



EN GARDE

The NCAA Fencing Recruiting Playbook

A Step-by-Step Guide for High School Fencers
& Their Families

From Freshman to Senior: How Fencers Navigate the Recruiting Process

Presented by

Admission-Bridge

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How to Use This Guide

This guide is your game plan. Every chapter is built around one thing: ACTION. Not theory. Not vague advice. Action.

Each chapter ends with an actionable game plan checklist. Read a chapter with close attention to detail, complete the steps, and check off boxes.



For Athletes

- Read Chapter 1 before 9th grade starts (or right now)
- Complete the game plan action items at the end of each chapter
- Take notes, ask questions, and do your own research
- Keep a recruiting Google Drive folder to organize all of your materials
- Start early so that you will have more options down the road
- Set your own goals instead of following the herd



For Parents

- Read along as this process affects your calendar and budget too
- Encourage your student to explore and decide on their athletic direction
- Let your athlete lead the outreach because coaches want to hear from the athlete, not the parent
- Provide emotional, financial and logistical support
- Chat with other parents without pressuring your kid



The Golden Rule

The recruiting process rewards athletes who are proactive. Coaches at top programs expect fencers to show interest in fencing for their teams. This guide shows you exactly how.

 CHAPTER 1

Know the Landscape

Before you can get recruited, you need to understand what you are being recruited into. College fencing has rules. If you do not know it, you will waste time chasing the wrong schools.

The Three Divisions

NCAA fencing is divided into three divisions. This guide focuses on recruiting pathways to top D1 and D3 programs, the most competitive athletically and academically. Here is the quick breakdown:

Division	Div I (D1)	Div II (D2)	Div III (D3)
Competition Level	Most intense	Competitive	Balanced with academics
Athletic Scholarships	Yes, some teams (not Ivy schools)	Yes, limited	No, academic merit or need based only
School Examples	Columbia, Penn State, Notre Dame, Stanford	Wayne State (the only D2 fencing school)	JHU, Vassar, MIT, NYU
Roster Size	~20-30 athletes	~20-30 athletes	~15-25 athletes

Parent Insight

D1 scholarships sound glamorous, but D3 academic scholarships at elite schools can actually be worth more money. Do not dismiss D3 schools, JHU, MIT, and NYU have produced outstanding scholar athletes.

What Weapons Do You Fence?

College teams recruit by weapon: foil, épée or sabre. Know your weapon and understand how it fits into a college roster.

 Weapon Facts	 Recruiting Impact
• Foil: Target torso only, right of way rules apply, most commonly taught beginner weapon • Épée: Target whole body, no right of way, pure blade work • Sabre: Target above the waist, fast and explosive, right of way rules apply	• Ask coaches directly which weapons are high priority for their upcoming rosters • Leverage unique traits like left-handed sabre to instantly boost your recruiting value • Be aware coaches occasionally ask fencers to switch weapons to cover roster gaps

The Numbers You Need to Know

~21 D1 Men's Fencing Programs	~15 D3 Men's Fencing Programs	~27 D1 Women's Fencing Programs	~16 D3 Women's Fencing Programs
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Your Chapter 1 Game Plan

 Chapter 1 Checklist
☐ Identify your weapon (foil, épée or sabre) and commit to it
☐ Look up 10 schools you might be interested in and note their division
☐ Find each school's fencing program website and learn everything about the team
☐ Check if target schools are D1, D2 or D3
☐ Start a Google sheet to track schools, coaches and contact info
☐ Ask your club coach, "Am I on a D1 or a D3 track?" "What do I need to do to reach my college fencing recruiting goals?"

 CHAPTER 2

Build Your Athletic Profile

Coaches recruit results, not a promise of “my kid is really dedicated.” They want athletes who get along with teammates, show up to training, tournaments and fundraising events, and ultimately fight to win for their school teams.

What Are USA Fencing Ratings and Ranking Systems?

USA Fencing uses a rating system from U (Unrated) to A to classify fencers based on competition performance and skill level.

Historically, college coaches identified top junior recruits using the National Rolling Point Standings (NRPS). With USA Fencing transitioning to a Unified Points system, both systems will coexist for several seasons, and coaches may reference both The Legacy Points List and The Unified Points List when reviewing a fencer’s competitive standing.

- **A Rating:** Elite level for top D1 recruitment
- **B Rating:** High level for second-tier D1 and top D3 recruitment
- **C Rating:** Mid-level for lower D1 and second-tier D3 recruitment
- **D & E Ratings:** Developing level for lower tier D3 recruitment
- **U Rating:** Entry level for tournament advancement

 Hot Take

Aim for the top 20 on the rolling point standing list of your class and weapon. Fencing recruiting works like a game of musical chairs. Top program coaches take their picks first, then the remaining spots go to less competitive schools. The music does not stop till all spots are filled and offers are accepted in the senior year. So, do not give up hope until the coach says, “We are done this year.”

Key Tournaments That Get You Noticed

Not all tournaments are equal. Coaches specifically watch results from high visibility events.



Must-Do Tournaments

- **Cadet & Junior World Team Trials:** Fencing on the world stage earns athletes top priority from elite programs searching for international-caliber recruits.
- **Summer Nationals:** This flagship July event provides the highest overall recruiting exposure of the entire season with heavy coach attendance.
- **Junior Olympics (JOs):** Most college coaches closely watch bouts at this key winter championship to track target recruits and spot rising talents.
- **North American Cups (NACs):** These national events attract college coaches who regularly review results and watch live strip performance.
- **Super Junior & Cadet Circuits (SJCCs):** These tournaments serve as vital steppingstones to secure national rankings that draw coach interest.
- **Regional Circuits (RJCCs & ROCs):** Fencers with strong regional results elevate their national qualification status required for major showcase events.
- **High School State Championships:** Success at the state-level competitions shows coaches that you thrive in high-energy and team-first competitive format.
- **Collegiate Style Invites:** These specialized meets offer unique and close-up opportunities for hosting college coaches to evaluate fencers.

Your Fencing Resume

Every recruit needs a one-page fencing resume. Think of it as your athletic highlight reel on paper.

Contact Info	Name, email, phone, graduation year, high school name
Weapon & Hand	e.g., Right-handed Foil / Left-handed Épée
Current Rating	Your USA Fencing rating (A/B/C/D/E) + year earned
Tournament Results	Top finishes at FIEs, Summer Nationals, JOs, NACs, SJCCs, RYC
Club & Coach	Your club name, city, head coach name and contact
Academic Stats	GPA (unweighted or weighted per transcript), SAT or ACT
Awards & Honors	Academic awards, team captain, All-American, etc.
Video Link	YouTube or Google Drive link to your highlight reel (see Chapter 5)

Your Chapter 2 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 2 Checklist

- ☐ Register with USA Fencing (usafencing.org) to fence if you have not already
- ☐ Focus on getting a USA fencing rating and enter your first rated tournament
- ☐ Map out the next 12 months of tournaments you will attend
- ☐ Create your fencing resume using the template above
- ☐ Film higher level pool and DE bouts for your recruiting video production later
- ☐ Set a rating goal for the end of sophomore year (aim for C or higher for D1 interest)
- ☐ Start a tournament results log: your placement, event name, date, location

 CHAPTER 3

The Academic Game

Here is the thing that needs to be said loudly: colleges recruit STUDENTS who fence, not just fencers. Your grades and test scores are not an afterthought. They are part of your recruiting package.

NCAA Academic Eligibility Rules

 Important — Read This Carefully

To compete in D1 or D2, you must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (eligibilitycenter.org). You cannot take official college visits without an NCAA ID number. Do not wait. Registering early ensures you meet all academic rules to compete in your freshman year.

 NCAA Eligibility Requirements (D1)

- Graduate from high school
- Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses
- Meet the 10/7 core-course progression rule
- Earn a minimum 2.3 core-course GPA
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (eligibilitycenter.org)

What GPA Do Top Programs Actually Want?

Here is the honest truth about most top fencing schools, even though their bottom lines may not be publicly shared:

3.9+ Ivy League avg GPA	3.5+ Most D1 programs	3.0+ Minimum D1 eligibility	1450+ SAT target for Ivies
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 The Real Talk

At schools like Columbia, Princeton and Harvard, your fencing can 'tip' an admissions decision, but your academics still need to be in range. A 2.8 GPA will not get you into Stanford, even if you are an A-rated fencer. Both matter.

Ideally, take 5 core subjects for all 4 years and try to get all As.

Building Your Academic Profile

✓ Do This

- Take most rigorous courses offered at your school (APs, IBs)
- Aim for above a 3.5 unweighted GPA minimum
- Take SAT or ACT early, spring in junior year at the latest
- Take AP exams with confidence after taking AP courses
- Build relationships with teachers for great recommendation letters

✗ Avoid This

- Wait until senior year to worry about grades
- Skip APs or IBs to save time for fencing
- Take only one shot at SAT or ACT
- Let your grades drop during tournament seasons
- Assume athletic ability compensated for weak academics

Your Chapter 3 Game Plan

✓ Chapter 3 Checklist

- ☐ Register at NCAA Eligibility Center early
- ☐ Map out your 16 required core courses across 4 years of high school
- ☐ Set a highest GPA goal without sacrificing your mental and physical health
- ☐ Sign up for the PSAT or preACT in 10th grade and get a feel for the SAT or ACT
- ☐ Plan your SAT or ACT test dates, aim to take either first time in the fall of junior year
- ☐ Identify 2-3 junior year teachers to write strong recommendation letters for you
- ☐ Review academic requirements for your top 5 target colleges

 CHAPTER 4

The Recruiting Timeline

What is the biggest mistake recruits make? Starting too late. College coaches are building their rosters years in advance. By the time you are a senior, many D1 spots are already filled.

 Reality Check

Some D1 coaches make unofficial offers to top recruits early in the process. If you wait until 11th grade to start reaching out, you may already be behind for the most competitive programs.

In reality, many fencers begin training years before high school and have already built strong competitive reputations by the time recruiting starts.

Year-by-Year Roadmap

 9th Grade — Build the Foundation

- Get your USA fencing rating, enter as many rated tournaments as you can
- Start your fencing resume (even if it is thin)
- Research about 20 college programs that interest you
- Create a free profile with the NCAA Eligibility Center
- Focus on grades, every semester counts
- Attend local and national tournaments to earn unified points

 10th Grade — Gain Momentum

- Compete at JOs and Summer Nationals if qualified
- Begin reaching out to D3 coaches (see Chapter 5 for email template)
- Attend a college camp or clinic to be seen in person by coaches
- Take PSAT or preACT when your school offers one
- Narrow your college list to about 10-15 target schools
- Improve your rating, aim for B or higher by the end of 10th grade

 11th Grade — The Critical Year

- Maximize actions for this most important recruiting year
- Compete at Summer Nationals and JOs, where your results matter A LOT
- Make official contact with ALL coaches after **June 15 before junior year**
- Prepare for interviews with coaches, sometimes with teammates as well
- Take SAT or ACT, and retake if needed to meet target score expectations
- Send high school transcript to coaches for academic pre-read when asked
- Plan campus visits (5 free D1 official visits if invited)
- Receive unofficial offers from coaches (not binding, but exciting!)
- Attend summer college fencing programs for last chance coach exposure

 12th Grade — Sign and Commit

- Finalize commitment with your chosen program coach
- Notify other coaches and thank them for their interest and time
- Submit college application, often through Early Decision (ED)
- Sign the National Letter of Intent (NLI) with a D1 university
- Obtain a Likely Letter from an Ivy League or an elite college
- Maintain your academic and athletic performance to keep your offer
- Receive official college acceptance and announce it proudly
- Confirm your scholarship and financial aid package
- Stay connected with your future coach and teammates

Important Dates to Know

Per NCAA rules, coaches are not allowed to contact recruits till certain dates. Mark these dates in your calendar so that you can execute your plans timely.

 Key Dates

- **Anytime in High School:** Communicate with D3 coaches at any point
- **Jun 15 (After Sophomore Year):** Contact D1 coaches via email, text or phone
- **Aug 1 (Before Junior Year):** Interact and interview with D1 coaches in person
- **Nov 1-15 (Senior Year):** Submit your ED application before college deadline
- **Oct-Nov (Senior Year):** Secure Ivy League Likely Letter or sign NLI
- **Mid-Dec (Senior Year):** Receive official university acceptance notification

Your Chapter 4 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 4 Checklist

- ☐ Create a professional email address if you do not have one
- ☐ Update your coach contact Google sheet with columns: school name, coach email, cell phone, interaction status, coach response, next step
- ☐ Study each target school's program website, read fencers' bios in your weapon and learn about their pre-college achievements to see fit
- ☐ Group your interested colleges by your recruiting chances: Likely, Possible, Reach
- ☐ Sort these schools by tentative dates to send materials to coaches
- ☐ Budget enough time (weeks if not months ahead) to prepare materials for contacting coaches, including cover email, resume and video
- ☐ Use Google calendar to mark when to send out materials to coaches
- ☐ Record coaches' responses in Google sheet and follow up with coaches promptly
- ☐ Fill in athletic questionnaires on colleges' websites
- ☐ Ask your club coach to chat with college coaches about your interest before you are allowed to contact them

 CHAPTER 5

How to Contact Coaches

This is where most recruits completely drop the ball. They either never reach out, or they send a terrible email that gets ignored. You are going to do better.

 Key Rule

Coaches want to hear from YOU, the athlete, not your parents. When a parent emails instead of the athlete, it is a red flag. You need to own your recruiting process.

The First Email Template

Here is a cover email template. Use your own language to articulate your strong interest in fencing for a particular team.

Subject: Your Name | Graduation Class | Weapon | Rating

(Example: Karen Zhang | Class of 2028 | LH Women's Epee | A26)

Dear Coach [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name] and I am a [grader] at [High School] in [City, State], graduating in [year]. I fence [weapon] for [Club Name] under Coach [Coach Name], and I am very interested in [University Name]'s fencing program.

In this paragraph, really demonstrate your understanding of the team and the school. [University Name] stands out to me because of [specific reason: major, academic program, team culture, campus]. I would love to learn more about the team and what you look for in recruits.

I have attached my fencing resume. My highlight video is here: [video link]. I will be at XXX fencing event. If you are there, I would like to meet with you to learn more about your program.

Thank you for your time! I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Email]

[Phone]

Do's and Don'ts of Coach Communication

✓ DO

- Use professional email address (firstname.lastname@gmail.com)
- Proofread carefully to avoid mistakes, especially coach name
- Personalize each message with specific reasons for liking the school
- Follow up after two weeks if there is no response
- Send updated resume with improved results after major national tournaments
- Be polite, grateful and enthusiastic to show respect to coaches' time

✗ DON'T

- Use cringe email address like 'fencer2009swag@...'
- Let parents write message instead of doing it yourself
- Send copy-paste email with no personalization
- Send it and forget it
- Contact coaches daily, which feels annoying rather than dedicated
- Exaggerate results or rankings
- Ghost coach who has shown interest, always respond

Building Your Highlight Video

Your highlight video is your visual resume. Coaches watch hundreds of these. Make yours easy to watch and impressive from the first 30 seconds.

📺 Highlight Video Guide

- **Length:** Keep video to 3–5 minutes MAX because coaches prefer shorter videos
- **Order:** Place most recent best performances first
- **Focus:** Showcase clean touches, tactical sequences, and recovery points
- **Content:** Use an **uninterrupted section of a DE bout** to show athleticism, strategic thinking and tenacity, plus a few highlight clips of best moments
- **Quality:** Ensure clear visibility, OK with decent phone camera, and absolutely NO background music
- **Event label:** Choose readable font and text color to name each event, such as 2026 July Challenge, top 8 DE
- **Intro and closing screens:** Put your name, weapon, rating and class year on the intro screen, and Thank You on the closing screen
- **Host location:** Upload video to YouTube or Google Drive and share link with coaches
- **Updates:** Refresh video after achieving each major improved result and resend the link to coaches

Your Chapter 5 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 5 Checklist

- ☐ Write your first personalized cover email using the template above
- ☐ Complete your resume (see Chapter 2) and convert it into PDF file
- ☐ Create your recruiting video (see Highlight Video Guide above)
- ☐ Edit your highlight video and upload it to YouTube or Google Drive
- ☐ Organize all material for coaches: cover email with attached resume and video link
- ☐ Start with sending materials to coaches of most likely schools to gain coach contact experience in communications and interviews
- ☐ Practice interviews again and again: adjust lighting for remote interview, use body language, facial expressions, tone and voice volume to project confidence, and ask thoughtful questions to show your maturity and intelligence
- ☐ Send materials to your top choice school coaches and arrange meetings or interviews at JOs and Summer Nationals
- ☐ Email thank you note to coach within 24 hours after each interview
- ☐ Set reminder to follow up in 7 days if no response
- ☐ Update coaches with any major fencing or academic achievements
- ☐ Reach out to college team members to establish positive connection

 CHAPTER 6

Campus Visits & Official Offers

You have sent the emails. Maybe you have had some calls with coaches. Now it is time to visit. Campus visits are where recruiting gets REAL, and where athletes and families often make the most important decisions.

Two Types of Visits



Official Visit

- Receive official invitations from D1 coaches after August 1 before junior year
- Use up to 5 total official visits across all D1 schools, extremely rare
- Enjoy school-funded travel, lodging, meals and campus activities such as attending major NCAA events
- Meet coaches and team members, watch practices, and tour facilities
- Impress coaches and team members by being open, sharp and engaging



Unofficial Visit

- Schedule visits with D3 coaches and teams at anytime
- Arrange visits with D1 coaches and teams after Aug 1 before junior year
- Contact coaches to meet, tour facilities, and watch team practices
- Plan your own visit agenda: meetings, tours, timing and activities
- Pay for all travel, lodging and meal expenses personally
- Show strong interest by visiting coaches and teams, important to coaches

What to Do on a Campus Visit



Visit Checklist — Make the Most of Every Trip

- Meet with the head coach and assistant coach if possible
- Spend time with current fencers to hear their honest perspectives
- Tour athletic facilities and fencing training space
- Watch practice if coach allows it
- Observe team culture: spirit, cohesiveness and competitiveness
- Take notes to avoid forgetting details after visiting multiple schools
- Register for admissions info session and student-led tour
- Visit the academic department(s) you are interested in
- Eat in the dining hall, walk around the campus, and feel the vibe

Questions to Ask Coaches

Come prepared. Coaches respect recruits who ask thoughtful questions. Here are some examples:

? Questions for the Coach

- What qualities do you value most in your athletes?
- How do you build team culture and resolve conflicts?
- What does a typical practice week look like?
- How does the team balance academic demands with competition travel?
- Do you support fencers competing at non-NCAA national events?
- What other academic and athletic support is provided for student-athletes?
- How many spots do you have in the class of [your year]?
- At this time, where do I fit in your recruiting plan for the class of 20XX?
- What timeline should I expect for your recruiting decisions?
- Will you be supporting my application? If yes, in what way?
- Do you offer financial aid to athletic recruits?

Understanding Unofficial Offers

Unofficial Offer — What It Means

An unofficial offer is when a coach tells you in person or via email, “We want you on our team!” It is NOT binding on either side. The coach can rescind it. You can decline it. Nothing is official until you either sign the National Letter of Intent (NLI) or receive the official acceptance letter from the college.

When you receive an unofficial offer, keep these best practices in mind:

Responding to an Unofficial Offer

- Thank coach sincerely and ask for time to decide (some coaches only give a few days before moving on to the next candidate, the musical chair game is still on)
- Ask coach to confirm any verbal offer via email so you have a record
- Clarify academic and athletic expectations for both you and the program
- Continue your other campus visits if you are not committed yet
- Discuss with your family before making any decisions
- Do NOT commit to multiple schools simultaneously because coaches talk and it could jeopardize your chance of going anywhere

Your Chapter 6 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 6 Checklist

- ☐ Schedule at least 2 unofficial visits to your target schools
- ☐ Research fencing facilities and team records of each school you will visit
- ☐ Prepare a list of 8-10 questions to ask the coach
- ☐ Take notes on every visit to capture your impressions
- ☐ Follow up with a thank you email to coach within 24 hours of every visit
- ☐ Be professional when accepting or declining each unofficial offer
- ☐ Create a comparison chart for schools about academics, fencing program, scholarships and campus feel for decision making

 CHAPTER 7

The Money Talk

Let us talk about everyone's favorite subject: paying for college. This chapter is for athletes AND parents because it affects the whole family.

Types of Financial Aid for Fencers

Aid Type	What It Is
Athletic Scholarship (D1/D2)	Coach-allocated grants based on athletic performance, typically distributed as small partial awards (unavailable at Ivy League and D3 schools)
Academic Scholarship	University-funded awards based on GPA, test scores and other academic achievements, offered primarily at non-Ivy D1, D2 and D3 institutions
Need-Based Financial Aid	Income-based financial assistance determined by FAFSA/CSS Profile filings, with top Ivies and D3 schools covering 100% of demonstrated need
Merit Aid	Admissions-driven institutional discount based on overall student profile and family financial strength to incentivize enrollment
Department or Program Scholarships	Program specific academic awards based on declared major, research achievements or specialized academic projects

 The D3 Secret

Most D1 fencing programs operate on a partial scholarship model, meaning coaches divide their funding across the roster. An excellent D3 school like NYU or Brandeis might offer \$40,000+ per year in merit or need-based aid, sometimes MORE than a partial D1 athletic scholarship. Always compare net costs, not sticker prices.

Your Chapter 7 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 7 Checklist

- ☐ Submit FAFSA on the earliest possible opening date during your senior year
- ☐ Complete CSS Profile form if your target schools require it
- ☐ Calculate net price (not sticker price) for each school using their Net Price Calculator
- ☐ Ask coaches, “What financial aid do your fencers typically receive?”
- ☐ Compare financial aid offers side-by-side before making your final decision
- ☐ Appeal directly to financial aid office for additional aid if your family's financial situation worsens, allowing your parents to take the lead on this one
- ☐ Understand scholarship renewal conditions, including minimum GPA, athletic obligations and competition expectations

 CHAPTER 8

Making Your Decision

You have done the work. You have competed, emailed, visited, and maybe even received offers. Now comes the hardest part: choosing the right school for YOU.

The Decision Framework

Do not just pick the most prestigious school or the biggest scholarship. Here are the factors that actually matter for long-term happiness:

 The 5 Factors That Matter Most

1. **Academics:** Does the school offer the best fit program in your intended major? Will you earn a degree that prepares you for a meaningful career? Is the academic environment collaborative or cut-throat?
2. **Fencing fit:** Will you compete during your freshman year or sit on the bench? Does the program align with your athletic goals, such as making national or Olympic teams?
3. **Culture:** Will you vibe with the team and student body at large? Are they overly social, hyper-focused on academics, or healthily balanced? Can you see yourself spending four years with these people?
4. **Finances:** What is your actual out-of-pocket cost? Is it sustainable for your family over four years?
5. **Location & campus:** Can you see yourself living here when you are not training or studying? Do you like the surrounding city or town, the climate and the general campus environment?

 The Test

Imagine you get injured freshman year and cannot fence for a full year. Would you still be happy at this school? If the answer is no, reconsider.

When Coaches Put Pressure On You

Some coaches may try to rush your decision. Keep an eye out for these signals:

● Red Flags

- Coach wants your answer by tomorrow.
- Coach pressures you to cancel other campus visits.
- Coach refuses to email the offer when asked, or worst, ghosts you.
- Coach has no answers for your questions and makes no effort in finding out.
- Current athletes on the team seem evasive when you reach out.

● Green Flags

- Coach gives you reasonable time to decide.
- Coach encourages you to visit other schools.
- Coach emails your offer voluntarily or send one quickly when asked.
- Coach follows through on promises and provides needed support.
- Team members were eager to help and share their insights.

How to Decline Schools Gracefully

When you choose one school, you have to close the door on the others. Do this with class, the fencing world is small.

Sample Decline Email:

Dear Coach [Name],

Thank you so much for your time and interest in recruiting me over the past [months/years]. After careful consideration with my family, I have decided to commit to [School Name]. This was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made.

I have tremendous respect for you and your program, and I hope to compete against your team in the future. Thank you for believing in me!

With gratitude,
[Your Name]

Your Chapter 8 Game Plan

☒ Chapter 8 Checklist

- ☐ Create a comparison chart and rank all serious schools across your key factors
- ☐ Have a family meeting specifically about finances and your priorities
- ☐ Make a final visit to your top 1-2 schools if you are still undecided
- ☐ Ask coach, “Where do you see me fitting in the lineup as a freshman?”
- ☐ Make your decision and commit wholeheartedly, mentally and emotionally
- ☐ Send your decline emails to other coaches within 48 hours of committing
- ☐ Announce your commitment! Post it. Celebrate it. You earned it.

 CHAPTER 9

After You Commit: The Bridge Year

You have committed, congratulations! But the work is not over. It is just shifting focus. Your senior year is your last chance to train without college pressure. Use it wisely.

Stay Sharp, Stay Humble

Senior Year Priorities

- Maintain your competition schedule because coaches watch their commits at major tournaments
- Protect your training routine to avoid showing up to college out of shape
- Keep your grades up to prevent the admissions office from noticing major drops and canceling your athletic scholarship
- Stay in touch with your college coach by emailing them after major tournament results
- Connect with your future teammates on social media or messaging apps
- Research your college's academic expectations and close gap if there is any

Serious Warning

Coaches CAN and DO rescind offers if a recruit's grades drop significantly or they have a conduct issue. Senior year still counts. Do not coast.

Prepare Your Mind for the Transition

Going from being a high school star to a college freshman is a mental challenge. Most recruits are the best fencers on their high school teams or in their clubs, then they arrive at college and suddenly they are just one of many outstanding athletes. It's normal to feel like a small fish in a big pond. Give yourself time to adjust.



Mindset Shifts to Make

- Recognize that you may no longer be the best and trust that you will grow faster
- Listen to your college coach, even if it contradicts your old coach.
- Ask for help early, do not wait until you are struggling
- Practice hard and stay humble to earn respect quickly
- Develop your identity beyond fencing and build the whole you.



Logistics to Handle

- Confirm financial aid and scholarship paperwork in summer
- Register for fall semester classes as soon as you are able
- Connect with your academic advisor whenever possible
- Know the team's pre-season reporting date and what to bring
- Prepare your fencing gear for shipping early, do not scramble

Your Final Game Plan



Senior Year Final Checklist

- ☐ Continue training through the summer
- ☐ Attend at least one major tournament after committing
- ☐ Send your college coach a quick update after every major result
- ☐ Submit your college admissions and financial aid acceptance forms on time
- ☐ Research and plan your freshman class schedule to balance academics, training and social life
- ☐ Set a physical fitness goal to hit before freshman year begins
- ☐ Write a personal thank you note to your club coach, school counselor and teachers who helped you get here
- ☐ Ask your parents how many hours they have spent traveling with you to events, watching you fence, and having their hearts almost jump out when you were battling at 4-4 or 14-14, then give them a BIG hug and say thank you

 CHAPTER BONUS

Your Recruiting Resources

Essential Websites

- [NCAA Teams and Coaches](#) – NCAA fencing teams and coach contact info
- [NCAA Fencing For Prospective Student Athletes](#) – USA Fencing NCAA fencing recruitment rules
- [USA Fencing](#) – USA Fencing membership, point standing lists and national tournament calendars
- [Points List Explanation & Tables](#) – USA Fencing point standing ranking lists
- [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) – NCAA Eligibility Center registration for D1, D2 & D3
- [Fencing Time Live](#) – Live tournament results
- [AskFred](#) – Local and regional tournament listings
- [FencingTracker](#) – Fencer progress and strength statistics and analysis

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This guide was created by Karen Zhang at Admission-Bridge, built on her professional athletic recruiting training and years of experience working with fencers. Feel free to share it with students, families, fencing clubs, chat groups and schools.

Feedback and correction suggestions are welcome at karen@admission-bridge.com and will help shape future editions published by Admission-Bridge. For the newest edition, visit admission-bridge.com/resources.

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College fencing recruiting rules and practices change regularly. Always verify current requirements directly with program coaches and admissions offices.

Admission-Bridge shall not be held liable for any student's recruitment or admissions outcomes.



You've Got This.

Every Olympian started as a beginner.
Every college fencer started by sending one email.

The strip is yours. Now go take it.

Admission-Bridge

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