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IMPORTANT DECEMBER RECRUITING DATES

December 3 - SAT test (SAT I & II)

December 10 - ACT test

December 21 - Football (mid-year JC transfers) initial signing date for National Letter of Intent

December 22 SAT registration postmark for January 28 test. (SAT I & II)

RECENT ADDITIONS TO CPOA Pennsylvania

Brent Heckel – Football – Greater Latrobe HS

Mark Dzubak – Football – Greater Latrobe HS

Jake Gibas – Football – Greater Latrobe HS

Chris Skovira – Soccer – Southmoreland HS

Alex Bearer – Football – Mt. Pleasant HS

Jake Hoffer – Football – Mt. Pleasant HS

Mauriell Blake – Soccer – Freeport HS

Josh Brannan – Football – Greater Latrobe HS

Brad Janiro – Football – Yough HS

Andrew Armstrong – Baseball – Trinity HS

NCAA News

NEWS ON INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES

College of the Redwoods suspended the volleyball program because of a lack of participation.

The NCAA placed the University of Illinois on probation for one year because a booster improperly provided payments and other benefits to a football prospect.

Humboldt State University will join the California Collegiate Athletic Conference, effective with the 2006-07 academic year.

Geneva College will become the ninth member of the **Presidents' Athletic Conference** (PAC), pending completion of provisional Division III membership. Geneva formerly competed at the NAIA level.

Guilford College announced \$1.1 million in gifts from the Edward M. Armfield Sr. Foundation and other donors to support renovation of the Armfield Athletic Center, where the school's football and lacrosse teams play

St. John's University opened a new basketball practice facility part of which is available to the student body.

Lewis & Clark College announced the suspension of the conference portion of its football team's 2005 schedule, citing safety concerns stemming from low numbers on the team roster. As a result, the squad is playing games on four consecutive weekends beginning September 17, against Occidental College, Colorado College, Chapman University and Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges, but will not play its Northwest Conference opponents this season. After several years of decline in the size of the team roster, this year's team has 34 players,

Mount St. Mary's University will break ground on its new \$3.5 million athletics stadium and field. The 1,000-seat facility will be named the Waldron Family Stadium

Edgewood College announced plans to add men's and women's track. The move will increase the school's intercollegiate teams to 14

Maryville University of St. Louis will add men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field this year.

Towson University is adding women's golf to its varsity athletics program beginning next fall.

The NCAA has placed **Ohio Northern University** on two years probation and banned its football team from 2005 postseason competition for conducting a number of impermissible out-of-season practices.

The NCAA has placed **Texas Christian University** on two years of probation and penalized the former head track coach for violations involving impermissible inducements, extra benefits, academic fraud, unethical conduct and failure by the institution to monitor its track and field program. The school is losing official visits, 2 scholarships, and cannot compete in post-season competition next year.

NCAA Announces New Financial Aid Policy for Student-Athletes

A legislation package affecting financial aid for college athletes, almost four years in the making, now appears to be complete. The NCAA Division I Board of Directors, after consulting for months with students, administrators and financial aid professionals will now allow academically gifted student-athletes, who have completed their freshman

year, to receive certain financial aid monies without counting them against team scholarship limits.

In NCAA language, here is the new legislation:

“A student-athlete at a Division I institution whose only source of institutional financial aid is academic aid based solely on the recipient's academic record, awarded independently of athletics interests and in amounts consistent with the pattern of all such awards made by the institution, may compete in intercollegiate athletics without counting in the institution's financial aid team limits, provided he or she has completed at least one academic year of full-time enrollment at the certifying institution and has achieved a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.300 (on a 4.000 scale) at the certifying institution.”

Make sense?

In plain English, that means an athlete can be part of a team without counting against the scholarship limit (such as 85 in football or 13 in men's basketball) as long as he has completed one academic year at the school he is attending, receives financial aid based only on his college academic record with no other scholarship money from the school, and the college certifies that the academic aid he receives is comparable to what any student on campus (athlete or not) would also receive.

This new policy is not without its critics. Some are concerned that Division I schools could “stockpile” top athletes who also happen to be great students, making an end-run around the scholarship limit rules. They argue, “What is to stop a football coach from having 120 players on his roster if he can find 35 top academic kids coupled with 85 scholarship players? Won't he have a competitive advantage?” Theoretically he would, but there are safeguards in the process.

One safeguard is the clause concerning “amounts consistent with the pattern of all such awards made by the institution.” A school must certify that they are not throwing all of their academic scholarships at student-athletes. This would be very difficult to cover up and would certainly result in stiff NCAA sanctions if a school is caught violating this rule. It is also likely that some administrators would be summarily fired by their respective Boards of Trustees if this activity was taking place.

Additionally, these “non-counters” cannot participate until at least their sophomore year.

One may ask, “Won't redshirting, a common practice for many college athletes, lend itself to making more candidates eligible for these academic awards?” Consider this. It would take a tremendous sales job by a college coach to convince a parent. He might say, “We would like to give your son an academic scholarship beginning in his sophomore year if he can maintain a 3.3 GPA as a freshman. Sorry, but we do not have anything for him for his first year.” But will the offer still be valid for his second year?

What if the student doesn't make the grades as a freshman? What if the school cannot show it gave similar scholarships to non-athletes and reneges on the award? What if, for the following year, the coach recruits someone better than the athlete in our example?

Finally, there's more evidence that stockpiling does not occur. Since 1999, Division I has operated under a little-used but similar rule to the new one that has been passed. That rule provides for *incoming freshmen* with a high core GPA, class rank or standardized test score to be eligible for academic-only awards without counting against team limits in equivalency sports! We have not exactly noticed a tremendous swelling in roster sizes, have we? As always where college athletics are concerned, we return to the issue of funding and affordability. How many colleges, not just college athletic departments but the university as a whole, can truly afford to pay for such programs? Almost every article we read repeats the mantra that most colleges are still drowning in deficits. Paying for skyrocketing energy costs or health insurance for the faculty and staff is more of a priority.

The upshot is, at this time, we do not anticipate this new rule will make a tremendous difference in athletic recruiting. But as always, we will monitor our publications and sources and report any and all changes. One observation to make in support of the new bylaw: It is clearly another example of the strong emphasis on academic performance that we have seen the NCAA turn out over the past several years. And since most of our clients perform well in the classroom, these changes should continue to bode well for them.

CPOA PA Topic of the Month

VERBAL OFFERS

Beware of verbal offers. Recently, one of our clients had received a scholarship offer from a college coach and had told the coach that he needed to take some time to make his decision. After several weeks of thinking and evaluating, he decided that he wanted to accept the verbal offer, but asked if there was a way to guarantee it. Unfortunately, other than the National Letter of Intent, a verbal offer from a college coach and a verbal yes from you is not legally binding until the National Letter of Intent is signed. This is what makes recruiting a difficult and stressful job for both families and coaches. In many cases, the college coach has no idea who will be signing National Letter of Intent's at the end of the day till the faxes arrive on signing day. Many coaches want a decision from you immediately after they offer you a scholarship on your official visit, coaches who care about you as an individual and want to see that the right decision is made will usually understand that you need some time to think about what school you will want to attend so long as you understand that the more time you take, the harder it becomes for the coach to wait. In this case, I simply told the family to contact the coach and say that after careful thought this is the place you really want to be and that you would like to verbally accept the scholarship offer that was made. They took my advice, contacted the coach and told them that after careful consideration, that this school was the place they wanted to be and gave their verbal yes for a full scholarship offer and hopefully will be signing their National Letter of Intent in February.

CPOA News

FAFSA Time Nearly At Hand

We are busy preparing for the annual surge of electronic FAFSA filings next month. We will begin filing for your clients who have returned our FAFSA Information Form on January 3rd.

Every client who sent their FAFSA form to us **prior to December 1** will be mailed a copy of the information they sent us as a confirmation that they are in our "priority filing

queue". They will also be given the opportunity to make updates or corrections to what they originally submitted on the FAFSA.

Each franchisee or representative will be e-mailed by month's end with the names of all clients who have returned the FAFSA Information Form to us so far. Those clients receive priority filing. Others who send in forms after the first of the year will be filed in the order they are received. If the family doesn't complete the form properly, there may be a slight delay in filing but these have been minimized over the years.

After the FAFSA is filed, clients receive a confirmation letter and a paper copy of their Student Aid Report (SAR) from CPOA. Two to three weeks later, the Department of Education will send the official SAR to the family. If any corrections or further action is required, the family will be notified with their official SAR.

Instruct your clients to call our office if they have any questions about the FAFSA. The process can be confusing, but we are able to reduce their anxiety by reminding them of the importance of going through the FAFSA process, even if they are not going to be eligible for federal need-based financial aid. Almost all colleges require the SAR in order to consider the student for ANY type of financial aid, including athletic or academic awards and student loans.

If you have any questions about FAFSA filing, call Tom at the Corporate Office.

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://actr7.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 \$50 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).