



“I just want to play D1 Golf”

Recruiting Article | Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
By Mike Smith, ForeCollegeGolf



When I meet with players, I ask them each the same question, “What are your plans for college golf?”. Undoubtedly, the most common answer I hear is...

“I just want to play Division 1 Golf”

Now hear my out, I’m the last person to belittle a dream or tell someone they can’t achieve a goal but I strongly believe players should know all the facts before they set their goals, expectations, and recruiting plans.

The numbers...

There are roughly 300 schools that offer Division 1 Men’s golf, with an average team roster of 8-10 players. Therefore, each program will take an average of about two players per graduation class. This means about 500-600 Men’s Division 1 roster spots are offered each year.

The opportunities in D1 athletics might seem abundant and plentiful but when you take a look at the numbers the chances the ***average junior golfer*** is going to play for a Division 1 school is very small.



How small? Let's break down the numbers...

At any given time, there are about 2,500 ranked high-school Seniors on Junior Golf Scoreboard. Approximately 20% of college golf teams are made up of international players. There are thousands of international players from countries such as Canada, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Mexico, and Colombia. **Therefore, if you are an American player, the number of opportunities are reduced to 480 per year and if you are an international player your number of opportunities are reduced to 120 per year.**

Below is ForeCollegeGolf's insider analysis from the Junior Golf Scoreboard rankings. As you can see, we've broken each section down by recruiting class, scoring average by class/year, and overall JGS national ranking. (Note*: Scoring Differential does not include the new CCA or Course Conditions Adjustment)

Junior Golf Scoreboard Rankings (By Class)								
	Overall Ranking	# of Events	Scoring Average	Scoring Differential (65%)	Strength of Sched (25%)	Wins	Top 5	Top 10
Seniors								
10th Ranked Player	15	8.50	72.4	-3.79	23.47	1.20	1.80	1.45
50th Ranked Player	80	9.47	72.7	-2.35	42.65	1.31	2.33	1.59
100th Ranked Player	164	10.43	73.1	-1.44	49.90	0.76	2.59	1.96
250th Ranked Player	462	10.84	73.9	-0.05	61.32	0.57	2.19	1.80
500th Ranked Player	1010	9.70	75.6	1.44	70.19	0.53	1.62	1.29
750th Ranked Player	1588	9.91	77.2	2.46	74.76	0.44	1.65	1.45
1000th Ranked Player	2234	9.05	77.8					
Juniors								
10th Ranked Player	41	10.85	72.5	-3.37	35.40	1.65	2.95	1.60
50th Ranked Player	177	11.17	73.3	-1.40	50.76	0.96	3.21	1.82
100th Ranked Player	353	11.31	73.7	-0.47	58.94	0.82	2.55	1.88
250th Ranked Player	836	11.69	75.4	1.07	67.28	0.56	2.13	1.74
500th Ranked Player	1693	10.06	77.3	2.64	75.09	0.33	1.58	1.25
750th Ranked Player	2448	9.24	78.2	3.75	79.84	0.25	1.34	1.30
1000th Ranked Player	3223	8.13	79.1					
Sophomores								
10th Ranked Player	105	12.60	72.8	-2.30	46.89	2.10	3.55	1.55
50th Ranked Player	349	12.66	73.6	-0.52	59.38	0.92	3.05	2.33
100th Ranked Player	636	13.53	74.7	0.52	64.06	0.73	2.92	2.49
250th Ranked Player	1498	11.58	77.1	2.27	75.13	0.52	1.94	1.51
500th Ranked Player	2872	9.02	78.8	4.43	81.87	0.29	1.06	1.10
750th Ranked Player	4083	8.76	79.9	6.11	87.11	0.25	0.88	0.72
1000th Ranked Player	5359	7.18	82.0					

(avg's from JuniorGolfScoreboard.com)*



For this analysis, we looked at players ranked from 1st to 1000th from each recruiting year/class in the following areas:

- Overall ranking
- # of tournaments played per year
- Tournament scoring average
- JGS adjusted scoring average
- Strength of schedule
- Top finishes

So let's pretend there are 600 chairs in a room and "John Doe Golfer" is the last player to "make the cut" and secure chair #600. From our analysis, we can't conclude exactly what his numbers would be but we can estimate the following:

"John" had an approximate tournament scoring average of 78.8 as a sophomore, 77.3 as a junior, and 75.6 as a senior in high school. Also worth noting, it's very likely that Johnny's strength of schedule became increasingly more difficult during his high school career and he began playing much longer golf courses after his Sophomore year, some of which were 7,200-7,400 yards long!

We suggest, if you:

- **Fall inside the top 600 in your recruiting class**
 - Understand that you might be able to play D1 golf but it's not the only option
 - Begin the recruiting process earlier (before the initial contact date of June 15th), communicate with Coaches, narrow down your school options and take campus visits
 - Sign up for the NCAA Eligibility Center
 - Remember: College Coaches put high importance on things like true potential, academic match, personal character, work ethic, attitude, likability, family legacy, and many other intangibles like physical prowess when recruiting players.
- **Fall outside the top 600 in your recruiting class**
 - Understand that you most likely aren't a good fit for D1 golf right now...
 - Look elsewhere for your "best-fit" at D2, D3, NAIA, or NJCAA schools for a school that fits your athletic, academic, and social needs.
 - Remember: The recruiting process is all about timing,
 - If you're still in 8th or 9th grade, don't worry about your ranking, focus on constant improvement to your skillset, and showcase your skills in competition once you're in 10th grade.
 - If you're already in 11th or 12th grade, make certain you are pursuing the right schools, and compete near the schools that are recruiting you. Ask to go on-campus visits, work hard to engage with Coaches regularly and pursue your "best-fit" opportunities in college golf.



I hope the above information is useful to you during your recruiting search. Please reach out to someone at ForeCollegeGolf if you would like an assessment of your current situation or further clarification on the information above.

Best of luck on the recruiting trail!

Many thanks for reading,

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Mike Smith is the founder of ForeCollegeGolf, a college placement and recruiting business where he aims to apply his background in competitive golf and recruiting education to help educate players, their families and coaches about the college recruiting process.

If you have any questions about the article above, any feedback, an article idea you would like to provide; you can find me at mike.smith@forecollegegolf.com or www.ForeCollegeGolf.com.

