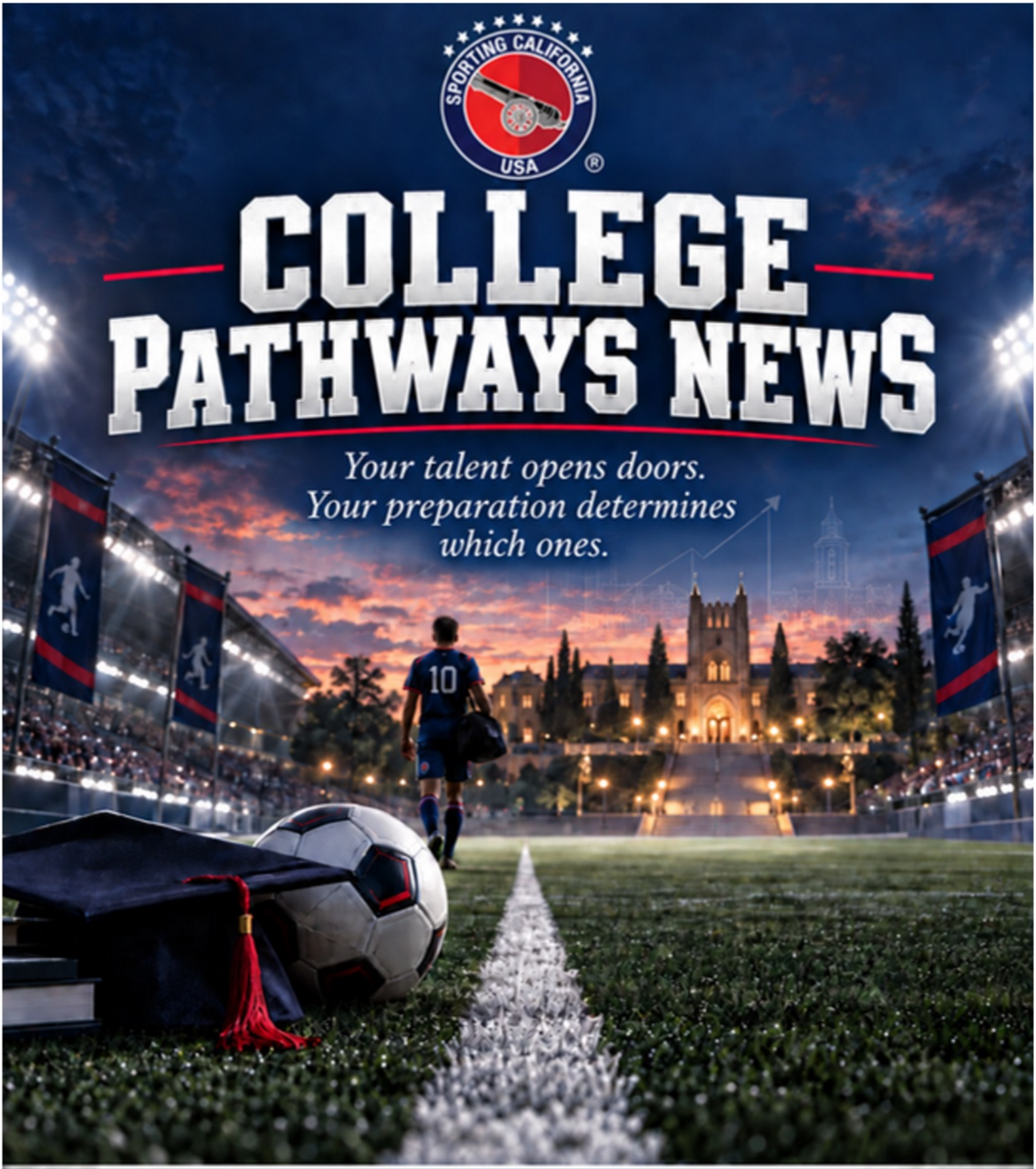
COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

Your talent opens doors.
Your preparation determines which ones.



SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA

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November 2026

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

MESSAGE FROM YOUR COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM MANAGER



One of the questions I hear from parents is, “When should we start thinking about college?” My answer depends on where your player is right now. For a younger athlete, it might mean building good school habits and learning to balance homework with training. For a high school player, it might mean exploring colleges, understanding eligibility, or figuring out what to say in that first email to a coach. Wherever your family is in the process, I want you to know you have a place to start.

The College Pathways Program is a club-wide resource that helps players and families understand college options and prepare for the next step. Most of our programming is geared toward high school athletes, and I encourage families with younger players to follow along so they know what to expect as their kids get older. Through workshops, college coach panels, and monthly newsletters like this one, we cover everything from academic readiness and eligibility to building a player profile and communicating with college coaches. My goal is to help families understand the process and give players the tools to take ownership of it.

This November, our workshop will focus on NCAA rules and eligibility. I encourage players and parents to attend together if you can. It’s a chance to ask questions and talk about what your player can do now, whether college soccer is already a goal or something they’re just beginning to explore.

As both an educator and a soccer mom, I know how quickly a week fills up with school, training, and games. Thank you for making time for these conversations. I’m grateful to be part of your player’s journey and look forward to seeing you at a workshop or out on the fields.

Nicole Salazar, M.A.T.

Nicole Salazar

College Pathways Program Manager
Sporting California USA
collegeadvisor@sportingca.us



COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

★

OUR BELIEFS. OUR COMMITMENT. THEIR FUTURE.

At Sporting California USA, we believe that developing exceptional student-athletes extends far beyond success on the field. While athletic development is an essential part of a player's journey, we are equally committed to helping our athletes grow academically, personally, and as a future leader. We believe that education creates opportunities, and every student deserves access to the knowledge, guidance, and support needed to confidently pursue their goals.

This belief is the foundation of the College Pathways Program. While our coaches are dedicated to helping players reach their highest athletic potential, we recognized that many families also needed guidance navigating academics, the college recruiting process, and the ever-changing landscape of collegiate soccer. The College Pathways Program was created to bridge that gap by providing Sporting California USA families with reliable information, educational resources, and year-round education so that no athlete has to navigate the journey alone. Our goal is to empower student-athletes and their families to prepare early, make informed decisions, and maximize opportunities both on and off the field.

We understand that success looks different for every student. Whether a player ultimately pursues NCAA, NAIA, junior college, trade school, military service, or another meaningful pathway, our commitment remains the same: to help athletes find the right fit and equip them with the tools, confidence, and knowledge to reach their full potential. Through education, meaningful relationships, and collaboration, we strive to create a culture where academic achievement, character, leadership, and athletic excellence work together.

As a growing initiative, the College Pathways Program continues to evolve alongside the needs of our athletes and families. We are committed to expanding our resources, workshops, partnerships, and opportunities each year to ensure we provide the highest level of support possible. Your feedback is an important part of that growth, and we encourage every family to share their experiences, ideas, and recommendations through our annual program survey. Together, we can continue building a stronger College Pathways Program that empowers current student-athletes and creates lasting opportunities for future Sporting California USA families.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP	ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE	MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS	COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

Preparing Today. Empowering Tomorrow.

ON THE FIELD. IN THE CLASSROOM. IN LIFE.

★★★★★

ONE CLUB. ONE PATH. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

ABOUT THE COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM

EDUCATE. EMPOWER. ELEVATE.



GUIDING STUDENT-ATHLETES AND FAMILIES THROUGH THE COLLEGE PLANNING AND RECRUITING JOURNEY

OUR MISSION

To provide every athlete with the knowledge, tools, and opportunities needed to confidently navigate the college recruiting process while encouraging academic achievement, athletic development, and personal growth. Whether your goal is NCAA, NAIA, junior college, trade school, military service, or another meaningful path, we are here to support you.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- College Recruiting Education
- Grade-Specific Timelines
- Workshops & Seminars
- College Coach Panels
- Scholarship Opportunities
- Educational Resources
- Parent Education & Support
- Recruiting Process Guidance
- Important Deadlines
- College Planning Tools
- Networking Opportunities
- Monthly Updates
- Communication & Resources
- Year-Round Support

WHO WE SERVE

Student-Athletes in Grades 8–12 and Their Families

Together, we prepare today for tomorrow's opportunities.

★ THIS PROGRAM IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR REGISTERED SPORTING CALIFORNIA PLAYERS ONLY. ★

EDUCATION

Providing knowledge and resources about academics, recruiting, and college options.

RESOURCES

Access to valuable tools, timelines, templates, and information.

OPPORTUNITIES

Workshops, panels, scholarships, and events that open doors and create connections.

SUPPORT

Year-round education and communication to help families stay informed and prepared.

EMPOWERMENT

Helping athletes and families make informed decisions and take ownership of their future.

AT SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA, WE BELIEVE SUCCESS ★ IS BUILT IN THE CLASSROOM, IN THE COMMUNITY, AND ON THE FIELD. ★

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
We value education and lifelong learning.

ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT
We train with purpose and compete with heart.

CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP
We lead with integrity and inspire others.

RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY
We build connections that last a lifetime.

FUTURE FOCUSED
We prepare for life beyond the game.

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

ACADEMICS & ELIGIBILITY

THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR COLLEGE SOCCER JOURNEY

GOOD GRADES TODAY. COLLEGE SOCCER TOMORROW.

Colleges want student-athletes—athletes who succeed in the classroom and on the field. Academics open doors. Eligibility gets you in.



WHY ACADEMICS MATTER

COLLEGES RECRUIT STUDENT-ATHLETES
Coaches want players who will be successful in their program—on the field, in the classroom, and in life.

YOUR ELIGIBILITY DEPENDS ON IT
You must meet academic requirements to practice, compete, and receive an athletic scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE ACADEMIC, TOO
Strong grades can qualify you for academic scholarships on top of athletic aid.

YOUR FUTURE IS THE GOAL
A college degree lasts a lifetime. Soccer is a season—education is forever.

MORE OPTIONS, MORE OPPORTUNITIES
The better your academics, the more colleges that can recruit you.

WHAT IS ELIGIBILITY?

NCAA

- For NCAA D1, D2, D3
- Must be cleared through the NCAA Eligibility Center
- Based on core courses, GPA, and test scores (if applicable)
- You must be academically eligible before you can practice or compete.

NAIA

- For NAIA schools
- Must be cleared through the NAIA Eligibility Center
- Based on core courses and GPA
- Test scores may be required at some schools.

NJCAA

- For Junior College (2-year colleges)
- Eligibility determined by the college
- Focus on completing high school diploma or GED and placement requirements.

USCAA

- For USCAA schools
- Eligibility determined by the college
- Focus on academics and character

! The rules are different for each association. Know the requirements early so there are no surprises later.

ELIGIBILITY TIMELINE: WHAT YOU NEED TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

9TH GRADE — BUILD THE HABIT

- ✓ Focus on good grades in all classes
- ✓ Take challenging courses (Honors, AP if available)
- ✓ Get organized and develop good study skills
- ✓ Start a file of your academic records
- ✓ Learn about NCAA eligibility requirements early

GOAL: STRONG START

10TH GRADE — STAY ON TRACK

- ✓ Take the right core courses
- ✓ Keep your GPA strong
- ✓ Start studying for the SAT/ACT (if required by schools)
- ✓ Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center (NCAA only)
- ✓ Ask your counselor to verify your courses

GOAL: STAY CONSISTENT

11TH GRADE — GET PREPARED

- ✓ Continue with rigorous courses
- ✓ Take SAT/ACT (if required)
- ✓ Request your transcripts through the NCAA Eligibility Center
- ✓ Check your amateurism status (NCAA only)
- ✓ Research colleges that fit your academics and soccer

GOAL: BE PROACTIVE

BEFORE SENIOR YEAR — GET ELIGIBLE

- ✓ Make sure all required courses are completed
- ✓ Confirm your core course list with your counselor
- ✓ Ensure your GPA and test scores meet eligibility standards
- ✓ Get cleared by the eligibility center before senior year

GOAL: GET CLEARED

SENIOR YEAR — FINISH STRONG

- ✓ Finish strong academically
- ✓ Communicate with coaches and schools
- ✓ Apply and get accepted to your college
- ✓ Maintain eligibility all year long

GOAL: READY TO PLAY

NCAA DIVISION I CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

16 CORE COURSES

- 4 YEARS — ENGLISH
- 3 YEARS — MATH (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 YEARS — NATURAL SCIENCE (1 year lab if available)
- 1 YEAR — ADDITIONAL ENGLISH, MATH, OR NATURAL SCIENCE
- 2 YEARS — SOCIAL SCIENCE
- 4 YEARS — ADDITIONAL COURSES (From any area above, doctrinal religion/philosophy)

10 MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

[illegible]	Minimum 2.300
CORE GPA	
SAT	Minimum 1020
ACT	Minimum 86

*Requirements may be higher at some schools.

DIVISION II
CORE GPA: Min. 2.200 | SAT: Min. 820 | ACT: Min. 68

DIVISION III
No minimum core course requirements
Set by each school.
Focus on grades and admissions standards.

WHAT COUNTS AS A CORE COURSE?

- ✓ Must be completed at an accredited high school
- ✓ Must be in-person courses (online courses limited)
- ✓ Earn a grade of "C" or better
- ✓ Repeated courses do NOT count twice
- ✓ Summer school courses can count (if approved)

WHAT DOESN'T COUNT?

- ✗ Physical Education
- ✗ Health (unless required by your school)
- ✗ Study Hall
- ✗ Non-academic electives
- ✗ Courses below high school level

AMATEURISM (NCAA ONLY)

To be eligible for NCAA athletics and scholarships, you must be an amateur. You cannot:

- ✗ Receive pay for playing
- ✗ Sign a professional contract
- ✗ Accept prize money beyond actual expenses
- ✗ Play on professional teams

When in doubt, ask the NCAA Eligibility Center!

ACADEMIC TIPS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

- Create a schedule and stick to it
- Do your homework and study ahead
- Ask for help when you need it
- Communicate with your teachers and coaches
- Take care of your health and get enough rest
- Stay focused on your goals

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Take the right core courses
- ☐ Keep your GPA strong
- ☐ Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (if NCAA)
- ☐ Take SAT/ACT (if required)
- ☐ Request and send transcripts
- ☐ Check amateurism status (NCAA)
- ☐ Get cleared before senior year

REMEMBER

You can be a great player, but if you're not eligible, you can't play. Academics are your ticket to the game.

GET ELIGIBLE.
GET RECRUITED.
GET YOUR DEGREE.

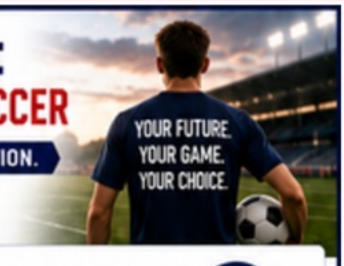
WORK HARD IN THE CLASSROOM. ★ PLAY HARD ON THE FIELD. ★ BUILD YOUR FUTURE. ★ *YOU'VE GOT THIS!*

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

THE BIGGEST ADJUSTMENT:
CLUB/HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE SOCCER

IT'S MORE THAN A STEP UP IN LEVEL—IT'S A LIFE TRANSITION.

College soccer challenges you to grow as a player, a student, and a person—every single day.



THE BIG PICTURE

College soccer is faster, stronger, smarter—and far less forgiving. You're not just competing for playing time; you're managing academics, adjusting to independence, and learning to perform under constant pressure. The biggest adjustment is handling it all at the same time.

1. TRAINING & GAME INTENSITY

The Game Gets Faster. The Margin Gets Smaller.

- **Higher Speed of Play** — Every pass, touch and decision happens quicker. There's less time and more pressure.
- **Stronger, More Athletic Opponents** — Everyone is big, fast and technically sound. You can't take plays off.
- **More Demanding Training** — More practices, higher intensity, smarter sessions and less repetition of what you've already mastered.
- **Tactical Complexity** — Expect advanced systems, positions with purpose and a higher soccer IQ.
- **Less Playing Time** — You earn your minutes. Depth is real. Rotation is constant. Nothing is guaranteed.

Be prepared to work harder than you ever have—for every touch, every minute.

2. ACADEMICS & TIME MANAGEMENT

You're a Student-Athlete—In That Order.

- **Academic Rigor** — College courses are more challenging and demand more reading, writing and independent learning.
- **Less Structure, More Responsibility** — No one is reminding you. You must plan your day, stay on top of assignments and manage deadlines.
- **Time Management is Everything** — Balancing classes, training, travel, study, recovery, social life and sleep is the real challenge.
- **Accountability is Internal** — You're responsible for your success on the field and in the classroom.
- **Grades Matter** — Playing time, eligibility and your future opportunities depend on academics.

Discipline in the classroom creates freedom on the field—and in life.

3. CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

A New Place. New People. New Expectations.

- **New Team, New Roles** — You're the new player. You must earn respect and fit into the team culture.
- **Independence** — You're away from home. You'll face challenges that build maturity and resilience.
- **Coaching Relationships** — Coaches expect maturity, communication and professionalism in every interaction.
- **Travel & Recovery** — More travel, different environments and learning how to recover on little sleep.
- **Higher Expectations** — The standard is higher—every day, every rep, every decision.

Embrace the change. Growth lives outside your comfort zone.

4. WHAT SEPARATES PLAYERS WHO ADAPT FROM THOSE WHO STRUGGLE

PLAYERS WHO ADAPT	PLAYERS WHO STRUGGLE
✓ Have a strong work ethic and consistent habits	✗ Expect everything to be handed to them
✓ Are coachable and open to feedback	✗ Focus only on playing time
✓ Manage their time and stay organized	✗ Procrastinate and fall behind in class
✓ Prioritize academics and understand their "why"	✗ Don't communicate or ask for help
✓ Communicate, ask for help and build relationships	✗ Compare themselves to others
✓ Stay positive, resilient and solutions-focused	✗ Let setbacks affect their confidence
✓ Focus on getting 1% better every day	✗ Have poor habits and lack discipline
✓ Understand the bigger picture of their journey	✗ Lose sight of their goals

THEY CONTROL WHAT THEY CAN. THEY GROW. THEY LAST.

HOW TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENT SUCCESSFULLY

- **PREPARE BEFORE YOU ARRIVE** — Get in shape, study the playbook and understand the academic expectations.
- **BUILD DAILY HABITS** — Sleep, nutrition, hydration, study, recovery—be consistent with the little things.
- **ASK QUESTIONS AND SEEK HELP** — Use your coaches, professors, academic advisors and teammates.
- **PLAN AHEAD** — Use a planner or app. Block time for class, training, study, recovery and rest.
- **TRUST THE PROCESS** — There will be hard days. Keep showing up. Keep improving. Stay patient.
- **ENJOY THE JOURNEY** — This season is temporary. The lessons will last a lifetime.

KEY REMINDERS

- You don't have to be perfect—just consistent.
- Everyone goes through tough times—keep going.
- Your mindset is your greatest advantage.
- Balance is not doing everything; it's doing the right things each day.
- This challenge is shaping your future.

SUCCESS IN COLLEGE SOCCER = PREPARATION + ADAPTABILITY + ACCOUNTABILITY

STUDY HARD + TRAIN HARD + PLAY SMART = ACHIEVE MORE

REMEMBER

> This is your opportunity to become the best version of yourself—on and off the field.
>
> Embrace the challenge. Your future is worth it.

ADJUST TODAY. ★ GROW EVERY DAY. ★ COMPETE TOGETHER. ★ SUCCEED BEYOND THE GAME.

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

THE COLLEGE SOCCER RECRUITMENT PROCESS TODAY

BE PROACTIVE. BE PREPARED. BE RECRUITED.

RECRUITING IS A PROCESS, NOT AN EVENT.
Start early, stay consistent, and take ownership of your journey.

ACADEMICS MATTER | ATHLETICS MATTER | YOU MATTER

1 BUILD YOUR FOUNDATION
- Focus on training, development & academics
- Play a competitive schedule
- Understand the recruiting timeline

FRESHMAN–SOPHOMORE

2 GET EXPOSURE
- Attend showcases, ID camps & tournaments
- Create opportunities for coaches to see you
- Connect with your club & high school coaches

SOPHOMORE–JUNIOR

3 CREATE YOUR RECRUITING PROFILE
- Build a player profile
- Highlight video
- Academic information
- Statistics & achievements
- Keep it updated

SOPHOMORE–JUNIOR

4 RESEARCH & TARGET SCHOOLS
- Research programs that fit your academic, athletic & financial goals
- Create a target list (Reach, Realistic, Likely)

JUNIOR

5 REACH OUT & INTRODUCE YOURSELF
- Email coaches professionally
- Include your information & interest
- Follow instructions & be concise

JUNIOR

6 BE SEEN & STAY ON THE RADAR
- Attend events where coaches are present
- Send updates (achievements, schedule, progress)
- Continue building your relationship

JUNIOR–SENIOR

7 EVALUATION & RECRUITING INTEREST
- Coaches evaluate you as a player and a person
- You may receive interest, offers or invites to visit

JUNIOR–SENIOR

8 OFFICIAL VISITS
- Visit campuses
- Ask questions
- Talk to players, coaches & current students
- Evaluate the overall fit

SENIOR

9 MAKE YOUR DECISION
- Compare your options
- Consider academics, playing opportunity, culture & finances
- Trust your process and make the best decision for you

SENIOR

10 COMMIT & PREPARE
- Commit to your future school
- Continue to work hard on & off the field
- Prepare for the transition to college soccer

SENIOR–COLLEGE

KEYS TO SUCCESS

START EARLY | BE PROACTIVE | STAY CONSISTENT | COMMUNICATE PROFESSIONALLY | ACADEMICS ALWAYS MATTER | BE COACHABLE, COMPETITIVE & RESILIENT

REMEMBER
Coaches recruit the whole person. Be the athlete, student, teammate & leader they want in their program.

YOUR GAME. *YOUR FUTURE.*

PRESENTED BY THE COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM

INFORMED TODAY. PREPARED TOMORROW. READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT.

CPP WORKSHOP #1: BUILD YOUR COLLEGE RECRUITING TOOLKIT

OCTOBER 18TH, 2026
ONLINE ZOOM

College Workshop #1 Recap | Build Your College Recruiting Toolkit In October, we kicked off our College Pathways workshop series by walking Sporting California USA athletes through four things they can prepare before reaching out to a college coach. Whether players were starting from scratch or already contacting coaches, the goal was for everyone to leave with one concrete next step.



COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS





Player profile. Keep your Sprocket profile current with your graduation year, position, team, GPA, contact information, and highlight video link.

Athletic résumé. Give coaches a fuller picture of who you are by including your academics, soccer experience, honors, leadership, and volunteer work.
Highlight video. Make yourself easy to spot and choose game clips that show what you do well in your position. Our guest speakers, Kelsey Stafford and Julio Neto of Stafford Productions, led a session on highlight videos and reels.

First email to a coach. Introduce yourself, explain why you're interested in that specific school and soccer program, and share your profile, video, and upcoming game schedule. Keep track of who you've contacted so you can follow up with a useful update.

My challenge to our players was simple. Pick one thing you can finish in the next seven days. That might mean updating your Sprocket profile, gathering game footage, or researching one school and drafting an email. If you're early in the process, start with the piece you can work on today.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and brought questions. If you missed the workshop or want to revisit it with your family, watch the Workshop #1 recording from Stafford Productions.

COLLEGE PATHWAYS NEWS

CBU Sporting CA Family Game Night RECAP

This October, our Sporting California USA families headed to California Baptist University to watch the CBU Lancers take on San Diego State. One of my favorite parts of the night was seeing our players get a turn on the field. A Sporting team joined the pregame walkout and played a halftime scrimmage while families and teammates cheered them on.

As part of our College Pathways Program, Sporting Night gave players of all ages a chance to experience a college soccer game in person. From the stands, they could see how college players communicate, move off the ball, and respond when the pace of the game changes. For our younger players, it was a fun night with their teammates. For those already thinking about playing after high school, it gave them a firsthand look at the level they're working toward.

Thank you to CBU for welcoming our club and to all the families who came out in their Sporting gear. Watch the CBU Sporting Night highlights.



PLAY
LEARN
GROW
BELONG

SAVE THE DATE

SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA ®

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW THROUGH SOCCER

DISCIPLINE
OPPORTUNITY
HIGHER GOALS

SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA

COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM

4-SERIES ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Learn. Prepare. Compete. Succeed.

MORE THAN A GAME

Live on Zoom • Sundays • 7:00–8:00 PM

STUDENT-ATHLETES TODAY LEADERS TOMORROW

1 BUILD YOUR COLLEGE RECRUITING TOOLKIT

COMPLETED

October 18, 2026

Player profiles, highlight videos, athletic résumés and coach emails.

2 KNOW THE RULES & BUILD YOUR RECRUITING TIMELINE

November 15, 2026

NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA, eligibility requirements and grade-level planning.

3 THE MENTAL GAME

January 17, 2027

Confidence, resilience, pressure and mental toughness.

Reschedule
Jan 24th

4 FROM RECRUIT TO COLLEGE ATHLETE

February 21, 2027

An alumni's real recruiting journey, lessons and college transition.

Open to Sporting CA USA student-athletes and families

Guest speakers • Practical guidance • Live Q&A

CHARACTER TODAY. OPPORTUNITIES TOMORROW.

SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA

COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM

WORKSHOP #2

KNOW THE RULES & BUILD YOUR RECRUITING TIMELINE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026

7:00–8:00 PM PT • LIVE ON ZOOM

- NCAA, NAIA & NJCAA
- Eligibility requirements
- Grade-level recruiting planning
- Live Q&A

Open to Sporting California USA student-athletes and families

EARLY REGISTRATION / SIGN IN

Scan the QR code to fill out the form.

PLAY DEVELOP COMPETE ADVANCE

SPORTING CALIFORNIA USA

MORE THAN A CLUB A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

YEAR AT A GLANCE

COLLEGE PATHWAYS PROGRAM • JULY 2026 – JUNE 2027

JULY

College Pathways Program Launch

COMPLETED

PLEASE NOTE: DATES MAY CHANGE

AUGUST

24 Parent Orientation

31 College Coaches Panel COED

COMPLETED

Welcome Packet

SEPTEMBER

TBD CPP Training Visits

COMPLETED

CPP Athlete/Family Survey

Monthly Newsletter #1

OCTOBER

17 CBU Game Night

18 Workshop #1

COMPLETED

NOVEMBER

15 Workshop #2

TBD CPP Training Visits



Monthly Newsletter #2

DECEMBER

MZK Scholarship Announcement

Monthly Newsletter #3

JANUARY

24 Workshop #3 Reschedule

Monthly Newsletter #4

FEBRUARY

21 Workshop #4

MZK Scholarship Application Open-SENIORS

TBD CPP Training Visits

Monthly Newsletter #5

MARCH

TBD College Coaches Panel -BOYS

Monthly Newsletter #6

APRIL

TBD College Coaches Panel -GIRLS

Monthly Newsletter #7

MAY

MZK Scholarship Application Deadline - SENIORS

Monthly Newsletter #8

JUNE

TBD Senior Night C/O 2027

Monthly Newsletter #9

★★ CHARACTER TODAY. OPPORTUNITIES TOMORROW. ★★