

How to Build your Target College List

Student-Athletes usually have a couple of dream or reach schools in mind when they begin their recruiting journey. But the chances of those coaches recruiting their position and offering a scholarship might be fairly slim. That's why we tell every student-athlete to research several programs and build a school list to maximize their opportunities and find the best college matches.

Starting early in high school, student-athletes should begin to build their list of potential colleges. This college list should include 2-3 Safety Schools, 4-5 Target Schools and 2-3 Reach Schools.

Safety Schools: These are the schools where, based on your academic and athletic assessments, you would be easily accepted and you have on your list as a backup plan. If you were to get injured, the coach you want to play left the program, or any other number of problems, you need to make sure you have a plan for this. You should include 2-3 Safety Schools. Other criteria should include:

- ✓ You want to attend
- ✓ You have visited the college
- ✓ Your Athletic Assessment, feedback, stats recommendations exceed those of the Athletic Division and Program. An example of this would be your Athletic Assessment, feedback and stats point you towards a Division II Program, and the Colleges you List as Safety Schools are Division III Programs.
- ✓ You meet all the requirements for the *recommended* coursework
- ✓ Your SAT I score is **significantly above** the average that was accepted last year
- ✓ Your un-weighted GPA is **significantly above** the average accepted last year
- ✓ You have taken the average number of honors/AP courses
- ✓ The major you want is available and you have checked the graduation requirements
- ✓ You meet every requirement for admission and you submit a complete application before the deadline

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR SAFETY SCHOOLS:

- ✓ Your SAT scores are above the mid-50% range of SAT scores for that college. *If you have made some contact with the college, you are likely to be admitted.*
OR
- ✓ Your SAT Scores fit within the Mid-50% range of SAT scores for that college AND the college accepts the majority of its applicants.

You should include 2 to 3 Safety Schools on your list.

Target Schools: These are the schools where you have the most realistic chance of getting in and will be the right fit academically and athletically. You should include 4-5 Target Schools. Other criteria should include:

- ✓ You want to attend
- ✓ You have visited the college
- ✓ Your Athletic Assessment, feedback, stats recommendations exceed those of the Athletic Division and Program. An example of this would be your Athletic Assessment, feedback and stats point you towards a Division II Program, and the Colleges you List as Safety Schools are Division II Programs.
- ✓ You meet all the requirements for the *recommended* coursework
- ✓ Your SAT I score is **at** or **above** the average that was accepted last year
- ✓ Your un-weighted GPA is **above** the average accepted last year
- ✓ You have taken the average number of honors/AP courses
- ✓ The major you want is available and you have checked the graduation requirements
- ✓ You meet every requirement for admission and you submit a complete application before the deadline

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR TARGET SCHOOLS:

- ✓ Your SAT scores fit within the Mid-50% range of SAT scores for that college. You have an equal chance of being admitted *or wait-listed*. If you apply Early Decision, the odds are very strong that you will be admitted.

You should include 4 to 5 Target Schools on your list.

Reach Schools: These are schools that are a stretch academically and/or athletically. This is a school where you will need to improve significantly to qualify academically and/or athletically, or maybe it is going to be too expensive without significant financial or athletic aid. You should have these dream schools on your list, but recognize, it is going to be a stretch to make them happen.

- ✓ You want to attend
- ✓ Your Athletic Assessment, feedback, stats recommendations exceed those of the Athletic Division and Program. An example of this would be your Athletic Assessment, feedback and stats point you towards a Division II Program, and the Colleges you List as Reach Schools are Division I Programs.
- ✓ You meet all the requirements for the required coursework
- ✓ Your SAT I score is **at** or **about** the average that was accepted last year
- ✓ Your un-weighted GPA is **at** or **about** the average accepted last year
- ✓ You have taken the average number of honors/AP courses
- ✓ The major you want is available and you have checked the graduation requirements
- ✓ You meet every requirement for admission and you submit a complete application before the deadline

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR REACH SCHOOLS:

- ✓ Your SAT scores are within the mid-50% range for that college, but the college only accepts approximately 20% of its applicants. You are an appropriate applicant for this college, but admission there is always unpredictable.

OR

- ✓ Your SAT scores are below the mid-50% range of SAT scores for that college. You are not a strong candidate for this college, but it could be worth applying if you have a “hook” (such as being a legacy, recruited athlete or under-represented minority).

You should limit your list to 2 or 3 of this type of Reach College.

Reach, Safety, Target Worksheet

GPA	
Best SAT Critical Reading Score	
Best SAT Math Score	
Best SAT Writing Score	
Best ACT Composite Score	

What's Important to Me			
Major	Distance from Home	Climate	Setting
Cost	Level of Comp	Campus Size	Housing
Clubs	Food	Setting	Grad Rate
Practice	Extra-Currics	Visual Appeal	Class size
Tutors	Conveniences	Local Area	Social

College Name	Division	Ranking in Division – High/Mid/Low	Overall % of applicants admitted?	SAT Reading Middle 50% Average?	SAT Math Middle 50% Average?	ACT Combined Middle 50% Average?	Percent of applicants admitted?	Safety, Target Or Reach?	Notes