

SportsHopes Highlights

Fall 2010

High School to College Pathway
Student-Athlete Support
www.sportshopes.org

Hello Community!

“I know the importance of getting an education. I know that its benefits last a lifetime.”

- *Men's Basketball Head Coach John Wooden (UCLA 1948 - 1975)*

“Self-discipline is a matter of how hard you are willing to work when no one is watching.”

- *Women's Basketball Head Coach Pat Summitt (Tennessee 1974 - current)*

The NCAA recently passed a new proposal, No. 2009-64, which will no longer allow student-athlete prospects initially enrolling for college on or after August 1, 2010, to use non-traditional online or independent study self-paced courses (such as those offered by BYU and American School) to meet DI college core course requirements for eligibility. The proposal does not effect DII colleges at this time.

[NCAA decertifies selected nontraditional secondary education ...](#)

A concern now for many high school student-athletes trying to make their way to DI educational institutions is how are they going to obtain core course “credit recovery” when some school districts are cutting out summer school altogether, or restricting the number of summer classes available resulting in waiting lists, so that common avenues of achieving academic eligibility disappear. Does it become a situation of have's and have not's where families who can afford options such as private school courses in the summer time are able to provide for that? What has happened with online courses and degrees being the wave of the future where ease of access and affordability make sense? Eliminating options becomes punitive. For student-athletes graduating in 2013 or later the DI and DII colleges will both require the same number of core courses, 16, with a C or above in each core course. Currently DI's require 16 and DII 14. Where high school students aren't making the grades and not passing the core courses (such as Geometry, Chemistry, English) we have to ask why are they failing? Do we need to seek change in how certain subjects (those with the highest failure rate) are taught? Are teaching methods that combine both visual presentations along with alpha and numeric instruction something we should seek more of so students who learn better one way or other can improve chances of success?

In a recent phone call to BYU's Independent Study department the courses most often retaken at the high school level include math, science and English courses. Interestingly, a popular BYU course is not one of the noted core courses but a “Character Education” course “Exploring Values” which focuses on character development values, courage, self-discipline, respect, honesty, work, trust and compassion.

Thank you to three California college coaches who took time to share their insights in this Fall Highlights as to how we can better assist student-athletes on the higher education pathway. - J.O.

SportsHopesSnapshots

You have to want it ~ I want to go to college ~ Get busy!



(Left to right) **Sulayman "Solo" Diomande** (SR) Castro Valley decathlete scored 5623 points placing 16th in the 2010 National Junior Olympics decathlon; **Danica Appleby** (SR) Castro Valley hard working 5'7" starter varsity basketball forward; **Jimmy Woodard** UC Berkeley 2nd year mentors **Alex Foster** (SR) Castro Valley sprinter 50.59 400m, 23.67 200m, 35'-3.75" triple jumper and 6'-2" high jumper.



(Left to right) **Ben Eversole** (SR) Castro Valley with parents Ron and Jane, T&F/XC competitor 4:20 1600m, 9:23 3200m, 15:49 5k and a 33 ACT; **Arianna Posey** (SR) Castro Valley with father Keith, 5'-11" starter varsity basketball forward balances academics, athletics and a part-time student job.



(Left to right) **Dominic Revelez** (SR) Dublin High with parents Dominic and Teresa, starter varsity football MLB/Special Teams has lots of reps/tackles; **Anthony Martore** (SR) Castro Valley with mother Donna, placed 5th with a 4:02.33 1500m at 2010 National Junior Olympics and has a 1:56.50 800m; **Brianna Miller** (SR) Castro Valley with mother Felicia, defines leadership, placed 8th with 36'-3" triple jump at 2010 National Junior Olympics and best long jump 17'-8.75", 13.07 100m and 26.62 200m.

It's about the grades, core courses and SAT / ACT



(Left to right) **Ben Davis** (SR) Castro Valley with stepfather Frank, registers for SAT and has best marks 42'-9" triple jump, 19'-6" long jump, 52.87 400m and 12:12 XC 2 mile; **Elham "Ellie" Dehdari** (SR) Castro Valley with mother Azar, starter varsity soccer midfielder (HS) / forward (Club) signs her NCAA transcript release form; **Ray Huey** (SR) Castro Valley with mother Emily, registers with the NCAA Eligibility Center. The quick-footed track sprinter and football RB is building stats this year.



(Left to right) **Brianna Giscombe** (SR) Castro Valley reviews NCAA Core Course requirements. The talented hurdler is entering a second season of track and building stats; **Alyssa Boisse**, Las Positas Community College 2nd year mentors **Tobi Alli** who recently relocated to New York and will attend Lehman College as a track athlete in January 2011; **Alex West** (SR) TE/LB and **Moner Afschar** (SR) WR/DB Castro Valley varsity football players help out at a SportsHopes summer ewaste fundraiser.



Ashawndaus "Ash" Woods (1st year) Chabot Community College (Hayward High) football DB is a regular SportsHopes volunteer and new Student-Athlete Mentor; **Travis Gardner** (1st year) Chabot Community College (San Leandro High) football QB is tied for the state lead with 19 TD passes as of October 29, and will soon assist at SportsHopes events; **Darnell Reed** (1st year) Chabot Community College (Castro Valley) football WR works hard to move forward to a four-year college.

Leadership and community service count



(L to R) **Kristina Utley** (SR) CV varsity soccer goalie; **Alex Foster** (SR) CV varsity track & field; **Damion Rosby** (SR) CV varsity football RB and track sprinter; **Ash Woods** (1st year) Chabot College football DB; **Marzetta Davis** (SR) CV student-volunteer; Mentor **Dash Oliver** (2nd year) UC Berkeley; **Florence Valentine**, SportsHopes; and **Camila Barbour**, SportsHopes, help at a summer ewaste fundraiser.



(L to R) **Alex Cardiasmenos**, volunteer; **Lynda Foster**, SportsHopes; **James Foster**, volunteer; **Dee Batis**, volunteer; **Rosie Aldridge**, volunteer; **Jennifer Oliver**, SportsHopes; **Jennifer Diaz**, SportsHopes; Mentor **Jimmy Woodard**; **Dave Ellington**, SportsHopes; and **Jerry Oliver**, volunteer, help out at a SportsHopes summer ewaste collection fundraiser.



(L to R) **Jennifer Oliver**, SportsHopes Founder; **Sue Hohl**, Castro Valley Sunrise Rotary officer and VP Manager Bank of the West; SportsHopes attendees at the Castro Valley Educational Foundation 2010 Dynamic Dinner included **Jerry Oliver**, guest; **Juan Sigler**, guest, **Jennifer Oliver**, SportsHopes; **James Foster**, guest; **Lynda Foster**, SportsHopes; **Cathy Milam**, guest; and **Leroy Milam**, guest and local USA Track & Field official.

We Need to Help Student-Athletes Earlier On

By Head Football Coach Danny Calcagno, Chabot Community College

One of the programs we are seeing substantial growth in is our “Shirt Program”, or more commonly known as a gray shirt program. For many community colleges this is the equivalent of a fifth year of high school. Student-athletes take less than a full load of classes (11 units or less) which enables them to work out and practice with the team, but not suit up nor compete in any games. It provides student-athletes an opportunity to catch-up with their core courses depending on their academic situation coming out of high school, and gives them a second chance to set goals and hopefully transfer at some point to a four-year educational institution. Once student-athletes land with us there is no time to waste and studies must be taken seriously. Some core courses can be hard to get into due to the economic cutbacks and lack of core course availability, so when a student-athlete gets in they must pass their courses. Every kid is different. Kids come in with different expectations regarding academics at a community college, and then they get hit with the reality. There is no wiggle room.

Our Shirt Program is geared towards academics, as compared to other reasons for delay in athletic participation such as rehabilitation from injury or lack of experience in a sport, which are situations often remedied by four-year colleges’ red shirt programs. In a gray shirt program the five year clock does not start ticking with the NCAA yet for a student-athlete, so it’s not about a sport, it’s about earning eligibility in academics to qualify for the privilege of playing a sport. In our freshmen orientation we present to student-athletes what courses are needed each semester in order for them to earn the 60 unit minimum to be eligible to progress to four-year colleges. If the student-athletes had taken and passed required core courses in high school they would not need to be in a community college program.

In the fall of 2009 we had approximately five gray shirt student-athletes in our football program. In fall of 2010 we have ten. In the fall of 2011 it is possible we will have 15-20 gray shirts. Some community colleges may have 30-40 gray shirt football student-athletes or more. **One thing this growth is telling us is that we have got to find a way to get parents, guardians, educators, coaches and community involved with the academics of these kids starting much earlier on, by middle school at the latest.** If we don’t then these kids are already behind even when considering that there are socio-economic factors as well as pockets of support or lack of support in all communities.

By freshmen year at the high school level student-athletes need to be educated by their counselors or better yet, by athletic counselors (Athletic Directors are already overwhelmed) as to the NCAA academic requirements needed in order to move forward successfully from high school to four year colleges. High school counselors and administrators need to know what the requirements are. High school coaches and off-campus coaches need to know. Parents and guardians need to know. There needs to be a process to make this happen. Core courses, grades, GPA, SAT and ACT testing are important parts of determining whether a kid can make it out of high school successfully academically or not. At the community college level we are seeing that the knowledge is pretty much not there across the board.

Better programs have more knowledge. Better programs have more coaches who are employed by the school districts fulltime as teachers where a bigger investment is made in the outcome of the student, the athlete and their education. We see less and less of that these days. We know that the character of the student-athlete is important, but so is the character and good will of school districts, those they employ, coaches, parents, guardians and community. It is our problem as a community and we need to fix this. Let’s get knowledge, let’s share information, and let’s open more doors to higher education.

My years of being involved in athletics and education have given me knowledge and insight. I'm a local San Leandro High School graduate. I played football and baseball in high school, in community college (Chabot), and in four-year college (Sonoma State) where I graduated with a BA in History. I played a few years in minor league baseball for the San Francisco Giants and the Milwaukee Brewers. Eventually I returned to San Leandro High School where I taught physical education and coached football. I've been coaching and teaching at Chabot now since 2003. My grandparents emigrated to the U.S. from Italy, I was the first one in my family to graduate from college, and I get it, I understand the need not only for education, but for mentoring and building support structures that will help student-athletes.



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Knowledge is Key to Success for College-Bound Student-Athletes

By Director of Track & Field/Cross Country, Kathleen Raske, Sacramento State University

I believe that it takes a team of people to help student-athletes get to college. This is important because there is so much information to know and be educated about in order for a prospective student-athlete to even be in a position to be recruited and have opportunities. The process, rules and requirements can be overwhelming for any aspiring high school athlete and their parents or guardians, so it is important to have guidance from someone that understands the process. Even high school counselors, if they don't have experience going through the process, need help in understanding the process and guiding young athletes academically throughout high school. Therefore, it is crucial to catch the student-athlete as early on as possible in the education pathway.

After coaching for 21 years at four different NCAA four-year Division I institutions I have come to firmly believe that it's all about academics first and talent second when it comes to generating opportunities to play at the NCAA Division I level. A great combination of both is going to open many doors, but if a prospect doesn't get cleared through the NCAA Eligibility Center and doesn't meet the NCAA's academic criteria, then they likely won't get recruited or be eligible to play at the Division I or II level right away.

The most success in finding opportunities at four-year institutions I have observed over the years are prospective student-athletes (PSAs) with parents or others that are knowledgeable and involved in the process. Those that do not have this level of immediate support need people to help them along the way such as extended family, coaches, teachers, mentors and not-for-profits geared to assist youth.

1. **Take the right courses and get good grades in high school.** It is crucial to be well advised on meeting the NCAA standards. Parents and guardians must get involved and sit down with the student's guidance counselor and go through the worksheets for the core course requirements needed to be NCAA Division I or Division II eligible.

2. **Be careful to listen to the right people.** I've so often seen PSAs not get advised accordingly, and/or think they have met all requirements, but still end up short. Do at least some of the research and work yourself and get involved in the process. Take ownership as a PSA!
3. **Take initiative in introducing yourself to those universities/coaches you want to play for.** Go online, research their programs and fill out their recruit questionnaires. Be realistic and get your name out to many different levels of programs because you never know where you'll end up. Leave yourself with options and don't box yourself in.
4. **Know the most important factors in your decision making process.** Once PSAs know what's most important to them in choosing a school (what they want and what they need), then they can easily narrow down choices and focus on the universities that "match" what they want and need. For example, a PSA should not look out of region if the most important factor to them is to stay close to home; or a PSA should look for a program with a team concept approach if they really want to be a part of a true collegiate team vs. an individual type of approach; or a PSA should look for schools that offer particular majors of interest.
5. **Troubleshoot.** If a high school can give credit to a student who takes Algebra I in the 8th grade and post it on the high school transcript, it's a victory. We are seeing problems with Algebra I not counting as a core course because it's not listed on the high school transcript.

Sacramento State is committed to helping its student-athletes succeed once they have committed to the university and are participating on our team. Once here, our primary mission is to graduate our student-athletes. The level of support is very high and starts immediately once a PSA is signed/verbally committed. Constant communication to the PSA regarding deadlines and checklists is provided to help guide them along the process to make sure all is complete (orientation, placement exams, document deadlines, etc.). We meet with the incoming student-athletes at orientation in the summer to make sure they are taking the right classes and are being advised properly by our academic counselors. Sacramento State has a staff of five full time academic counselors that work on behalf of our student-athletes throughout the year. They are located in our Student Athlete Resource Center (SARC). The SARC offers a full realm of support comparable to any other Division I program in the nation.

Once the student-athlete gets to a four- year institution of higher education the level of support is high to ensure their academic success, however not at the absence of self-discipline and responsibility on the student-athlete's part. We are here to help as much as they are willing to work to help themselves. This rings true also at the high school level. Student-athletes must work much harder than in years past to meet tougher and tougher NCAA academic standards.

Next steps....

Once PSAs are deemed a "recruitable athlete" at the Division I level based on their talent AND academic eligibility they can take the next steps in the recruiting process. The internet is a great resource to get familiar with NCAA recruiting rules via the NCAA website, or sometimes a school's athletic department website. Make sure PSAs are knowledgeable about the rules surrounding unofficial and official visits, calls, contacts, etc. They should start early in their junior year by making unofficial visits to campuses of interest. This can be very helpful in deciding what they're looking for and what's important to them. Connecting with a potential future coach to make a determination on compatibility and match is critical. Know the right questions to ask and don't hesitate to ask them.

Every coach will try to put their “best foot forward” and talk about the positives of their program, but be aware that all programs are not equal and can differ very much in overall philosophy and management of their teams. I enjoy it when recruits ask me great questions regarding my program. It also tells me a little about them. Also, talk with several current student-athletes about their experiences in a college program and if possible talk with their parents or guardians as well.

I hope that each aspiring prospective student-athlete finds assistance in the process of recruiting and eligibility. There are so many opportunities out there in all sports at all levels. I believe that being a collegiate student-athlete is a once in a lifetime experience that will positively shape the future of that person’s development as a productive member of any society or nation. Best wishes in all your pursuits!



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Programs and Pathways to Help Student-Athletes

By Women’s Basketball Assistant Coach Jesse Clark, Saint Mary’s College

As a college basketball coach I am hearing about kids deciding earlier and earlier on that they will be going to college. While I am not sure as to the viability of kids making this decision before their junior year of high school, I do feel that because these potential college student-athletes have their love of sport to be a motivating factor to put themselves on the pathway to higher education, it is a realistic goal. Unfortunately, not every potential college student has athletics as a vehicle to put them on this pathway. As a result the pathway to college for many kids can be a limiting experience.

The NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, *Education*, and Human Development says “there are a host of possible explanations for the limited college pathway knowledge, and these include the varying degrees of complexity of the college/university system (depending upon the host country), language factors, and unfamiliarity with university education (depending upon the educational attainment of the family members). Schools, the most likely information site, often fail dismally to provide information to immigrant parents and students.”

Here is what Saint Mary’s College is doing to help kids have a chance to be successful college students.

Since 1973, the High Potential (HP) program at Saint Mary’s College has welcomed students into higher education who would likely not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college. The HP program is designed to meet the needs of first-generation, low-income students as they transition into Saint Mary’s. Each year an average of 40 students are admitted into the program after completing the application process. The HP program is open to all first-generation (neither parent has a college degree), low-income (Pell-grant eligible) students who have been admitted to Saint Mary’s.

HP students begin their college experience with a two-week residential summer bridge program where they take college level courses preparing them for the rigors of Seminar, Composition, and mathematics. Students live on campus and follow an intense schedule to prepare them for the rigor of college level work. Working with faculty, HP staff, and peer mentors (upper division students trained to work with HP students), HP students receive individualized academic support, personal and socio-cultural support, and an introduction to the campus resources available to them while at Saint Mary's.

As a college coach for the past 15 years I have had the opportunity to have mentoring relationships with a diverse group of young people. While the love of playing basketball is certainly a driving force behind their desire to attend college, for many playing basketball it is the means to paying for a college education they would otherwise be unable to afford. Regardless of the motivation, the student-athletes that have taken advantage of these college degrees have entered into the post-education world highly skilled in both their career and life. Employers seek out former student-athletes because they already have a proven ability to balance heavy academic and athletic responsibilities. This skill development is being used by young people whose pathway to college was a bit less slippery than those who were not involved in the vehicle sports provided them.

There are many ways that a young person's pathway to higher education can be made more stable. One idea that is very interesting comes from Canada's Stay-in-School Initiative, Pathways to Education. This 10 year-old social enterprise seeks to create higher education opportunities by giving teens entering the 9th grade in ten different cities the opportunity to break out of the persistent cycle leading to being stigmatized as "high school drop-outs."

The Pathways program does represent a new departure. It's designed to be a grassroots "bottom-up" mentoring and tutoring program bridging the gap between school and real life for teens. Instead of raising school standards, testing students and tightening discipline, or the extreme of firing the teachers as in Central Falls, RI, the formula is quite simple. Students entering grade 9, at age 14, are offered a \$1,000 tuition scholarship for every grade they pass. Upon graduation they earn \$4,000 in tuition credits enabling them to continue their education.

The Pathways formula has, so far, achieved incredible results. Free after-school tutoring, mentoring, bus tickets to school, and the tuition scholarship have driven down dropout rates in three of Toronto's most troubled communities: Regent Park, Lawrence Heights and Rexdale's Jamestown. How did it get off the ground? After its initial success in Regent Park, the Toronto business community and the United Way took notice. A 2006 Boston Consulting Group report lauded its record in reducing dropout rates and attracted serious donor interest. The business and university community have rallied the cause, and Nova Scotia's power utility, Emera, has coughed up \$400,000 over four years to kick-start fundraising.

This idea of communities investing in a young person's academic achievement at the junior high and high school age with programs such as PATHWAYS is not dissimilar to parents who have the means to invest in their children's sports talents by paying for them to have personal coaches and play on travel teams so that college coaches can offer them college scholarships. Programs such as Pathways create opportunity for higher education and with the research showing that by 2013 up to 70 per cent of all new and replacement jobs will require post-secondary education we simply cannot afford to ignore this problem any longer.

It is exciting to see a movement being created to generate ideas to help our future and our future is our young people. I am proud to be a part of this movement as a college coach.



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SportsHopes Updates

SportsHopes is building a Videos page on www.sportshopes.org

Local high school and community college varsity student-athletes who have worked with SportsHopes can have one sports highlights video posted per varsity sport. Assistance and services are provided to student-athletes free of charge. For more information email: joliver@sportshopes.org

SportsHopes is now connected to Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/people/Jennifer-Oliver/1746949986>

2010-2011 NCAA Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes (includes worksheets):

<http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CB11.pdf>

NCAA Recruiting Calendars:

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Issues/Recruiting/Recruiting+Calendars/Recruiting+Calendars>

NCAA Glossary of Terms:

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Issues/Recruiting/recruiting+glossary+of+terms#period>

Important timelines (also, please view Get Started page on www.sportshopes.org):

Seniors -

- + Apply now via regular admissions pathway to a variety of colleges you are interested in.
Should you not get recruited via the athletic pathway you may have an opportunity to walk-on.
- + Take your final SAT and/or ACT test and two SAT Subject tests by November (December at latest).
- + File for FAFSA - Free Application Federal Student Aid starting January 1 or ASAP: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- + Keep working to improve your grades and your sports stats (and you may need a highlights video).
- + Keep reaching out to introduce yourself to college coaches via email, phone, online recruit forms, visits.
- + Try to obtain unofficial visits (easier to obtain) and if possible, official visits (more difficult to obtain).
- + Finalize and sign-off on your NCAA registration by spring.

Juniors -

- + Take SAT and/or ACT test and two SAT Subject tests, and make sure you have needed core courses.
- + Keep working to improve your grades and your sports stats (and you may need a highlights video).
- + If you have a D or F in a core course re-take course in summer school; or online if DII and a non-lab.
- + Reach out to college coaches via email, phone, online recruit forms and introduce yourself.
- + Create a professional email address you will use only for your student-athlete college pathway needs.
- + Register with the NCAA by spring.



Jennifer Oliver
- Founder

SportsHopes is a high school to college pathway student-athlete support all-volunteer nonprofit public benefit corporation organized for public and charitable purposes.
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The mission of SportsHopes is to help high school and community college student-athletes move forward to four-year colleges, play the sports they are passionate about in college, stay in college and graduate from college.

Castro Valley – Hayward – San Leandro – San Lorenzo
and neighboring communities in the Greater S.F. East Bay Area