



COLLEGE SEARCH & BEST FIT FOR MADELEINE WHARTON

I would build your college list on **two axes: Academic/admissions fit** and **pole-vault fit**. Being recruitable and being admissible are different questions. And an important point: college team marks are **not the same thing as published recruiting standards**. Unless a coach publishes standards, I use current marks as a temperature check, not as a promise that a coach will or won't recruit you.

MY BEST BALANCED FITS

Samford University

I like this fit a lot. You get Birmingham healthcare access, a connected campus culture, Division I athletics and an environment where leadership and involvement make sense for you.

Samford's published ACT middle 50% is 23–29, and it superscores the ACT for admission, so your 32 is academically strong there. Samford is test-optional for Fall 2027.

Athletically, Samford women cleared 3.80m—about 12'5.5"—in 2026 competition.

At 11'0", you're not at that current team performance yet, but this is absolutely a **coach-contact school**.

My fit: Strong overall fit / athletic stretch with legitimate reason for outreach.

UAB

This may be one of the most obvious medicine-first fits. You're already comfortable in a clinical environment, and UAB is built around a major academic health center.

Your academics are strong relative to UAB's Fall 2025 averages. UAB reports an average ACT around 26.6 and GPA around 3.84; your 31 composite and 4.0 unweighted GPA are above those benchmarks.

UAB doesn't superscore for admission or scholarship, which means **your 31 composite**, not 32 superscore, is the number we use there. Its current 2027–28 in-state merit chart gives the Presidential award of \$12,000 annually at ACT 30–36 and GPA 3.5+.

Current UAB vaulters were clearing approximately 3.74m/12'3" at the 2026 conference championships.

My fit: Very strong academic/career fit / worthwhile athletic outreach.

Auburn University

Auburn makes sense academically, socially and geographically. Its Fall 2025 Alabama resident middle 50% was ACT 25–31 and GPA 3.87–4.33. Your 32 superscore is above that ACT range, and Auburn accepts ACT superscores.

Auburn athletics is another story. Current women's vault marks include 12'3.5" and higher, including a 13'3.5" clearance by a freshman in 2026.

So Auburn is currently an athletic stretch, but that should **not** stop you from contacting the coach.

My fit: Strong college fit / SEC athletic stretch.

University of Alabama

Academically, you are very strong here. Alabama's Fall 2025 resident middle 50% was ACT 22–30 and GPA 3.48–4.16. Fall 2027 has a December 4 priority deadline.

One important scholarship detail: Alabama **does not superscore for automatic merit**, so your 31 ACT composite matters more than the 32 superscore for those awards.

Athletically, this is a substantial current stretch. Alabama's Isabella Maple cleared 13'3.5" in 2026, putting her ninth all-time at UA.

Still contact the coach. The answer has to come from the coaching staff, not from us guessing.

My fit: Strong academic/campus option / significant SEC athletic stretch at current PR.

Ole Miss

Ole Miss belongs on this list. It offers the larger traditional campus/social environment I think you'll enjoy, your academics are strong for admission, and its current scholarship structure can be very attractive for nonresidents.

For 2026–27, Ole Miss's published nonresident merit grid gives students with a 3.75–4.0 GPA and ACT 32+ up to \$20,790 annually toward the nonresident fee, and it accepts superscores. We will need to verify the **2027–28** grid rather than assuming those values carry forward.

Athletically, I find this one interesting. Ole Miss had elite women clearing 13'+ in 2026, but its results also include an 11'8.5" clearance.

That doesn't tell us a recruiting standard, but it tells me this conversation is worth having, especially if you continue progressing.

My fit: Strong overall fit / very worthwhile coach contact.

COLLEGES WHERE ATHLETICS MAY GIVE YOU MORE LEVERAGE

UAH

Do not overlook UAH. For 2027–28, UAH's published Alabama-resident scholarship grid puts a student with **4.0+ GPA and 31–36 ACT/SAT equivalent in the Saturn V tuition scholarship category**.

And UAH is Division II. Its women's school record in pole vault is 12'3.5". This is exactly why I don't want you looking only at SEC schools.

At UAH, the combination of **academics + potential merit + athletics** could create leverage.

My fit: Excellent strategic value; serious athletic conversation.

University of Montevallo

This is another school I would keep for strategic reasons. Montevallo's 2026 women's competition included a winning vault of **11'3.75"**. Your verified PR is 11'0". That makes the current athletic level much closer to where you are today.

Academically, you're well above the normal freshman minimum. Montevallo also offers the competitive M.A.P.S. scholarship (12 awards covering room, board, tuition and fees) with minimum consideration criteria of 30 ACT and 3.5 GPA plus résumé, recommendations and interview.

You meet the reported academic thresholds; that does **not** mean the scholarship is guaranteed.

My fit: Strong athletic/financial leverage option.

South Alabama

Academically, you're in a strong position. South currently says students with a 3.4+ high-school GPA are automatically admitted through its test-optional path, and recommends submitting ACT scores of 21+.

Its currently posted scholarship grid—still labeled for Fall 2026—shows **full tuition at the Arts & Sciences rate for 3.75+ GPA and ACT superscore 32+**. That is exactly your current academic combination, but I will **not promise that award until South publishes/confirms the Fall 2027 grid**.

South's top current vaulting level is much higher—13'2.5" at the 2026 Sun Belt Championship.

My fit: Strong admission/merit possibility; athletic conversation needs coach evaluation.

THE HIGH-REACH SCHOOL I WOULD ADD

Emory University

This is the school I think is missing from your list. **Emory is the most interesting new school I found for the intersection of your academic profile, medicine and athletics.**

Academically, Emory College is highly selective. For the Class of 2029, it reported a 10.3% admit rate, 3.83 average unweighted GPA and ACT middle 50% of 33–35.

So this is absolutely a reach. But you're not a random 4.0 applicant.

And here is where it gets interesting: Emory is Division III, and its top women's pole-vault mark for the 2026 outdoor season was **3.54m—about 11'7"**. Your 11'0" PR is substantially closer to that level than it is to the SEC/Ivy marks we've been discussing.

Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships, but athletes can receive merit or need-based financial aid. Emory is also test-optional through the 2026–27 application cycle. **This is the kind of school where your athletic and academic profiles may overlap in a way we should investigate immediately.**

My fit: High academic reach / unusually interesting athletic-academic fit / ADD TO LIST.

OTHER HIGH REACHES

University of Georgia

UGA is a legitimate reach for you, not an unreasonable application. Its newly admitted Class of 2030 has a middle 50% of **4.13–4.40 UGA core GPA, 9–14 AP/IB/DE courses and ACT 31–34**. Your 32 is within the range.

Your actual position will depend heavily on UGA's recalculation of your core GPA, your school's curriculum and your senior rigor.

My fit: Reach / potentially very good overall fit.

University of Miami

Your 32 superscore sits around the median in Miami's latest readily available CDS data, which showed an ACT range of 30–33 with a median of 32. Miami superscores the ACT.

Your academics keep you in the conversation. Your distinction factors make the application more credible. (And your college admissions coach is an alumna that's very well-connected at UM...Go Canes!)

But this is still a selective university, and it's much farther from your family, which you have specifically said matters to you.

My fit: Reach / attractive academic and lifestyle option that needs a campus-fit test.

Harvard, Yale and Princeton

I am **not** taking these off your list. You have enough substance that I think a few very-high-reach applications are completely defensible.

But I also want us to understand what pole vault is and is not doing right now.

Princeton is unusually transparent: its published women's pole-vault standard is **13'0" for recruitment and 12'9" for admitted walk-ons**, with recruiting standards expected by the beginning of senior year. At 11'0", Princeton athletics is **not currently a recruiting lever**. That doesn't mean don't apply. It means Princeton would currently be an academic/holistic application rather than one we build around recruited-athlete status.

And the same basic caution applies to Harvard and Yale until coaches tell us otherwise.

MY PRELIMINARY BEST-FIT LIST

If I were building your list today, I would prioritize:

Best all-around fits: Samford, UAB, Auburn, Alabama, Ole Miss.

Strong athletic/financial leverage: UAH and Montevallo.

Potentially strong merit option: South Alabama.

Best new high-reach addition: Emory.

High reaches worth pursuing: UGA and Miami.

Very-high reaches worth keeping if you genuinely love them: Harvard, Yale and Princeton.

And I would begin coach outreach **much more broadly than this list**. We may discover colleges you have never considered where a coach sees your 11'0" junior PR, two state titles, 4.0 and 32 ACT and immediately wants a conversation.