

Advice for being a Student Athlete

Submitted By Jason Fearing

I can't speak to shooting in college, at the time I went I wasn't interested in shooting and the school I went to didn't offer it. I did however go to a Division I tennis school (and played for 4 years) under a pretty nice scholarship package. So I hope that my below advice for being a "student athlete" will carry some merit:

- 1.) **The hardest part of the transition is going to be the first semester of your freshman year.** I experienced it, the guys before me experienced it and I watched 3 years of underclassmen behind me experience it. You'll need to find the right balance of classwork, practice, the college experience and finding the "right crowd" that you want to associate with on campus. Balancing those can be difficult at first but you always want to make sure your class attendance and time for homework does not suffer.
- 2.) **Several of my teammates valued "fun" over "getting work done" but still tried to fit everything in.** It never worked. My freshman year I was expected to play 3rd or 4th singles (out of 5) and because I prioritized having fun more than focusing at practice I rode the pine the first half of the season.

Once I got my head screwed on, I finished the season playing 4th singles. My coach made a few things very clear to me and the other incoming freshmen right out of the gate (he had been the men's coach for 19 years):

- He's not here to babysit us. We're to show up to practice when it doesn't conflict with our classwork and we're expected to be ready to play at practice with no distractions or "screwing around."
- Be upfront with him when you need extra time hitting the books. He monitored our grades but he didn't go over them with a fine toothed comb. If we needed to show up late or leave early for a student group or get some extra help he was 100% on board but he just wanted to know about it with as much advance notice as possible. He also expected us to make up for missed practice with our free time. So rather than going to the frat's Friday night bash, I would instead hit the weights or the track for an hour or so because I didn't log the same hours earlier in the week due to course work.
- Enjoy college, enjoy all the opportunities it offers you. But find the right balance and learn to

prioritize. For most student athletes their social life revolves around their team and/or their sport.

Often times your social life is an off shoot of that in addition to as 95% of us valued our commitment to the team as our #2 priority (behind class).

- 3.) **Get into a routine.** Most of us had morning classes as practice was 3-5:30pm everyday. Some of us would take a night class but most of it started at 8:00am and went to about 1:30-2:00pm and then headed to practice.

I wasn't a morning person so it took me a while to make sure I was awake enough in the AM to learn but still have enough energy at night (after practice) to put 2-4 hours in the library/study hall. This required a diet change, a sleep cycle change and most importantly the ability to remove distractions at night when I was in my dorm (girls, video games and beer runs). Thankfully my roommate was an athlete as well so we were on the same page some of my teammates were not so lucky and really struggled with fatigue as a result of this.



Congrats to 2012 Olympian Sarah Scherer who set an NCAA record with a 597 in smallbore in a showdown with the UTEP Rifle Team. She also tied the NCAA record with a 1,195 aggregate in leading the defending NCAA Champion TCU Women's Rifle Team to their 22nd consecutive victory.
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