

Kearns Water Polo

Tips on Playing Water Polo in College

- Many colleges have water polo programs. If you are interested in playing in college you can! No matter what your skill, talent, or experience level, there is something for everyone, if you are willing to look around and possibly go out of Utah.
- Your college search should begin with these questions:
 - What do you want to study? What profession do you want to go into?
 - What type of college (i.e., big, small, public, private, etc.) and do you have the grades and test scores to be admitted to that school?
 - Where (East, West, Midwest, etc.)?
 - How much money do you/your parents have available for college? Are student loans or other means of financial aid a possibility?
- Once you've narrowed your search based on the above answers, then look at which of those colleges offer water polo programs.
- There are several types of colleges that offer water polo teams:
 - NCAA/NAIA Varsity Teams.
 - Division I – These are the generally the best teams in the country. They are the only teams that can offer athletic scholarships in water polo. There are only about 20 Men's and 35 Women's colleges in the country in this division. Because of this, there are very few scholarship opportunities in water polo. The commitment level is very high, usually practicing 25-30 hours per week.
 - Division II and III – The level of play is generally not as high as DI, but many are just as good, just as well coached, just as well funded as DI. DIII schools pride themselves on making sure that academics is more important than athletics, and in some cases do not practice as much as DI teams for this reason. These are often the smaller, private colleges. There are about 20 Men's colleges and 30 Women's colleges that are DII or DIII.
 - The Men play in the fall and the Women play in the spring.
 - Junior Colleges - Two year colleges (like SL Community College). The level of play varies, but in California the competition is pretty similar to the DII and DIII teams. They receive funding from the school and have paid coaches like Varsity teams. There are about 60 Junior Colleges in California that have water polo teams. Both Men and Women JC's play in the fall.
 - Club Teams – The level of play is generally not as good as the above colleges, but the top few club teams are just as good as or better than some Varsity or JC's. Most practice 2-3 times per week. Most club teams are student run (one of the student players acts as coach), although a few do have volunteer coaches. There are currently about 130 colleges in the country that have Club teams and this number is growing fast. In Utah, the U. of Utah is the only school that has a club team. The Men play in the fall and the Women play in the spring. College Club water polo is administered by the Collegiate Water Polo Association (CWPA).

- DII, DIII, Junior Colleges, and Club teams can not offer athletic scholarships, but sometimes the coach can help in other ways like admission, help establish residency quicker, help locate housing, financial aid you might not be aware of, etc.
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 - Division I – These are the generally the best teams in the country. They are the only teams that can offer athletic scholarships in water polo. There are only about 20 Men's and 35 Women's colleges in the country in this division. Because of this, there are very few scholarship opportunities in water polo. The commitment level is very high, usually practicing 25-30 hours per week.
 - Division II and III – The level of play is generally not as high as DI, but many are just as good, just as well coached, just as well funded as DI. DIII schools pride themselves on making sure that academics is more important than athletics, and in some cases do not practice as much as DI teams for this reason. These are often the smaller, private colleges. There are about 20 Men's colleges and 30 Women's colleges that are DII or DIII.
 - The Men play in the fall and the Women play in the spring.
 - Junior Colleges - Two year colleges (like SL Community College). The level of play varies, but in California the competition is pretty similar to the DII and DIII teams. They receive funding from the school and have paid coaches like Varsity teams. There are about 60 Junior Colleges in California that have water polo teams. Both Men and Women JC's play in the fall.
 - Club Teams – The level of play is generally not as good as the above colleges, but the top few club teams are just as good as or better than some Varsity or JC's. Most practice 2-3 times per week. Most club teams are student run (one of the student players acts as coach), although a few do have volunteer coaches. There are currently about 130 colleges in the country that have Club teams and this number is growing fast. In Utah, the U. of Utah is the only school that has a club team. The Men play in the fall and the Women play in the spring. College Club water polo is administered by the Collegiate Water Polo Association (CWPA).

- DII, DIII, Junior Colleges, and Club teams can not offer athletic scholarships, but sometimes the coach can help in other ways like admission, help establish residency quicker, help locate housing, financial aid you might not be aware of, etc.
- Once you've narrowed your search, talk to as many people as possible, (i.e. your coaches, other players on that team that you know, players on teams in the same conference you know, etc).
- Email, write, or call the coach. Start communication as early as possible (sophomore, junior year in HS). This is not just if you're looking at a DI school.
 - The coach wants to communicate with you, not your parents. Put the athlete's name and class in the subject line.
 - Realize that there are certain times during the year that coaches cannot talk to athletes due to NCAA rules, depending on their division. Just because they don't reply doesn't necessarily mean they aren't interested in you.
- Check the school's website. Look at their roster, how many players on their team, who they play, game results, etc.
- Find out how often and how long they practice. If you're going to need to work while you go to college, make sure you're going to be able to make the time commitment of the type of program.
- Visit the school if possible. Meet the players and coaches. See if it has a good "feel" for you.
- Register with the NCAA Clearing House (for DI, DII, DIII) to make sure you have all the classes you need.
- Most of this work should be done during or before your Junior year. Most of the coaches want decisions to be made in the fall/early winter of your Senior year.
- It often comes down to money. You won't know how much it will cost until the end of the process, after you've applied to the school, done fafsa, applied for scholarships, etc.
- Websites to look at:
 - Usawaterpolo.org – they have a lot of helpful information about playing in college.
 - ncaa.org – this applies to Varsity Teams only. It will show you the rules for each division, the schools in each division, and a link to the school's website.
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 - collegiatewaterpolo.org – This is the website for the Collegiate Water Polo Association (CWPA). The CWPA is the Varsity conference for the eastern schools and also administers the Collegiate Club league.
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Kearns Water Polo

Tips on Playing Water Polo in College

- Many colleges have water polo programs. If you are interested in playing in college you can! No matter what your skill, talent, or experience level, there is something for everyone, if you are willing to look around and possibly go out of Utah.
- Your college search should begin with these questions:
 - What do you want to study? What profession do you want to go into?
 - What type of college (i.e., big, small, public, private, etc.) and do you have the grades and test scores to be admitted to that school?
 - Where (East, West, Midwest, etc.)?
 - How much money do you/your parents have available for college? Are student loans or other means of financial aid a possibility?
- Once you've narrowed your search based on the above answers, then look at which of those colleges offer water polo programs.
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