

Early Decision & Early Action

Applying to college can be one of the most stressful times of your life. For some of you, this will be the biggest decision you have made. Time management and organizational skills will be your biggest asset in this process. Before you are ready to fill out paperwork or submit test scores, research needs to be done to insure that you are meeting all of the criteria set forth by the school. You will need to have an understanding of what will be required at each specific school in order to complete your application file. The most important item to familiarize yourself with is each school's application deadlines and the different ways that you can apply. A great online resource is www.collegeboard.com. Follow the link "For Students" and then click on "Apply to College". This site gives you access to many informative articles on the application process, financial aid, and essay writing tips. They have also created several checklists for the application process as well as for visiting schools. While not everyone is on the same timetable, this is a great resource for you regardless of where you are in the process.

Early Decision (ED) and Early Action (EA)

ED and EA programs each involve an earlier application deadline than the standard admissions process does. Most of these application deadlines are in November. One of the benefits of applying early is that the student-athlete will know whether or not they have been admitted earlier than if they were to apply with the regular applicant pool. At most schools there are higher acceptance rates among early applicants versus those that elect to wait. As your college search progresses, it is important that you are able to identify yourself as a candidate for EA or ED. Many coaches that sign players to a Letter of Intent in the Early Signing Period (November 8-15) will ask their player to apply in one of these ways if the school offers it. In addition, if you have aspirations of attending a highly academic school (i.e. Ivy League, etc.), many times your best chances lie in the ED or EA period.

Early Decision (Binding)

If you decide to apply in a "binding" fashion, this means that you are making a promise when you apply that if you are accepted, you plan to attend. Failure to comply with a binding application can be met with legal action by the school or loss of a sometimes-large deposit. ED applicants are usually required to submit an ED application to only one school. All other applications are to be submitted in the regular application period.

Early Action (Non-Binding)

EA programs do not require you to make a commitment to the school if you are admitted. You are free to make as many EA applications as you would like. This option gives you the freedom to apply to schools that are high on your list while still giving you time to make a decision. Some schools have more than one of these application deadlines.

It is important that you review the application deadlines for every school that you are interested in. Keep a calendar so that you can stay on schedule.