

COLLEGE FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP BLUEPRINT

FOR KICKERS AND PUNTERS

INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE FOOTBALL KICKING & PUNTING

*How to improve your chances at
obtaining a college football scholarship*

"ROCKETFOOT"

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ROCKETFOOT
ACADEMY



WHY US?

THE MOST POPULAR TEAM ON YOUR SIDE

My name is Wihan van der Riet, I am the director of the Rocketfoot Academy and together with our partner One On One Kicking Camps USA, we are the bridge between talented kickers and punters in South Africa and college football scholarship opportunities in the United States. One On One Kicking is the industry leader in Kicking and Punting instruction and exposure in the United States. Founded by former NFL Punter Mike McCabe, the company boasts an impressive 98% college recruitment success rate for the athletes they represent. Even more impressive are the 18 current NFL Specialists who have come out of the One On One Kicking Camps system.

The right athlete has the opportunity to further their education with a potential scholarship opportunity through the college football system in the United States. We acknowledge the concept of kicking or punting in the college football realm explores unfamiliar territory for most South African households, but by the end of this brochure, you will have a clearer understanding of how the process works, what it all means, and what is required from an athlete to receive and make a success of such an incredible, life-changing opportunity.





SCOUTING CAMPS – FINDING TALENT

High school rugby kickers and/or soccer players with a good feel for kicking already possess some of the natural skills to kick and/or punt footballs at the collegiate level.

From a performance perspective, for any athlete to stand a good chance to kick and/or punt at the next level and obtain a college football scholarship, there are certain thresholds to overcome. From the aspect of kicking and punting performance expectations these thresholds ultimately separate the different college football divisions from one another.

We scout with an eye on measurables such as distance, accuracy, consistency, trajectory, hang time, and operation time. The above-mentioned elements each serve as a “measuring stick” and determine where a player stands in terms of immediate ability and skill level and gives us a good idea of how the player compares to peers at the different college football divisions.





INSTRUCTIONAL CAMPS

LEARN FROM A PRO!

There are further technical nuances that make football kicking and punting more challenging than simply kicking a ball; however, attending our instructional camps, and learning our methodology and technique philosophy from a coach who has competed at the professional level makes your transition to the sport much faster and a lot smoother.

Kicking and punting in the American football game is a technique-orientated sport similar to golf; however, unique skills are executed within a team sport environment but only during isolated kicking or punting plays. Kickers are referred to as “specialists” because the responsibility of only one aspect of the game falls square on the kicker’s shoulders – the kicking game.

Training, conditioning, and preparation are centered around being the most powerful, accurate, and consistent kicker or punter possible and helping the team win by converting field goals with superior accuracy, trajectory, and consistency in addition to punting and kicking off with appropriate hangtime (time in the air), distance (how far the ball travels), and placement (where it lands). The successful kicker or punter not only possesses the technical ability and strength to complete the task but has developed the mental grit to perform their duties during high-pressure situations.

Our technique and training methods have been tested and proven at the highest level of the sport with kickers and punters using our methods in the NFL and CFL. Trainees receive expert coaching at our instructional camps and player improvement is tracked and ranking adjusted accordingly. Our aim is to equip players with all the necessary skills to be the complete kicker and unlock their potential, and when the time comes, we recruit on the player's behalf based on where they would fit in best!



RANKING CAMPS

SHOWCASE YOUR ABILITY

The function of a ranking camp is to test the player's ability to perform under pressure and compete against their peers which will ultimately determine their success. The integrity of a ranking camp is very important and so when the player's official workout starts every kick counts. Punting and kicking films from these events serve as part of the player's profile, College coaches love camp film because it showcases a very realistic idea of what a player's abilities are under the right circumstances.

We then use all player statistics to formulate a scout report in order to give the player a "star rating" which is just a simple way to allocate the kicker to a certain division where they are able to compete and perform within their technique and skill level. There are plenty of opportunities outside of Division 1 football. Players do not necessarily have to be the very best kicker to enjoy the benefits of a football scholarship at a lower division or junior college. These "lower" divisions are great platforms to learn, gain experience and improve and the option to transfer to a better school or a higher division at a later stage is part of the journey for a lot of athletes.

RECRUITMENT SEASON

The football recruiting season typically begins as soon as the previous year's class has signed, although the building of relationships between college coaches and high school players and their coaches may have been going on for months or years before that.

Each summer, high school players attend various football camps to be evaluated on measures of athleticism, such as the 40-yard dash, vertical jump, agility shuttle; and the number of repetitions of the bench press that an athlete can perform at a given weight. Recently, the SPARQ rating has become a popular composite metric of a high school football player's athleticism.

At this time of year, based on camp film and performance at combines, this is typically when players begin to receive most scholarship offers. Although kickers and punters may be subject to similar assessments, the evaluation for kickers and punters is a little different than other positions, with the focus being on technical ability and performance under pressure.





After receiving an offer, a player may choose to commit. Although more coaches have tried in recent years to get players to commit early, the most highly rated players typically commit within a month of national signing day. This is the day all high school players graduate and can choose to sign letters of intent (LI) to play for the college of their choice.

Signing day always falls on the first Wednesday of February. Other players, who may not have as many offers to choose from, more often verbally commit earlier in the process. Junior college players can sign scholarships in late December, once their sophomore seasons have ended.

A letter of intent is binding for both the player and the school for one academic year as long as the player is eligible to enroll at the college.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

After the player has proven their kicking ability, their high school academic performance is ultimately the deciding factor in recruitment success. It would be difficult to break down exactly what the academic requirements are since different schools have different entry requirements and so does the player's desired direction of study. Generally, in order to be accepted at any higher education institution, a player must have relatively good grades. Finding out which schools and degrees a player is eligible for is part of the personal recruitment process.

The successful "student-athlete" is the most dedicated, disciplined, and focused individual on campus. A player must have an incredible work ethic, or it's impossible to maintain the balance needed to manage academic and football duties. This endeavor is a challenge even for the most suitable candidate but the experience and rewards of being part of a college football locker room are forever life-changing. If the player is a good kicker and a disciplined student with a superior work ethic, this may be the opportunity they have been waiting for!

COLLEGE FOOTBALL DIVISIONS



HOW MANY COLLEGE FOOTBALL TEAMS ARE THERE?

- NCAA Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision: 120 colleges
- NCAA Division I – Football Championship Subdivision: 118 colleges
- NCAA Division II: 157 colleges
- NCAA Division III: 239 colleges
- NAIA: 91 colleges
- Junior College: 69 colleges

HOW MANY SCHOLARSHIPS PER TEAM ARE IN EACH DIVISION?

- NCAA Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision: 85 scholarships
- NCAA Division I – Football Championship Subdivision: 63 scholarships
- NCAA Division II: 36 scholarships
- NCAA Division III: 0 scholarships
- NAIA: 24 scholarships
- Junior College: 85 scholarships

NCAA FOOTBALL



The NCAA became officially established in 1906 in response to a need to organize and oversee the sport. It was not until 1973 that it divided into Division I football, Division II football, and Division III football. Five years later, it was further divided into I-A and I-AA, which were renamed FBS and FCS in 2006.

At the Division 1 level, you will find the best football programs in the world. Division 1 football teams are classified in one of two subdivisions: FBS and FCS.

FBS

The best athletes, most competitive teams, and elite programs and facilities are found in the FBS subdivision. These schools give out up to 85 full-ride scholarships every year. This means that the qualifying athlete will be expected to perform on the football field at an elite level while being provided housing, money, and the opportunity to study for a full degree. These programs are for the top-level athlete and with some exceptions, most NFL rosters are comprised of former FBS football players from big-name schools such as Alabama, LSU, Texas, Ohio, and Oregon.





FCS

FCS football teams are highly competitive, with their fair share of top athletes. However, unlike FBS Schools, FCS football teams can give out a maximum of 63 scholarships and can allocate their scholarship money however they see fit. Division 1 FCS football programs are a good fit for the above-average athlete with a superior work ethic and potential to grow and improve.

Division 1 football teams are characterized by their rigorous schedules, and football is a nearly full-time job on top of the athlete's academic responsibilities. There is a lot of tradition and hype around Division 1 football, with TV coverage of games reaching millions of households across the country, and attendance at games is always a full house.



DIVISION 2 & 3

Depending on the ambition and priorities of the school, Division 2 & 3 football programs are for the athlete who has not yet developed to their full potential and looking for an opportunity to grow or has relative ability and skill but prioritizing their focus around academics while being able to enjoy a diverse college experience with far fewer football commitments and expectations. Football games in these divisions remain competitive yet they do not garner the same sort of attention surrounding D1 FBS and FCS schools.

Consequently, schools in these lower divisions do not enjoy the same football budget in comparison with Division 1 schools, with Division 2 schools only awarding up to 36 scholarships per year and Division 3 schools unable to provide any sort of scholarship opportunities whatsoever.

NAIA FOOTBALL

The NAIA is a smaller association than the NCAA, with just over 60,000 students. It includes two divisions (Division I and II) and Division I in the NAIA is comparable to Division II in the NCAA. Over 90% of schools in the NAIA offer scholarships. The amount and type of scholarship players receive depends on, among other things, which association the school is affiliated with and which division within that association that school plays in. Eligibility requirements and scholarship rules for the NCAA are stricter than those of the NAIA. The NAIA is a good fit for the same type of student-athlete who would be successful at the NCAA Division 2 level.



JUNIOR COLLEGE (JUCO)

Junior colleges are two-year schools, and are perfect for athletes with plenty of raw talent and potential but who lack experience. Some may need to improve their academic credentials while others want to focus on improving physically. In both cases, the goal is often to move on to a four-year university for their final two seasons.

Two separate organizations, the NJCAA, and the CCCAA, oversee junior college football, and they sponsor different postseason competitions for their best squads while bowl games are played by some schools as well. NJCAA schools are located across the country with many in Arizona, Kansas, Mississippi, and New York while every CCCAA school is California-based. Regarding scholarship opportunities, there are some JUCO's who offer scholarships to the right athletes but not all of them have the capacity to do so.



Understandably, the notion of a South African player with very limited experience gaining a scholarship to kick for a college football team seems far-fetched and this would probably have been the case several years ago. But the recent success of foreign athletes in both college football and the NFL over the past 10 years has paved the way for others and effectively changed the landscape of how college coaches approach recruiting and formulate their programs for incoming juniors.

This past season, 53 Australians occupied punting roster positions across 50 of the 130 Division I Football Bowl Subdivision teams. Six of the past 10 winners of the Ray Guy Award (given to the best punter in college football) have been Australians.

None of them played football in high school; they all come from rugby, soccer, or Aussie rules backgrounds and followed a similar model as described here. College coaches look for talent, not just experience.

Being a kicker or punter does not mean you do not play other sports in high school. On the contrary, multi-sport athletes are highly regarded by college football coaches because it shows drive, discipline, and overall ability outside of kicking and punting. It's to a player's advantage if their resume showcases participation and achievements in other sports, especially a similar sport like rugby.



Colleges start looking for potential talent years in advance. There is a high probability that a player could receive an offer from a school as early as their junior year. The recruitment process is not reserved for seniors only and the earlier a player gets the process moving, the better.

This means a player is following the model that has proven successful for all our foreign players who have played or are currently playing college football. New players work on technique and train in the weight room, attend our ranking and instructional camps every term, record their film for virtual lessons, manage their social media professionally, and work hard at school to ensure their grades do not hold them back from any opportunities.

Contact us.

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