

KeepPlayingBaseball.org – Sophomore Year Checklist

Fall

Academics

Remind your high school guidance counselor that you want to play college baseball and repeat the following steps like prior semesters. Get a list of classes at your school that are approved by the NCAA, and make a plan to meet the NCAA requirements at the *highest level*. The rules can change quickly. Be sure you check in with your counselor at least twice a year to make sure you stay on track.

Be your counselor's second set of eyes.

Visit <https://web3.ncaa.org/hportal/exec/homeAction> and navigate to the "List of NCAA Courses" tab at the top. Enter your high school and double check that you are enrolled in the correct number of Core Courses for eligibility at the highest level.

Set high academic goals and hold yourself to a high academic standard. Set a goal to keep your grades *above* what you need to play at the *highest level* you hope to play.

Continue to work hard in the classroom and take responsibility for your own performance. Find and use resources (parents, teachers, coaches, tutors, etc.) if you struggle with a class or subject. Your grades as a 10th grader carry the same weight as your grades as a senior for eligibility purposes.

It's time to start thinking about the SAT or ACT. Study hard and take the PSAT or a practice ACT.

Development

Play fall ball, another sport, or work with your coaches, trainers, and/or health professionals to develop a training program to improve your strength and conditioning and on-field skills.

Seek honest and objective feedback about your playing abilities and use the feedback to set measurable on-field goals to improve on your weaknesses and strengths. This pattern may start feeling repetitive. That's a good thing! Objective feedback and continuously improving your development plan is a key to getting better and playing at the next level.

Watch professional baseball on TV. Pay attention to the details and the decisions pros make.

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Continue to use KPB's Think the Game section and learn about the mental game of college baseball. At the college level, your ability to think like a ballplayer is as important as your physical skills.

Recruiting

Continue spending 10-15 minutes a day reading, researching, and learning about the recruiting process and what it will take to get recruited to play college baseball.

Start to explore different types of colleges and universities and begin putting together a list of schools you think might be a good fit for you. Don't limit yourself, think broadly and with an open mind. You'll be continuously refining your list as your college preferences evolve and you begin to figure out what level you should target.

Winter

Academics

Continue to work hard in the classroom. Get help if your grades are not as good as you need them to be to get into your top-choice schools.

A new year means new teachers. Continue to make it a point to communicate well with your teachers and make personal connections. You will likely need several teachers to write you letters of recommendation when it comes time to apply. Build relationships early and show these teachers that you care about your school work.

Continue to ask questions and learn about careers that interest you.

Re-visit your list of schools and zero in on your top-choice schools. Go to the websites of all the schools and learn as much as you can about what you have to do to get in. Don't rely on minimum requirements. Find the average GPA and test scores of successful applicants, and do your best to exceed those averages.

Development

Play another sport if you are interested.

Reflect back on your fall season and evaluate how you did with your goal setting. Use that information to set new goals for the winter off-season and adjust your plan for reaching those goals.

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- Continue taking care of your body. Stay in shape. Ask your coaches for off-season routines that are appropriate for your age and position. Learn all you can about how you can protect yourself from injury during the coming season.
- Continue spending time getting to know the influential coaches in your league, community, and online. Learn how to filter information that you can use and think critically about instruction and information you are given.
- Use the off-season to balance rest with preparation. Your success for the coming season is created during the off-season. Make sure you are giving yourself plenty of time to prepare to return to the field in the spring. Make it a point to hit the ground running when high school ball starts.

Recruiting

- Start to prepare yourself for contacting college coaches and seeking exposure. Some players may be ready as sophomores and some may need to wait as late as senior year. Use KPB blog articles to help figure out what timing is right for you. Regardless, you can begin to make sure you have everything ready for contacting college coaches (transcripts, test scores, skills video, references, etc.).
- Continue to spend time each day reading, researching, and learning about the recruiting process and what it will take to get recruited to play college baseball.
- Continue to spend time doing research on schools of interest. Evaluate the roster and find out what you can about the players past and present. This will help you figure out the standards and requirements necessary to play at that level.

Spring

Academics

- Check with your guidance counselor again to make sure that you are still taking the right classes. Check the NCAA website again to make sure any new classes are NCAA approved courses. Continue to work hard in the classroom.

Development

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Ask your coaches for an honest and objective evaluation of your playing ability. Are you getting the same feedback you got last year? Have you improved in the areas where you were weak? Continue to get tips on how you can improve your game, but most importantly implement strategies that will eliminate these weaknesses!

Recruiting

Be a sponge for information! Ask a lot of questions of coaches, older players, family members, or friends who can help you decide what you might want to study and where you might want to go to school.

Continue to spend time each day learning and researching the recruiting process, what it takes to play college baseball, and what you need to do to keep getting better. You will not regret learning about the process, even if you aren't ready to start engaging with college coaches. This preparation will allow you to take advantage of your opportunities when you are ready!

Attend college games in your area. Ask yourself how you match up to the competition. Think about what you need to do to get to that level. Learn about the mental side of the game.

Be the kind of player who is remembered for the right reasons every time you step onto the field. Hustle: be mentally and physically prepared for every game and practice. Be the first one on and off the field. Be the first guy to show up and the last guy to leave. You *never* know who might be watching you on the field or in the dugout.

Summer

Academics

Take summer school if you did not complete all of the NCAA required courses on your plan with the grades you need. Summer school can also be a great way to lighten the academic load during the school year. As always, be sure to check to make sure the summer courses you take are on the NCAA core courses list.

Start to plan out when you will take the SAT or ACT during junior year. Pick your test date and spend considerable time studying for the exam this summer. Think of the test like a big game. The big game is not won during those 9 innings, it's won in the preparation throughout the season. Spend a little time each day studying and preparing. The SAT or ACT will significantly impact the college programs you can target and can earn you lots of scholarship money!

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Development

- Focus on developing your skills and strength.
- If possible, consider attending college camps in your area for developmental reasons. At the camps, ask lots of questions, get used to interacting with college coaches, and pay close attention to the instruction. Be a sponge!
- Play competitive summer ball or work with coaches, trainers, and/or health professionals to take part in a high level training and strength and conditioning program. Sophomore summer is a pivotal time for preparing yourself for the upperclassmen years. Would you benefit more from playing, focusing on strength and conditioning, or a combination of both? At this point, many players benefit from additional focus on strength building.
- Re-examine your personalized plan for how you will continue to improve and what you need to do to get to the next level and make the necessary adjustments. Not all players should be doing the same thing. The more your plan can work to minimize weaknesses and build on strengths, the better off you will be.

Recruiting

- Continue to make sure you are a good prospect online as well as on the field. Make sure that everything on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other online service supports the fact that you are a good teammate and a dedicated athlete.
- Continue your research on college baseball and the recruiting process.
- Make sure you are familiar with all the levels of college baseball.
- Continue preparing yourself for contact with and exposure to college coaches. Some players may be ready to contact coaches now and some may need to continue to be patient as they develop their baseball skills. Use KPB blog articles to help figure out what timing is right for you. Regardless, you can begin to make sure you have everything ready for contacting college coaches (transcripts, test scores, skills video, references, etc.).
- Visit the www.KPBrecruiting101.org site for next recruiting steps and more information on what you should be doing given where you are in the recruiting process.

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