your teammates (students/parents) or teams/booster clubs (coaches).