

The numbers you need to get a college golf scholarship



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One of the most perplexing issues for junior golfers and their families is understanding where to look and how much scholarship (if any) they should expect. In this article, I want to introduce you to the coach's perspective in recruiting, explain their thought process and then help you understand where to look and approximately how much to expect.

As a college student I was blessed to work a lot of college golf camps with a ton of great coaches. These coaches quickly taught me a lot, including a key rule when recruiting; when you first watch a player, imagine you can make four more copies. Then imagine with a team of five of them, where would you be ranked? Would you make regionals? Nationals? Match Play? Win it all?

Obviously at each level these numbers are different. So, let's start by looking at some numbers:

In Division I Men's Golf, the No. 1 team in Golfstat Cup finished with a scoring average of 69.99. The last team to make regionals (Michigan State) had an average score for their top four of 72.86. The 125th team at the end of the year last year was UC Riverside. The best player on the team averaged 73.93 for the year, while the fourth player averaged 77.51. Dartmouth was the 200th team had three players average better than 75 with the fourth player averaging 76.74.

In Division I Women's, the No. 1 team in Golfstat Cup was Alabama which boasted an average of 70.93 among their top four. The last team to make regionals on the women's side was Missouri. For the season, Missouri had a stroke average of 295.4. The 100th best team was Georgetown, with a scoring average of 303.64 (75.91 per player). The 200th best team in women's golf was Appalachian State women's golf. They had a team average of 312 (78 per player).

In DII Golf, West Florida Men were the best regular season team with a scoring average among their top four of 70.75. For Women, the best team, as well as eventual National Champions, was Indianapolis with a scoring average of 73.45 among their top four. The 25th team in DII Men's Golf had an average among their top four of 73.47 and for women the number was 77.03. The 50th ranked team for Men averaged 294.7 as a

team (73.675 per player), while the 50th women's team averaged 322.3 (80.5 per player).

For DIII, the best men's team was Methodist. Their top four averaged 73, while the top four for the best women's team averaged 75.32. The 25th best men's team top four averaged 74.96 and the top four for the 25th ranked women's team averaged 81.37. The 50th ranked men's team averaged 302.4 as a team (75.6 per player).

In the NAIA, the best men's team top four averaged 71.64, while in women's golf the number was 75.32. The 25th best men's team averaged 73.13, while the 25th best women's number was 78.53.

Now, let's consider where you fit. Many students reading this article will have a ranking on Junior Golf Scoreboard. One aspect of the ranking is your scoring differential. Look that number up. Once you have it, add approximately one shot. Why one? For lots of reasons, including: college golf is likely harder, for many reasons not limited to having to balance school and golf, courses are less familiar, there can be more travel and you are often playing 72 holes in three grueling days.

Based on the competitive nature of college golf, most teams ranked within the top 30 percent of DI, 20 percent of DII and five percent of DIII and NAIA will likely require a scoring differential of one or better to even become a candidate since the data suggests that they need players who in college can average 73 or better (at worst). When considering allotting their scholarships, coaches are going to strongly consider your ability to contribute "countable rounds"; what is the likelihood and how often will your score count. When coaches think you will count at least 75 percent of the time is when they are most likely to make substantial offers.

Obviously, not everyone reading this article has a scoring differential of one or better. This does not mean that you cannot play college golf, nor does it mean that you cannot

get a scholarship. The data suggests that as schools move towards the mean, they become less interested in pure golf results and more interested in the player's "fit;" that is how they will represent the school and perform academically, as well as shoot scores which can contribute to the team's ability to finish within the top three at their conference tournament.

Players with higher scoring differentials should certainly be concerned about their golf, but it is likely that the most appealing thing they can do is earn good grades and high test scores. Since approximately 50 percent of programs at every level don't have full scholarship allotments, they often rely on academic money to package intriguing financial packages to attract prospective student athletes.

For girls, the range is much greater. Likely girls with scoring differentials of four or better are going to get significant attention, but it is likely that anyone with a scoring differential of six or better has a chance to not only get a large scholarship but likely that will come at the Division I level. Again, for female prospective student athletes with scoring differentials above six, don't worry, there are lots of opportunities, however, like your male counterparts, make sure to get the best grades and test scores possible. They are likely to help and save you thousands of dollars!