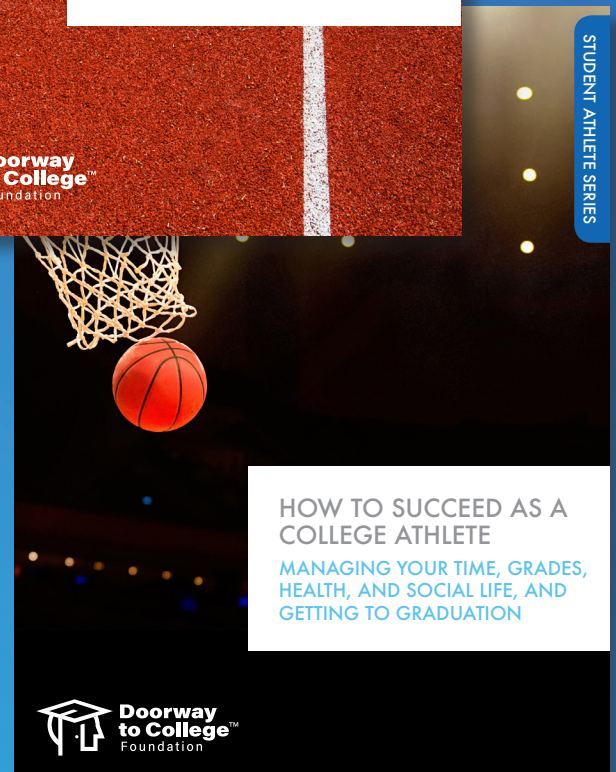
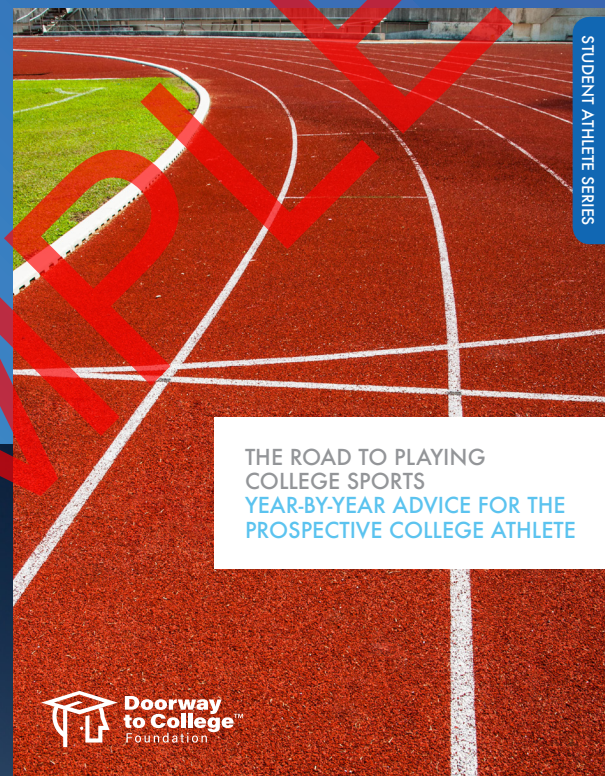


STUDENT ATHLETE SERIES





Some people go through life without a real plan. They simply wake up each day and see what happens. Sometimes they get lucky, but more often they simply float along with the current, going where life takes them instead of seizing control of the boat and making it go where they want.



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If you want success as a high school and college athlete, set goals for yourself. As Tony Robbins, a motivational speaker and author, says, "Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible."

As researched by R. H. Cox (1994), goal-setting can increase performance in four main ways:

- It puts strong focus on the task at hand. A clear goal allows you to take an inventory of your performance to determine whether you are performing at the desired level. If you aren't able to meet your goal, you will be motivated to improve.
- With increased focus comes increased effort. An athlete with a clear purpose can devote full energy and effort to achieving that purpose.
- Greater focus and concentration can eliminate distractions and increase

persistence to succeed. This is particularly important because every athlete goes through challenging training or practice situations from time to time.

- When your attention is focused on your goal and you are concentrating on completing tasks to help reach a goal, you can adjust your current strategies and develop new ones. Always keeping the bullseye in sight helps you to find the most effective ways to hit the target.

So what's your goal? To make varsity, all-conference, or all-state? To play college sports? To earn a Division I college athletics scholarship? To secure a professional contract? All these are admirable goals. They're easy to set and fun to talk about, but unless you take further steps toward achieving them, they're just talk.

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SAMPLE



INTRODUCTION

This book is written for middle-school and high-school athletes who hope to play the sport they love once they reach college. Becoming a college athlete is an admirable goal, yet it's one without a clear path for most students.



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When I was a high-school student, I had the same goal. I learned a lot along the way to becoming a college athlete that I'd like to share with you to make your journey easier. Very few prospective college athletes and parents know this information, and because they don't know it, the college recruiting process feels more like riding a roller coaster than taking a scenic and enjoyable drive. It doesn't have to be that way.

This book offers advice to help make the road ahead clear — both for you and for your parents. From athletic development to the recruitment process, from investigating colleges to taking college entrance exams, this information should go a long way toward demystifying the pursuit of your academic and athletic goals.

Ready? Let's get started.

THE NCAA ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The most important thing to do before freshman year is to map out your high-school coursework. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is extremely transparent about what it expects in terms of coursework that leads to NCAA eligibility. There is no excuse for graduating and *then* realizing that your school's graduation requirements were not as stringent as the NCAA's requirements.

Let me repeat that so you get it: You can meet *all* of your school's graduation requirements and *still fail to academically qualify for the NCAA*. Make sure the courses you are taking meet the NCAA's requirements. If you plan to attend a Division I or Division II school, be sure to register with the [NCAA's Eligibility Center](http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp) (http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp). The data in the following table is accurate at the time of this writing; be sure to check the NCAA website if you have any questions.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Division I: 16 core courses	Division II: 16 core courses
4 years of English	3 years of English
3 years of math (Algebra I or higher)	2 years of math (Algebra I or higher)
2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)	2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)
1 year of additional English, math, or natural/physical science	3 years of additional English, math, or natural/physical science
2 years of social science	2 years of social science
4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language, or comparative religion/philosophy)	4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language, or comparative religion/philosophy)

Source: NCAA Eligibility Center Quick Reference Guide, http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Quick_Reference_Sheet.pdf

BEGINNING THE COLLEGE SEARCH

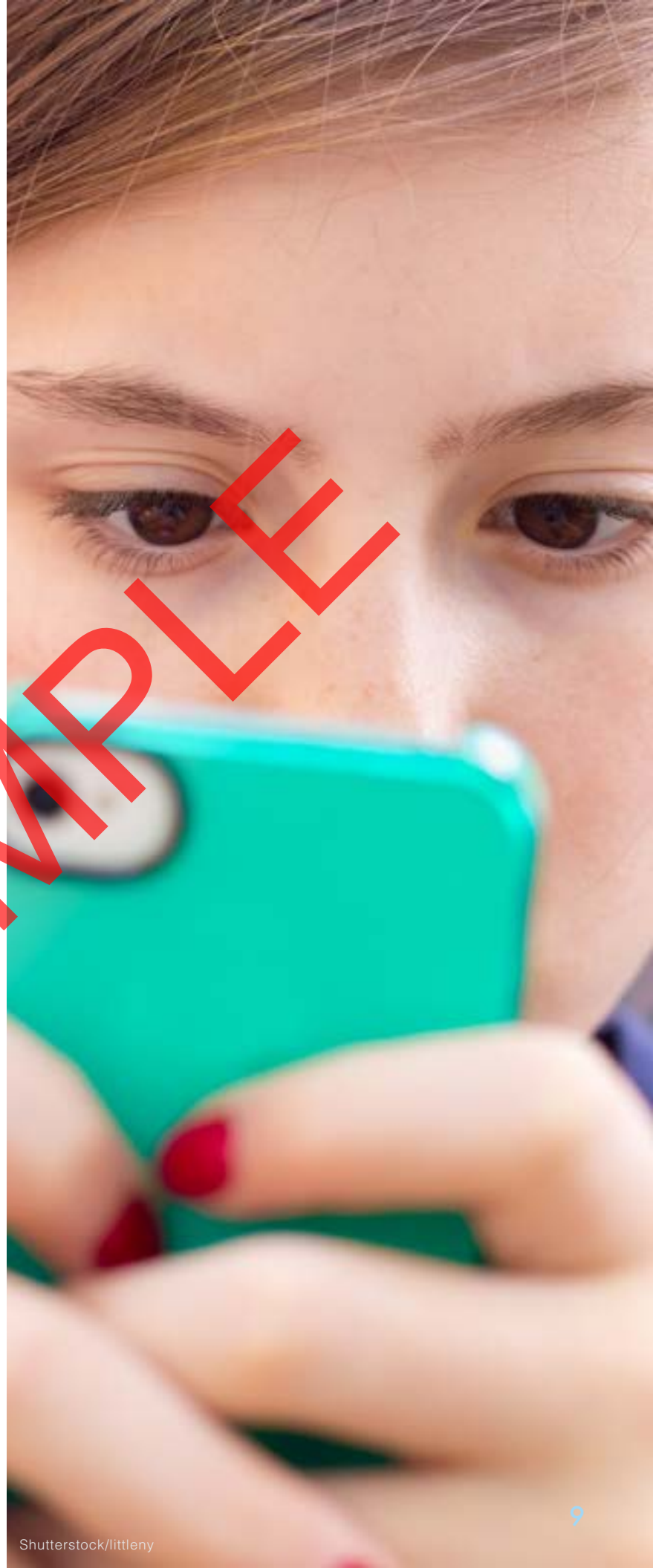
During your freshman year, you should also begin researching colleges. At this point, it's okay to have a long list of schools you're interested in. If you make a connection with coaches at some of these schools, now is a good time to ask them what you need to do to make their team. What are they looking for now, and what would they like to see you do over the next few years?

This next point will apply to only a small fraction of athletes, but it's worth noting for the few to whom it does apply. If you are already playing at a high level as a freshman, ask coaches if they have seen you play. If not, ask if they would be interested in taking a look.

Let me be clear: If you are dominating freshman games, don't bother asking if a coach wants to see the film. But if you are playing against varsity-level competition and looking impressive, it's worth mentioning. When you're excelling against athletes three and four years older than you, letting coaches know about that is a great way to get on their radar, which will allow you to build relationships from there.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA WISELY

Be smart about the decisions you are making, especially with social media. Almost everyone these days has a cell phone that takes pictures. Consider that a college coach might see every picture of you that shows up on social media outlets, such as Instagram and Twitter.



You dream of being a college athlete. You've planned, worked, tried, failed, and persevered to achieve your dream. You hope all that effort will pay off in a college scholarship and a chance to play your sport at a higher level. Now comes the time for the big decisions. What type of college will most likely enable you to reach your goals? As a prospective college athlete, one important decision to make is which type of school is right for you: Division I, Division II, or Division III?

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WHICH DIVISION WILL GET YOU TO YOUR GOAL?

Why do you want to participate in intercollegiate athletics? To continue involvement in a sport you're passionate about? To satisfy your thirst for competition? To enjoy relationships with your teammates, coaches, and mentors? To go pro? Your answer to the "why" question can have a big influence on which division — and school — you choose.

In a perfect world, we'd all play Division I sports at big schools with standing-room-only crowds, national TV exposure, and first-class athletic facilities. If your goal is to become a professional athlete, getting there will probably be easiest from a Division I program. But as the NCAA itself reminds us, most college athletes turn pro in something other than sports. So when you choose a college, be as realistic as possible. Divisions II and III offer some impressive options. They may not be the big state schools

we see on television, but they can be just as affordable and might even offer a better educational experience.

The academic impact of your college choice will linger long after your days of athletic competition are over. Many college transition professionals today mention that where you go to college is not a 4- or 5-year choice but rather a 40- or 50-year choice. This is why it is so important to make the decision that is best for you and why we recommend that you choose a school based on the intersection between athletics and academics.

“
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”

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SAMPLE



INTRODUCTION

Since you are reading this book, you likely have had some success as a high school athlete and are getting ready to make the jump to college. Most important in your journey to that new level will be adjusting to change. As almost everything in your life changes when you go to college, you must be certain that these changes do not disrupt the focus and habits that have led you to where you are today.

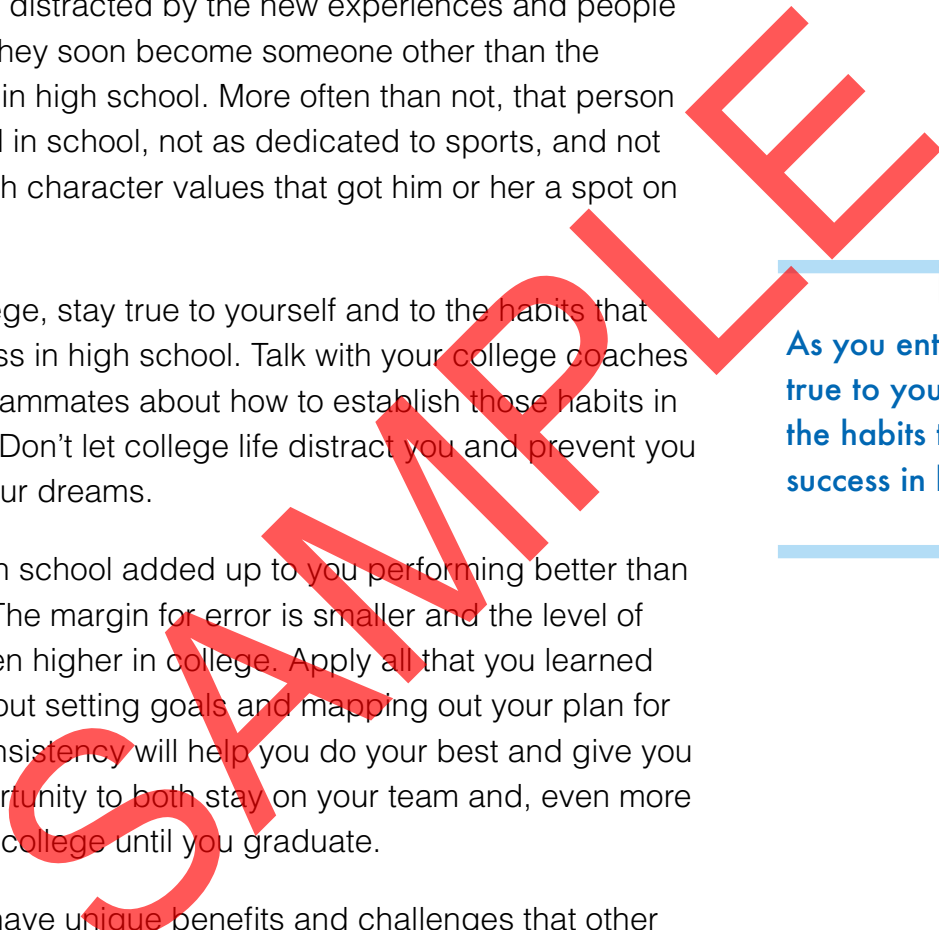
Chances are that you have developed patterns of behavior that have contributed greatly to your success thus far. You also probably have a group of people around you who serve as a support system to help you improve and stay grounded through the process of living as a high-profile athlete. As you transition to college, you must work extra hard to establish your athletic and academic habits early so you can continue to find the success you desire.

Many athletes get distracted by the new experiences and people on campus, and they soon become someone other than the person they were in high school. More often than not, that person is not as engaged in school, not as dedicated to sports, and not displaying the high character values that got him or her a spot on a college team.

As you enter college, stay true to yourself and to the habits that led to your success in high school. Talk with your college coaches and successful teammates about how to establish those habits in your new setting. Don't let college life distract you and prevent you from achieving your dreams.

Your habits in high school added up to you performing better than your opponents. The margin for error is smaller and the level of competition is even higher in college. Apply all that you learned in high school about setting goals and mapping out your plan for success. Your consistency will help you do your best and give you the greatest opportunity to both stay on your team and, even more important, stay in college until you graduate.

Student athletes have unique benefits and challenges that other college students don't experience. If you want to succeed, you'll need to be aware of these and be prepared to make wise decisions. In the following pages, we'll talk about some aspects of college life as they pertain to student athletes.



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