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Dear Parents or Guardian of Middle/High School Athletes

My name is Walter Davis and I have lived in the community of Carbondale for about 29 years. I have watched a lot of athletes come through the area but have always wondered why many of them didn't go to college or why many of them didn't go to a top Division I college. I would look at the athletes in this area and then look at other athletes that play at major Universities and wonder why these athletes here in this area who seem athletic and talented enough to play at that level, are not going to college.

As my daughters started playing at the high school level I wanted them to be prepared for college early. I knew they were good enough to play at the college level but was unsure about the steps to take to get them there. The old saying, "It's not about what you know but who you know that gets you in the door," is very true. I started hearing all this new information about NCAA Clearinghouse, the Fafsa, and the ACT, and was totally in the dark. I tried talking to the Guidance Counselors at the High School and other parents of various athletes about this material but it was like talking to a wall, they just didn't know. So my "who" in the old saying in the statement above became the Internet. I began to research about the NCAA Clearinghouse, the Fafsa, and the ACT and found some very interesting and beneficial information. And then I figured out why so many athletes in our area are not going to college or top Division I Universities.

After sharing my story with many professors while attending graduate school here at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and other parents of Middle School and High School athletes I decided to put a training program together to better prepare high school athletes for college. The training program covers three main areas:

- NCAA Clearinghouse, what it is, how to register, what core classes must be taken in high school to be cleared by the NCAA Clearinghouse to play at a Division I or Division II College.
- The Fafsa, how to apply to receive financial aid for college.
- The ACT, how to write specific college codes on the registration form to have ACT scores sent to colleges of athletes interest.

Upon researching this material and gathering this information for myself and my family the benefits have been, both my daughters have received full academic and athletic scholarships to go to college and still play a sport they love to play. Listening to Southern Illinois University Head Men's Basketball Coach, Chris Lowery talk to young athletes at the Dan Cross Basketball camp recently, he said, "The first thing he looks for in recruiting a player for his team is the player's eligibility. Has the player passed all the required core classes in high school to be eligible to play for his team?"

Basically if athletes don't have passing grades in high school then they won't be eligible to play at a top Division I or Division II college and therefore that's why many of them don't go to college or don't go play at a top University. This training program helps educate and inform parents, guardians, and athletes on the steps they need to take to be better prepared for college.

I will be constructing workshops and training sessions in the summer where this information and material will be available. Feel free to contact me anytime at the number or email address at the top and let's better prepare our young athletes for college and help them understand education is the key to success.

Thank you,

Walter Davis
Grad Student at SIUC and AAU Basketball Coach