

# SportsHopes

## Highlights

a Tiny Publishing

Spring 2013

### *High School to College Pathway Student-Athlete Support*

[www.sportshopes.org](http://www.sportshopes.org)

Hello Community!

With many lessons learned and experiences gained from the past year we move forward and grow! SportsHopes was awarded 501c3 status by the U.S. federal government and state of California in 2012. Also in 2012 we improved fundraising by staffing concession stands as nonprofit workers at Oakland A's baseball games, Oakland Raiders football games and this year we'll add Shoreline Amphitheater events.

With the good comes the tough....A tough economy that continues to wreck havoc with California public and private educational K-12 institutions and colleges. New methods of saving school districts money are enabled such as pay-to-play programs where high schools ask student-athletes and their families to make a contribution per student-athlete, per sport, per season, in order for the student-athlete to participate in sports. A recommendation of \$350 for football, \$325 for baseball/softball, \$275 for soccer and \$225 for track & field/cross country are realities today. While noted contributions may not be mandatory they can cause a negative effect on families who are reluctant to ask for financial support from their school, and instead make the decision to not have their child (or children) participate in sports, which can eliminate a potential pathway to four-year colleges for that child. On the positive side communities do rally, raise funds and donate to aid in the preservation of diversity of programs and pathways. Where we once saw 100+ student-athlete football players on the sidelines of high school football games today that number has dwindled on many campuses, but with continued support and concern by communities to retain sports and fitness programs in schools hopefully we'll see numbers increase. We have to do our part.

On the community college side funding cutbacks are evident as seen by reduced numbers of courses available as well as reduced numbers of academic counselors available to assist student-athletes. Last year a number of student-athletes advised that their coaches had either helped them register for classes or that coaches had actually chosen the classes and completed the registration, and that an appointment with an academic counselor was too difficult to obtain with the soonest appointment months away. For some student-athletes this may not cause too much of a challenge, but for others who have family backgrounds with little or no higher education history, knowledge or support, it can be damaging to their pathway to a four-year college and to their NCAA student-athlete eligibility status. Also, school transcripts loaded with D's, F's and W's (withdrawals), or loaded with sports-related courses and not academic transfer eligible courses, or student-athletes needing four years to move forward from a two-year community college to a four-year college leads to the question: How does it go so wrong? These student-athletes practiced and competed in a sport for two years on a community college team under the umbrella of an academic institution. They were made use of in their sport but not properly assisted in their academics. Without one you are not supposed to have the other. While the student-athletes may be 17, 18 or 19 year-old young adults that does not mean they don't need help to stay on track. They do need help. There needs to be more accountability on the part of the educational institutions, more early warning triggers to identify academic deficiencies, easier and more frequent access to academic counselors, improved training to coaches about academic requirements, and agreements with student-athletes that explain academic requirements, tutor/counselor/support systems and hold regular reviews.

*We all need to do our part to help young people move forward in a positive direction.  
They are the future.*

~ JO

*Diversity of Peoples, Programs and Pathways....*

**High School and Community College Student-Athletes**

*Watch them go and grow!*



Top row L-R: **Congrats to DJ Jones** (Bishop O'Dowd HS > Menlo College Football); **Taylor Hollis** (Newark Memorial HS > Soka University Soccer & Track); **Zach Tucker** (Dublin HS > Pacific University Football); **Alex Foster** (Castro Valley HS > City College of S.F. Track > Baylor University Track); Mid row L-R: **Sasha Wallace** & Mom Jamelle (Castro Valley HS > University of Oregon Track); **Nijae Jones** & Mom Marla (San Leandro HS > UC Berkeley Track). **Working hard to get to four-year colleges:** **Anthony Viveiros** - Castro Valley HS > Laney Community College Football [www.hudl.com/athlete/1815491/highlights/29163376](http://www.hudl.com/athlete/1815491/highlights/29163376) **Dom Gomes** - Bishop O'Dowd HS Football [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG\\_fjDrKBIQ&list=UUrC-UlteBBx4oKivYWcX\\_5A&index=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG_fjDrKBIQ&list=UUrC-UlteBBx4oKivYWcX_5A&index=1) **Ben Davis** (middle) - Castro Valley HS > Merritt Community College Track & Field 47'1.5" TJ & 21'8" LJ; Bottom row L-R: **Ryan Fritsch** - Foothill HS Varsity Baseball (pitches strikeouts) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4GQxQcHBrl> ; **Ray Carvalho** - Castro Valley HS Club/Travel Baseball (pitches strikeouts) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pB9PNxfS0M> ; **Christian Carter** (middle) - San Leandro HS Track 48.52 400meters; **Mendelssohn Vargas** - Tennyson HS Cross Country <http://www.athletic.net/crosscountry/Athlete.aspx?AID=2662973> & Track <http://www.athletic.net/TrackAndField/Athlete.aspx?AID=2662973>



**Academics & Athletics, a Perfect Pair!**  
**Working hard to get to four-year colleges...**  
**You have to want it. I want to go to college. Get busy!**



Top row L-R: **Jake Mitchell** - Castro Valley HS tri-sport <http://www.athletic.net/TrackAndField/Athlete.aspx?AID=4069677> ; **Johnny Garcia** - San Leandro HS > Chabot CC & Hastings Football [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl0FwwGUpMw&feature=youtu.be\\_gdata\\_player](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl0FwwGUpMw&feature=youtu.be_gdata_player)  
**Juan Emanuel Morales** Mt Eden HS > Chabot CC XC/Track 16:19 5k, 15:58 3.0, 4:23 1500m, 4:32 mile, 9:32 3200m, 2:07 800m.  
**Victor Andrews** - San Leandro HS > Chabot CC Football <http://www.hudl.com/athlete/745951/victor-andrews#.T0QmqoF3ljs.email> (Mid L-R)  
**Nate Moore** - Castro Valley HS Track 48'6" TJ & 24'7.75" LJ <http://www.athletic.net/TrackAndField/Athlete.aspx?AID=2913128>  
**Cate MacGregor** - Amador Valley HS Swimming 500 Fr SCY 5:15.70 [collegeswimming.com](http://collegeswimming.com) and [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org) ; Moreau Catholic twins **Breana Pearsall** & **Cristina Pearsall** both soccer & softball [www.maxpreps.com/athletes/6wK4kyFTRE2fUpXRHzTm2A/girls-soccer-winter-12-13/profile-breana-pearsall.htm](http://www.maxpreps.com/athletes/6wK4kyFTRE2fUpXRHzTm2A/girls-soccer-winter-12-13/profile-breana-pearsall.htm) and [http://www.maxpreps.com/athletes/FVbYtwGYHUSVgJ18au\\_jig/softball-spring-12/profile-christina-pearsall.htm](http://www.maxpreps.com/athletes/FVbYtwGYHUSVgJ18au_jig/softball-spring-12/profile-christina-pearsall.htm) ; **Ronald Sims** Castro Valley HS Track applied to numerous colleges and is training hard to prepare for 2013 track season;  
**Kortni Smyers-Jones** and Mom Katrina & **Gabriella Cantrell** and Mom Velma. San Leandro HS dynamic track & field teammates:  
**Kortni** (SR) track and field events <http://parser.dyestat.com/search.jsp?athID=218803> ;  
**Gabriella** (JR) track events [http://parser.dyestat.com/search.jsp?sort\\_type=season&eventSearch=null&athID=181012](http://parser.dyestat.com/search.jsp?sort_type=season&eventSearch=null&athID=181012)



*Work Hard, Stay Focused, Be Humble, Share Knowledge and Have a Great Time!*



Dash, Alyssa, Jimmy, Marzetta, Daniel Families, BriAnna, Terry, Jerry, Chase, JO, Dave, Ron, Cameron, Dash, Diana, Sherie, Trina, Donna (& JO), Wanda (& JO), San Leandro Breakfast Club, Castro Valley and San Leandro Unified School Districts, Aramark Concessions (Raiders and A's games) and Cotteco Ewaste, THANK YOU for your help and support with educational and fund-raising events! - JO

My parents instilled a very important concept in me starting at a young age: Always have a vision for where you want to go in life. Life is far more rewarding when you have a plan for what you want to do, rather than if you just go through the motions. To this day at the age of 21 and midway through my final and fourth year in college, I'm still on the path that I set forth while in middle school with the goal to become a sports and entertainment lawyer. This isn't to say that at one point I didn't also want to pursue a career in sports as a football wide receiver. When you possess determination and drive anything is possible, especially as an athlete. On days where talent levels the playing field it is crucial to have an inner drive to keep pushing yourself forward to your goal. I cared more about my goal of becoming a lawyer than my goal of becoming a professional wide receiver, so I chose the former over the latter. I continue to push myself everyday with a vision of where I want to take my life, and because of this all obstacles along the way become much easier for me to handle.

Not only is vision an important factor for deciding your future, but you also need skills to get there as well. The great thing about skills is that they can be developed by anyone. No one wakes up one morning with the ability to score a basketball like Kobe Bryant, throw a football like Tom Brady or hit a baseball like Albert Pujols. With any skill it takes practice. As many times as you've probably heard the phrase "practice makes perfect" it really is the truth. There are no shortcuts to success. Only hard work will help you realize your vision. *Hard work involves the development of certain skills that will help your talents increase exponentially if practiced to perfection.* Three skills at the top of my list are consistency, patience and discipline; however there is an often forgotten skill that holds an equal value on the pathway to success. That skill, which I want to explain why it is so valuable, is networking.

As the old saying goes, it's not always about what you know but sometimes about who you know. Let's take the case of two different superstar athletes. The first is loved by all his teammates. He takes the time to reach out and help everyone on the team, regardless of if they're a starter or a benchwarmer. He takes advice from all the coaches to improve his game and even trains with superstars from other teams to learn from them. Now the second superstar has gotten to a point in his career where he thinks nobody can teach him anything anymore. He selfishly works for himself, by himself, and doesn't listen to advice from his coaches or teammates. In his mind, he doesn't need any help to get to his goal for success. Think about these two athletes, because we all know two people who are like this in real life. Who do you think is going to go farther? Obviously the first superstar will reach his goal a whole lot easier based on his willingness to help others and get help from others. Networking is the key to accelerating your learning curve and realizing your dreams. Now that you know why it's important, let me show you some basic steps on how to do it as well.

*The best way to go about networking is to treat every new encounter as a friend you just haven't met yet.* Those who have a humble mindset understand that they can learn something from those around them. When you possess this mindset too, you find the value in reaching out to others to get better at your craft. As an athlete this should make plenty of sense. Most if not all coaches have already been in your position. This is why they are able to help you improve your skills and have plenty of advice to offer. A simple way to network is to find the best person in your particular sport or profession and ask to train with them or shadow them for a day. Not only will they respect the fact that you sought them out for advice, but the special ones will go out of their way to make sure you succeed as well. When your time with them is completed ask if they know anybody else who can help you on your journey to success. More times than not these simple actions will help grow your network which in turn will help grow your chances to reach your dreams.

Follow-up is critical to the long-term success of networking. Stay on top of your connections and try to stay in touch with as many people as you can over time. You never know if a high school teammate could be the same person who provides a recommendation to you for a job opportunity, or puts you in contact with the head coach of a team you've always wanted to play for. There are many ways to reach out to a large network of friends in order to stay in contact with them, and one of the easiest ones I know of is Facebook and the practice of social networking.



For the average person who doesn't have numerous hours each day to dedicate to Facebook an easy way to impress your friends, associates and acquaintances is to search Facebook for birthday dates and other events often shared by friends. Go above and beyond by sending a happy birthday text or by making a happy birthday phone call. These small gestures of kindness can translate into big things in the future. When you satisfy people's need to feel special and show that you care about your relationships more doors will open to you on your pathway to success. Along the journey to reach success in life is an essential step and important decision: to go to college.

College is the best opportunity to make connections while chasing your dreams. It's definitely not easy considering the academic workload, the increasing responsibilities you shoulder, living on your own, balancing a hectic personal and school schedule all while trying to manage a growing social network. There are a lot of moving parts that go into a successful experience but in the end it's all worth it. To those in high school who read this, never limit yourself to the college you think you can attend. A phrase I've carried with me for a long time is, *"Aim for the stars, because if you land on the moon you're still doing ok."* The higher you set your sights the higher the goals you will in turn reach. Never sell yourself short because with the right skills you can accomplish anything. That mindset propelled me to obtain a college education and continues to push me towards my goal of becoming a sports and entertainment lawyer. Now I'm not a special person, but I do work hard to get what I want out of life. Even if you have no idea right now what you want to do with your life, start with a small goal of what you want to accomplish in the next month and don't stop until you reach it. College offers hundreds of opportunities to reach your goals and grow, and one of them that I cherish the most is studying abroad.

Probably my most rewarding experience in college was studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain, during the second semester of my third year of college. Most if not all accredited four-year universities offer students the opportunity to take a semester (sometimes even a year!) to further their studies in another country. As I headed into college this was one opportunity I was not going to miss out on. I ended up choosing Barcelona because I wanted to visit a Spanish-speaking country, visit Europe and still stay aligned with my career goals. Barcelona offered all of the above because the particular program I was accepted into was a pre-law honors program. I enjoyed everything that Barcelona had to offer during the four months I was there. The people, food, beaches and exciting attractions were amazing and just some examples of the Barcelona culture. By the time I came back to America not only was my Spanish far more proficient but I also had more appreciation for the little things in life and an overall larger global perspective. I understand for the collegiate student-athlete it's more difficult to make studying abroad a reality because of the time commitment to a sport. However, if given the opportunity I recommend studying abroad for everybody in college as a way to broaden your horizons and grow.

In the search for success in life, everything that happens along the journey happens for a reason. It's up to you to make the best of every situation. If you have a vision towards where you want to go in life you should be making progress everyday towards that goal or goals. No shortcuts, no cheating, just determination, discipline and hard work. When you add the power of networking to this equation success becomes that much more attainable. The more connections you create for the long term the greater of a person you have the potential to become. I didn't understand this until I got to college but it really is the truth, and thanks to studying abroad I have friends in numerous countries now who I plan to stay in touch with for a long time. *Whatever your specific dreams are, never stop working until you reach them and make use of your team of connections to help you get there.*



**Jimmy Woodard**

[j.wood@berkeley.edu](mailto:j.wood@berkeley.edu)

Legal Studies - Class of 2013 - UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

- Will work for a law firm for one year prior to law school
- Vice President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Head Facilitator - Intro to Leadership & Organizational Dynamics
- Fitstaff worker at the UCB Recreational Sports Facility
- SportsHopes Founding Student-Athlete Mentor
- Castro Valley High School graduate - Class of 2009
- In high school earned a 4.2 GPA and 2170 SAT
- Co-Speaker at high school graduation ceremony
- Three-sport varsity athlete in high school: football, basketball and track & field

## NCAA Eligibility Rules Change (Things You Need to Know!)

by Curtis Taylor

*Per the NCAA: "College-bound student-athletes first entering a Division I college or university on or after August 1, 2016, will need to meet new academic rules in order to receive athletics aid (scholarship), practice or compete during their first year."*

NCAA eligibility requirements are getting tougher, no doubt about it. Student-athletes who started high school in Fall 2012 and plan to graduate in Spring 2016, take notice, these changes apply to you. To be a DI **"Full-Qualifier"** where you can practice, compete and/or receive an athletic scholarship you must have a minimum core course GPA of 2.3 (instead of previous 2.0), and you must complete at least ten of the required 16 core courses *prior to start of senior year* (7<sup>th</sup> semester of high school). Of the 10 core courses seven must be English, Math or Science courses. Grades earned in those 10 courses are "locked in" at start of senior year which means if you need to re-take a course to improve a grade you must do so prior to start of senior year. You must also meet the tougher sliding scale grade point average to SAT/ACT score, and you must GRADUATE from high school. Student-athletes entering a DI program as first-year **"Academic Redshirts"** can practice and/or receive an athletic scholarship (but not compete), must have a minimum core course GPA of 2.0, must meet a (lower) sliding scale GPA to SAT/ACT score and GRADUATE from high school.

The complete NCAA 2012-2013 Guide for the College-bound Student-Athlete (includes DI and DII core course worksheets, eligibility requirements and sliding scale graphs, etc.) can be found here:

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

Community college student-athletes who plan to transfer to a DI program must have a GPA of 2.5 and must earn an AA degree prior to transferring to a four-year college. The NCAA 2012-2013 Transfer 101 Guide can be found here:

<http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/TGONLINE2012.pdf>

In addition, there are a number of circumstances that can be confusing and create a lack of understanding among student-athletes with regards to various eligibility processes and statuses:

### **Grey-shirting:**

There are two definitions of "grey-shirting". Type one occurs when an athlete is eligible to gain entrance to a college/university but is not eligible with regards to the NCAA Eligibility Center requirements. Example: When a student-athlete does not have the required 16 core courses or their GPA is high but their SAT/ACT score does not match to the sliding scale. Their grades/test scores may be good enough to be admitted to the school, but not good enough to participate in a sport. Some NCAA coaches may advise that a student-athlete can come into their school, sit out a year (Grey Shirt) and then participate the following year, but it is more complex than that. Coaches can help a student-athlete get into school, set-up their schedule, etc., but as soon as the student-athlete comes onto campus they (the coaches) cannot legally contact the student-athlete, cannot allow the student-athlete to practice with the team, cannot coach the student-athlete and cannot allow the student-athlete to be on the same field, track, court, pool, etc., when the team is there. The student-athlete has to train on their own, study on their own and in general receive no assistance.

In addition, the student-athlete must earn a 2.0 GPA and pass 24 academic units in order to be eligible to participate on the team the following year and receive assistance that was promised when an LOI (Letter of Intent) athletic scholarship contract was signed. Lastly, if graduation is not earned within four years the student-athlete will lose a year of eligibility (participate for only three years) if a degree is not obtained within four years. Normally a "full qualifier" with no academic restrictions will be given five years to complete four years of sports participation with no graduation requirements.

The second type of grey-shirting applies to football. The student-athlete signs an LOI but for whatever reason the college/university decides that this athlete will be better for the team NEXT season and decides to grey-shirt them. At this point the college/university recommends that the student/athlete either attends a community college part-time, or attends the college/university but takes less than a full load (less than 12 units) of classes and then starts as full-time status the following season. This way the NCAA eligibility clock hasn't started and the student-athlete can obtain the lost year back. Unfortunately, the rules mentioned in Type One also apply in Type Two, with no contact with coaches or team, no practice or coaching and no athletic scholarship money, etc.

### **Scholarship Reductions:**

Legally you cannot have your scholarship reduced unless you do things that break the rules of the team, the school campus or the community-at-large. Coaches may threaten to, and actually do, reduce athletic scholarships on a regular basis. The truth of the matter is they can ask you to take a reduction, but you don't have to agree to it. Before you sign the yearly scholarship renewal papers, if there is a "reduced" scholarship, talk with the school compliance officer before you sign and see what your options are, otherwise once you sign it is too late to change.

Scholarship reductions and grey-shirting happen more frequently than one would expect.

***Athletes need to know their rights and know the rules!***

My 27 years of coaching has taught me a few important things in this area. First, the odds that you will become a professional athlete or make money in the athletic arena are very, very slim. *This means that you should make a college decision based on an academic, social and physical environment rather than an athletic one.* Even though you may obtain an athletic scholarship in the sport you compete in the schools are always looking forward and recruiting someone else to replace you each year. They are looking for the best person they can get and if that person is better than you he/she will take your place.

Second, *all money is not good money.* Just because a school offers you a scholarship, even if it's the only one, it may not be in your and your family's best interest to go there. The goal of a high school student-athlete should be to do the academic work required to be able to attend a college of your choice, and not attend a college just because it chooses you. Obviously, everyone cannot attend Stanford or Harvard, but you should have a moderate list of schools that you are interested in attending. If one of the schools on that list offers you a scholarship, great! Having an athletic scholarship and being a student-athlete is like having a full-time job while going to college with a full-time load of classes at the same time. It would be very hard to do all of this if the only reason you were doing it was for the money.

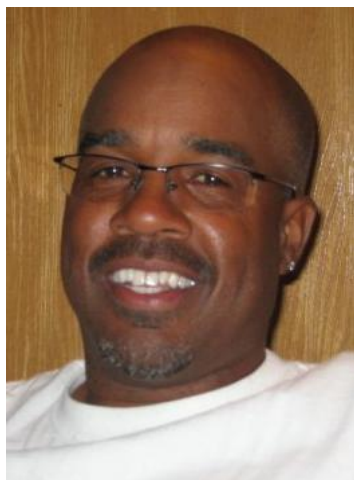
As a safety net, also apply to a number of colleges as recruitment by college coaches is not always guaranteed. A few colleges should be ones you are sure you can get into, a few should be colleges you think you can get into and a few should be reaches. Also, apply for financial aid during senior year of high school (FAFSA, Cal Grant, CSS Profile, etc.) to be prepared to pay for your college education.

Third, get the education you want. Many colleges/athletic programs will tell you that the major you are interested in is too difficult and recommend you switch to an easier major. Schools are now governed by the APR (Academic Progress Rate). Each program has to graduate a certain percent of their student-athletes within a five year period or risk losing future scholarships or other sanctions, so recommending easier majors improves their chances of that. Insist on the opportunity to give your best shot to the major you desire. If it doesn't go well then consider a change in majors, but don't let someone bully you into taking classes or a major that you have no interest in just because it will keep you eligible or it's easier.

Your only trade-off for your athletic skills is to get an education. That's the deal. You work hard as a student-athlete for them and they are supposed to provide an education for you. *Make sure your academic needs are met first* because at the end of the day after the cheering and accolades have stopped it is the education that's going to get you through the rest of your life.

**Remember, the strongest and best advocate for you is you!**





**Curtis Taylor**

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Head Coach  
Women's Track & Field  
Laney Community College  
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<http://www.laney.edu/wp/athletics/track/>

Head Track Coach  
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Oakland, CA

## **SportsHopes Updates**

### **GET STARTED: The Basics**

(upcoming presentations)

April 10, 2013 Wednesday, 6:30pm  
GEAR UP (federal grant college pathway program)  
San Leandro High School, San Leandro, CA

April 11, 2013 Thursday, 6:30pm  
College Night (college pathway program)  
Castro Valley High School, Castro Valley, CA

View a past presentation: [http://www.sportshopes.org/?page\\_id=788](http://www.sportshopes.org/?page_id=788) (Presentations are free of charge.)  
We welcome opportunities to share high school to college pathway knowledge with student-athletes.

**GET STARTED: The Basics** (action list) [http://www.sportshopes.org/?page\\_id=478](http://www.sportshopes.org/?page_id=478)

**Student-Athlete Application for Assistance:** [http://www.sportshopes.org/?page\\_id=493](http://www.sportshopes.org/?page_id=493)

**SportsHopes welcomes new Student-Athlete Mentors:** [http://www.sportshopes.org/?page\\_id=23](http://www.sportshopes.org/?page_id=23)

**GOALS – Looking Ahead:** Increase number of high school to college pathway presentations; purchase a portable projector and screen; develop a sport-specific athletic shoe donation program for high school and community college student-athletes in need; assist with pay-to-play fees for student-athletes in need at schools in need; apply for grants; continue to learn, share knowledge and grow SportsHopes!



Jennifer Oliver  
Founder, SportsHopes  
[joliver@sportshopes.org](mailto:joliver@sportshopes.org)

**SportsHopes** is a high school to college pathway student-athlete support all-volunteer 501c3 nonprofit public benefit corporation organized for public and charitable purposes.

Assistance is provided to high school and community college student-athletes free of charge.

***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, graduate from college, work towards a career and obtain self-sufficiency.***

SportsHopes, PO Box 21146, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Contact us: [http://www.sportshopes.org/?page\\_id=29](http://www.sportshopes.org/?page_id=29)

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