

# The Emergence of the Transfer Portal

*By Michael J. Smith, ForeCollegeGolf*

In October 2018, the NCAA modified the transfer rule for student-athletes from a “permission to contact” to a “notification to transfer” and made it much easier for student-athletes to freely transfer to another school. Many athletes feel the “grass is greener on the other side” and this has sparked a game of musical chairs in the world of college golf. Since then, we’ve seen a surge of players in the portal and about an 8% transfer rate across all sports.



## ***By the Numbers***

During the second season of the online transfer portal, the 2019-2020 school year, the NCAA saw a significant uptick in the numbers of transfers. Last school year alone, there were 534 total transfers in golf, 346 of those were in Men’s golf and 188 were on the Women’s side. For Men, 204 of those were in D1, 120 were D2 and 22 were D3, respectively. For Women, 113 of those were in D1, 73 were D2 and 2 were D3, respectively.

In the beginning, there were considerably fewer transfers. In 2018-2019, there were 359 total, 220 on the men’s side and 139 on the women’s side, respectively. For Men, 154 of those were in D1, 66 were D2 and 0 were D3. For Women, 98 of those were in D1, 41 were D2 and 0 were D3.

\*\*\*In September 2022, the NCAA introduced two 45-day Transfer Portal “windows”, one which begins the day after Regional Championship selections are made for Division 1 Golf. Therefore, student-athletes wishing to transfer can only do so from December 1st - 15th and during a 45-day window in May after NCAA Regional selections.

### ***NCAA Division I Transfer Process***

1. SA\* asks Coach or School compliance administrator to be placed in the transfer portal, at which point the school has 2 business days to do so.
2. Once in the portal, SA information is available to every NCAA Coach via the NCAA Apps website.
3. Transfers are initially listed in the portal as “active”, but administrators must change that status to “matriculated” if the SA has officially transferred or “withdrawn” if the SA has changed his/her mind and plans on returning.
4. While in the portal, SA’s are subject to their schools reducing or taking away their athletics aid. This is positive for coaches concerned with having scholarship money tied up in a SA who no longer wants to be a part of the team.

\*SA= student-athlete

In order to initiate a transfer, all a player has to do is notify their athletic department (specifically NCAA Compliance) they would like to transfer and within 48 hours they will be added to the online transfer portal. The recent rule change removes the step where the Coach must “give permission” for that player to speak with other schools.

- *Transfer Rule – What’s changed?*
  - **Players’ “power” vs. Coaches power** – players have more power than ever and control their own destiny.
  - **Transfers are visible** – the online transfer portal is easy to access and helps streamline the process by being live 24/7.
  - **Online Portal** – In the past, coaches didn’t know who was transferring so they didn’t call players looking to transfer. Now, Coaches have a live online portal with NCAA ID #'s and contact information at their fingertips.
  - **Level(ed) playing field** - Bigger more competitive schools have more recruiting “pull” but smaller less competitive schools will now have a clear picture of which SA’s are transferring and have the ability to make phone calls.
- *Recruiting implications.*
  - **Scholarship \$** -
    - Will there be enough roster spots, scholarship, and opportunity for these transfers?
    - Will the risk be worth the move? Will this transfer play right away? (ex. Player wants to transfer who is on 75% scholarship, and new school only has 30% to offer)
  - **APR impact** – programs are penalized if a player doesn’t finish a semester. Note: this will not affect players who transfer in between semesters.

- **Recruiting “eyes”** – Coaches didn’t really look at the transfer portal as a viable way to recruit talent but now there will be many teams utilizing the portal as ways to obtain players.

***Notable transfers from 2020:***

To the University of Florida –

- Carlos Bustos (SR) – transferring from Lynn, DII national champ 2x, top20 at Latin American Amateur
- Giovanni Manzoni (SR) – transferring from Lynn, DII 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-American, 71.14 scoring average

To Florida State University

- Vincent Norman (SR) – transferring from Georgia Southwestern
- Connor Futrell (JR) – transferring from Troy

To UAB

- Drew Mathers (SR)– transferring from Huntingdon, Jack Nicklaus award finalist, 6 career wins, and top 3 in 10 of his last 12 events.

To UCF

- Max O’ Hagan (SR)– transferring from Florida Tech, finished top8 in 6 of 7 starts. Was a finalist for the Jack Nicklaus award this year and was a semifinalist the past two seasons

To Ohio State

- Elis Svard (SR)– transferring from Cal State – Monterey, top10 in all 6 starts, 5 career wins

To Oklahoma

- Jonathan Brightwell (SR)– transferring from UNCG, 2 wins in 6 starts in 2019-2020 season

To Oklahoma State

- Leo Oyo (SO)– transferring from San Diego State
- Eugenio Chacarra (SO)– transferring from Wake Forest, \*Now on LIV golf

To Texas

- Hunter Ostrom (SR) – transferring from Notre Dame, posted the lowest season stroke average in program history with 70.68 strokes per round. Played in all 19 possible rounds.

To South Florida

- Ian Peng (SO) – transferring from VCU

To Florida Atlantic

- Davis Lamb (SR) – transferring from Notre Dame

To Oregon

- Owen Avrit (FR) – transferring from Long Beach State

To FCGU

- Frankie Capan (FR) – transferring from Alabama

***What are Coaches saying about the transfer portal?***

*“In my opinion the transfer portal was not as big a deal in golf as other sports because we already had the one-time transfer rule which allowed players to transfer to another school and play immediately. However, now that we are living with Covid-19 and all current players were given an extra year of eligibility, I think the transfer portal will be an invaluable tool for golfers who are stuck in a logjam of players on swollen rosters looking for playing time. I think it will also be a boon for coaches looking for good players from higher ranked programs that can’t offer enough playing time for all their athletes.”*

**J.T. Higgins, Head Coach, Texas A&M**

*“There are Pros and Cons to the Transfer Portal. For the players and coaches, the portal provides an opportunity for a fresh start to those who need it. In my opinion, it will affect even junior golfers. Due to the pandemic, coaches have seen how easy it is to find talented, more experienced players through the portal. Because of that, there’s not as much incentive to bring in a big freshman class.”*

**Lee White, Head Coach, Florida Southern (DII)**

*“I see the transfer portal as a positive tool for the student-athlete and the coach. It empowers the student-athlete in the transfer process. For the coach, it allows us to see who wants to transfer and how to contact them. If the student-athlete has already transferred or decides to stay at their current school, coaches can see that right away.”*

**Grant Wallace, Head Coach, Kenyon College (DIII)**

***If you are considering a transfer here’s my advice:***

1. ***Write down your long-term vision*** – It’s imperative to acknowledge what you are looking for – ask yourself:
  - a. What am I looking for? A different/better team environment, social culture, practice facilities?
  - b. What is my long-term plan? Do I want to be a lawyer or doctor? Will I turn professional after college? How much this decision influence my decision?
  - c. How important is the ability to be close to home and see my “team”?
  - d. Why didn’t I find my best-fit school the first time?
2. ***Learn the transfer & eligibility rules*** - When you begin to think about going to a new school, understand that the rules are different depending on whether you want to transfer to an NCAA D1,2, or 3, and whether you are currently enrolled at a two-year or a four-year school. In some cases, conference rules can be more restrictive than NCAA rules.
3. ***Stick it out*** – many players transfer prematurely after a semester or after a year. My advice is to stick it out for at least a year or two. Your credits are likely to transfer if you transfer before Junior year.
4. ***Keep a healthy relationship with your Coach/Team*** – it’s important to note that the transfer process is much less frightening when you have people to

assist you. No one wants “skeletons in their closet” during the transfer process, and no Coaches are interested in recruiting someone who isn’t a “team player”.

5. **Be realistic** – understand most Coaches are looking for transfers who will make an immediate impact on their program, have good grades, and quality leadership skills. Remember, transferring “up” is much harder than transferring “down”.

Contact us if you would like us to provide an assessment on your current situation or qualified advice regarding transfers in college golf.

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.*

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