

# TEEING IT UP FOR COLLEGE



## HOW TO PURSUE A COLLEGE GOLF CAREER

**A** Golfer girls already understand many of the benefits of playing the great game of golf. The friends we make, the time we spend with family on the course, and the thrill of competition are all excellent reasons to love the game. But for some girls, the biggest reward is a college education funded (or subsidized) by playing on a college golf team.

There are many important components to building a successful college golf career, but the most important is DESIRE. Certainly, there are many considerations, but ultimately, this decision is too important to be made for anyone but yourself. You are the one who will be putting in early morning workouts, attending long practice sessions and playing 36-hole days, so be sure it's what you want. If you feel like this commitment is not for you, there are still ways to keep golf as a priority in your life.

There are university intramural golf clubs, golf curriculums like Professional Golf Management, and summer tournament schedules to keep you in the game!

Once you have decided that college golf is right for you, you need to assess your strengths and identify the schools and programs that FIT. There are scores of college golf programs out there for just about every junior player. Find an advisor, mentor or golf professional that can give you an honest assessment of what schools may be good fits for your level of play. Try attending local women's college tournaments in your area to get more insight. And don't forget, it isn't only your golf game that needs to fit. You also need to consider your academic needs, the size of the school, the coaching philosophy, your personality, and your social needs. Your list of potential colleges should have at

least forty schools on it. You do not want to get in a situation where you have marketed yourself to only three or four programs only to find out spots are filled on those teams!

The final essential component is related to fit, but has to do with what you offer to a golf program. **MARKETING** will tell the colleges on your list why you are a good fit for them. Don't wait for coaches to call you. Prepare a simple, well-documented marketing packet that includes a letter of introduction expressing your desire, a resume, academic documentation, and reference letters. Some junior golfers even include a swing video in their packet. If you think such a video will help market your talents, ask your golf professional to help you with this important filming. Remember, you have to work hard to promote yourself... this is no time to be shy!

## HIGH SCHOOL TIMELINE TO PLAY COLLEGE GOLF



### 9TH GRADE

Grades, grades, grades! Your education should be your top priority. Work to improve your grade point average, get tutoring help if needed. Take advanced placement courses if possible. Create good study habits. And balance the academics with a tournament schedule that fits your goals of college golf.

### 10th GRADE

Begin compiling a college list. Go local women's college golf tournament. Family vacations and tournament trips provide great opportunities to visit programs. Visit the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for important recruiting guidelines. Document your tournament finishes as well as yardage, slope, weather conditions, etc. Keep a file of academic awards, golf accomplishments, community service and other activities. All of this information will assist you in preparing a meaningful resume.

### 11th GRADE

Work on your resume. Include academic information first. Most coaches want only current golf scores and awards. For accomplished players, your marketing packet should be sent out at the beginning of this school year. Investigate grants and non-athletic scholarships in your area to further help with your college expenses. Work closely with your high school guidance counselor to make sure you have the correct number of accredited classes for NCAA rules. Go to [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for more academic information. Register for the NCAA clearinghouse at this time if you plan on playing Division I or II golf. Go to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) for more info.

### 12th GRADE

Your application process begins now and visits take place. You are allowed one official visit per

college and up to five official visits to NCAA Division I and II schools. Have a list of detailed questions ready to ask the coach on your visit. Spend time with the team, ask questions, and see an academic advisor on campus during your visit. Your final decision is so important. Make sure the school, location, size, degree programs, and golf program fit your personality and needs.

## COLLEGE ASSOCIATIONS AND DIVISIONS



### NCAA DIVISION I

This is one of three membership divisions in the NCAA, often comprised of large colleges and universities that consider girls with national tournament experience. Your high school grades are a very important determining factor if you wish to qualify for play in this division. Go to [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) to learn more about academic requirements, ACT/SAT requirements and more.

### NCAA DIVISION II

This is a second membership division of the NCAA, committed to promoting education and athletics. This membership division offers very competitive programs and great fits for golfer girls who want a balance between quality academics and quality golf and, generally, includes small private colleges as well as large public research universities.

### NCAA DIVISION III

This final membership division of the NCAA does not award golf scholarships. However, great competitive programs do exist. Financial aid is often available from private grants, scholarships, and academic aid within the school. In this division, you are likely to find smaller colleges devoted to exceptional degree programs with golf coaches devoted to balancing academics and the athletic experience. Recruiting rules are more relaxed in this division with more opportunities to talk to these coaches earlier in your high school career. Check out [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for Division III guidelines.

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is an association of schools separate from the NCAA. Go to [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) to learn more. You can transfer from one NAIA school to another without penalty and there are fewer recruiting restrictions in the NAIA. You will typically find small, close-knit communities on the NAIA campus. There is no clearinghouse in this association.

## NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Junior College programs are offered at two-year schools, perfect for the developing player as well as the accomplished national golfer. Golf scholarships are offered at a number of these colleges and some of the top players in the world began their careers in this association. In the NJCAA you are likely to find small schools with smaller class sizes and often ideal golf training programs and facilities. Go to [www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org) for more information on this exciting program choice.



## IMPORTANT WEBSITES

- [www.straightshotinc.com](http://www.straightshotinc.com)
- [www.collegegolf.com](http://www.collegegolf.com)
- [www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org)

*Betty Baird Kregor, founder of Betty Baird Kregor Golf Instruction Inc. (out of the Cardinal Club in Simpsonville, KY), was a nine-time Kentucky PGA Junior Champion and the 1974 Junior World Champion Girl's 13-14. As owner of Straightshot Inc. College Athletic Advisors, Betty helps junior golfers and their parents in the often stressful college search. She and husband Mark have four busy children: Maggie (22), a walk-on women's golf team member for three years at University of Alabama; Baird (20), a baseball player for Indiana University Southeast; Mollie (13), who enjoys showing saddle-bred horses; and Paige (11), a competitive tennis player.*



Betty Baird Kregor