



Finding a College Rifle Team

By Sommer Wood, CMP Program Coordinator

One of the most common questions that I hear from athletes and parents is how to find a college that offers a rifle team. This topic was first covered in On the Mark in March 2008, but the frequency of the question has led me to revisit some key points for those looking for a college shooting program.

First off I want to mention that there are several differences between rifle programs offered at the college level. There are NCAA programs, club teams and ROTC teams. The first of these options, NCAA programs, is where an athlete needs to look if they are interested in competing on a varsity level team, and have the potential to earn an athletic scholarship.

Club teams are just as the name implies, a club sport that is open to all students on campus. ROTC teams are for students involved in ROTC programs at their university. The depth of each team, the level of coaching and competition vary at each school and between the different divisions of shooting programs with NCAA being regarded as the highest level.

But before you start your college rifle team search, keep in mind that there are no professional contracts waiting for you beyond your college shooting career. Make sure you pick a school that offers the major you want to study because the statement, "You will most likely be going Pro" is something other than your sport. It is also important to mention that under NCAA rules, Division 1 rifle teams are allowed a total of 3.6 scholarships per year. The head coach decides how the 3.6 athletic scholarships are distributed among the team.

The chances are, the harder you work, the better

the scholarship, but a full ride is rare. The NCAA also has Division III rifle teams but they cannot offer scholarships. Support from club teams varies from school to school, and there are no athletic scholarships at the club level. ROTC offers their own support for helping students pay for school, which is separate from participation on a rifle team. The Civilian Marksmanship Program offers \$1000/yr scholarships to ROTC students who are members of a rifle team, NCAA, club or ROTC. For more information on these scholarships, visit <http://www.odcmp.com/Programs/Scholarship.htm>.

So what are a few good resources for finding college teams? Well the first web site that I recommend is <http://www.collegerifle.com>. This site is the home of the Collegiate Rifle Coaches Association and is the best link for keeping up with NCAA programs and even a few club teams. There are links

to different college team web sites where you can look up scores, stats and contact information. Some schools even have plans to post live scoring during their home matches this season, so you can watch teams compete from your home computer. Tracking a team's progress over the course of a season will help you decide on the program that is right for you.

Another great site for high school

students looking for a college shooting program is <http://www.nrahq.org/compete/coldir.asp>. This is the NRA's directory of competitive college shooting programs. This allows you to look-up individual schools or look-up schools within a state that offer shooting programs. The neat thing about this site is that you can find NCAA, club and ROTC programs, and you can even find other shooting disciplines like shotgun and pistol.

Classes are finally resuming at universities across the country, and soon the rifle competition season will begin. Take some time to look over the web sites listed in this article and follow the teams you are interested in competing for in college. It is one of the best ways to learn about the different programs.

The screenshot shows the NRA website interface. At the top, it says 'The NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION' and 'Monday, August 30, 2010'. Below that, there's a search bar and navigation links like 'NRAHQ Home' and 'Competitive Shooting Programs'. The main content area is titled 'COMPETITIVE SHOOTING PROGRAMS' and 'COLLEGIATE SHOOTING PROGRAMS'. It features a logo for 'COLLEGIATE SHOOTING' and text explaining that the NRA Collegiate and Schools Department manages all Collegiate & School Shooting Programs. It lists various programs including NRA Collegiate Rifle & Pistol Sectionals, NCAA Rifle Championships, NRA Collegiate Pistol Championships, NRA Intercollegiate Rifle Club Championships, ACUI Shotgun Championships, and Junior and Senior ROTC. There's also a section for 'NRA COLLEGIATE SHOOTING SPORTS DIRECTORY IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!' and a link to 'The current NRA All-American Teams listing and previous teams from 1936 is available for download in PDF format.' At the bottom, it mentions '2010 Collegiate Sectional Results (Fired January thru February)'.