

AFA Questions to ask a College Coach

Questions to Ask a College Coach

When talking with a coach from a school you are considering, you are talking about YOUR future! You *should* have questions – and the coach will *expect* you to have questions. Asking questions reveals that you have a plan for your future, and you want to gather all the relevant information to help you decide if this school, this program and this coach can play a part in helping you achieve your goals.

Don't waste your questions asking for information that is readily available on the school's website. It not only wastes the coach's and your time, but it also shows the coach that you are either too naïve or were too lazy to use available resources to find the answers to these questions. By the time you talk to a coach, you should have already determined if the school has your intended program of study; the size of the school; admissions eligibility criteria; and other important factors in your final decision. The coach's answers to your questions should help you determine whether this school and program are a good fit for you. Have your questions written down, so you don't forget an important one. Ask the coach if it is okay for you to take notes to help you remember the answers to your questions. Not only will it help you remember, but you will also be demonstrating one of your academic skills!

Below are some sample questions for you to consider. Don't try to ask ALL the questions on this list in one conversation! Select no more than 20-25 to ask that are most important to you when narrowing down your choices. If the school ends up on your short-list and you end up on theirs, then be sure to ask more questions. You don't want any surprises!

My Athletic Career

- Have you personally watched me play? If so, why do you think my skills fit into your program?
- What position do you see me playing on your team?
- Describe the current players competing at the same position. What skills do they possess?
- How many returning players do you have at my position?
- How many freshmen are being recruited for my position?
- What do you look for in players at my position?
- How do you see me fitting into your system?
- I know you have a list of potential recruits for this position. Where am I on that list?
- Do you have a junior varsity program?
- How many players are on your roster?
- Do you have a general style of play, or do you mold your team to the talent you have?
- Where do you see me fitting in the program this year? Years 2, 3 and 4?
- What chance do I have to earn playing time as a freshman?
- Can I "red shirt" my first year? Under what conditions do you typically red shirt players?
- What are the physical requirements each year? (Training commitments, weight, etc.)
- Will I receive a written contract or tender?
- What are your expectations of me as a player? As a person?
- What is the off-season regimen?
- Do you have a strength and conditioning coach?
- Do you have indoor facilities?
- Are facilities available to players outside of team practices?
- How many players in the last five years have gone on to play professionally?
- How can you help me if I want to pursue a professional athletic career?
- If a professional career isn't an option, how can you help me with job placement after graduation?
- What advantages does your program bring compared to _____?

The Coach and Coaching Staff

- What is your recruiting timeline?
- How would you best describe your coaching style?
- Where do you place your emphasis (offense, defense) during training and games or matches?
- When does your head coaching contract end?
- What is each of the assistant coaches responsible for?
- How available is the trainer?
- What is your program's track record in terms of injuries?
- What are your red shirt policies? Will scholarship cover a fifth year?
- What is your walk-on policy and how does your team treat walk-ons?
- What is the typical year like for your student athletes? (off-season training program)
- What is the typical day like for your student athletes during the season? During the off-season?
- How important is this sport to your school's athletic director?
- What kind of players succeed here?
- What is the status of the college's relationship with the NCAA (or NAIA or NJCAA)?
- Can I compete in other sports?

Sports and Academics

- What percentage of your players on scholarship graduate in four years?
- What is the team's GPA from last year?
- Describe the typical class size.
- What do you do to academically support your players? (Tutors, study hall requirements, staff, class load)
- Does coaching staff assist student-athletes with forming class schedules?
- How are conflicts between academics and athletics handled?
- If there is a particular class, I need that is only offered during regular practice time, how is that handled?
- Am I allowed time to make up classes and tests missed because of the competition schedule?
- What kind of graduation track will I be on with my course of study? Are we looking at a four-year degree or can it be done in three, along with athletics?
- Are tutors provided for athletes? Is there a charge?
- Do you have an organized study hall for players? Is it mandatory or optional, in season? Out of season?
- How do students compensate for time out of the classroom?
- How much class time is missed due to travel?
- What are your policies for missed practices or being late due to class commitments?
- Do you offer an academic advisor for athletes?
- Do you have a solid academic advising center? How many players take advantage of it?
- Does a walk-on receive the same services as a scholarship athlete?
- Do you have priority registration for athletes?
- How many credits are required for me to be eligible to compete?
- How many credits are required for me to keep my financial aid?
- Does the school/coaching staff have their own academic requirements to play, outside of NCAA requirements?

The Team

- Do most players live on or off campus?
- Is freshman required to live on campus?
- Do the on-campus players on the team all live in the same dorm?
- Will I be roomed with another player from the team?
- Will I be required to live on campus all four years?
- What are the most common challenges that your freshman athletes report with respect to dorm life?

- What state/region do most of your players come from?
- What kind of nutrition/dietary plan is the team on?
- What portion of training is done off the pitch?
- Do you provide a pre-game or post-game meal for home games?
- Are there any unique team-building activities you do in your program?
- How many games/matches are there in a season?
- How much do freshmen play?
- Is there a junior varsity team?
- How much travel do you have in a typical year?
- What tournaments do you play in?
- What kind of community activities and camps do you run? How is the team involved in these activities?
- What are the most impressive accomplishments of your program in the past five years?
- What are your team conduct rules? Are they the college's minimums or are they tougher?
- Are sporting events a big part of campus life?
- Do sports teams support one another at home games?
- Am I expected to stay in town during the summer?
- When does the season begin? End?
- What does a typical week of practice look like?
- What are my off-season responsibilities?

Finances and Scholarships

- Specifically, what expenses does the financial aid and/or scholarship package cover? (Tuition, room, board, books, special assessments, supplies)?
- How many scholarships does your athletic department fund in my sport?
- What scholarship packages are typically available?
- Is financial aid available for summer school?
- What equipment are players required to provide?
- What expenses will players have to cover?
- What are the costs for off-campus apartments?
- How is the cafeteria food?
- What meal plan is best for me as a student-athlete?
- If I'm injured, what happens to my financial aid?
- What are my opportunities for employment while I'm a student?
- What conditions are used to determine annual renewal of scholarship?
- What medical expenses does the college cover? Do I need other insurance?

Last, but certainly not least!

- How accessible is the program to my family?
- Is there a family section in the stadium?
- Are tickets provided free of charge for family members at home games?
- If my family can't attend, are games available live online?
- What are the next steps you plan to take in recruiting me?
- Do you need anything else from me?