

another high school. Before approaching college coaches, you need to have a good idea of BOTH your academic and athletic levels.

By spring of your junior year, you should be ready to begin the final steps in the testing process. Don't wait to sign up for your exams. Get an application from your school counselor in the fall, choose your date and send in the paperwork. This should assure that you would get your choice of testing locations. **THE BEST TIME FOR AN ATHLETE TO TAKE THE ACT or SAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IS IN MARCH OR APRIL OF THE JUNIOR YEAR.** If you take them earlier in the year, you may not have been exposed to some of the mathematics concepts that will be on the tests. If you wait to take them until June, you will not have your scores back in time to mention them to coaches at summer sporting events, summer college recruiting camps, or summer sports clinics. It will take three to six weeks to get the scores back. Athletes should be contacting coaches at colleges that interest them during late spring and early summer before their senior year. Expect the coaches to ask for your academic scores. Recently, there has been a strong backlash against athletes who are at risk academically. Coaches want to recruit players with solid academic credentials. The better your grade point and college entrance exam scores are, the more likely a coach will be serious about you. If you expect problems with your college test scores, do everything you can to raise your grade point.

The biggest mistake many athletes make is waiting until their senior year to take the college entrance exams for the first time. **DON'T WAIT.** You can take these tests as many times as you want. Most colleges will consider all your scores. For example, if your math score was higher on the April test but your English score was higher on your October test, many colleges will combine the highest math and English scores. Unless you are positive that you will be satisfied with your score, **DO NOT** have your scores sent to any colleges the first time you take the test. For a fee, both the SAT and ACT testing services will send you a copy of the test you took along with the answers you marked plus the correct answers. You may find this helpful in identifying areas of weakness to work on before you take the test again. Keep in mind that the mathematics on the tests covers the first three years of school. If math is not your best subject, **DO NOT** wait until October of your senior year to take the SAT or ACT.

After you have identified colleges that interest you, call and talk with those college coaches about your academic background. Be truthful about your abilities. Most will try to help in any way they can if they feel you are sincerely interested in their program. Some coaches can smooth the path with the college admissions office. Be blunt and ask if the coach thinks you will have any problem with the admissions process. You do not need to waste your time if there is no chance of admission. Think of the college testing process as a competition. The more you prepare and the harder you practice, the better your performance will be.