

Maximizing Your Academic All-America Nominations

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Think of the changes that have taken place in the nominating process for CoSIDA's *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-America program over the years. The ballpoint pen was ultimately replaced by the typewriter, which has since yielded to the almighty computer, and what was once a paper-driven process has simplified to a data processing system, resulting in unprecedented growth and expansion of the program over the last five years.

And while this advent of technology has made things easier, it has put an onus on the nominating member to pay particular attention to highlight background items about his/her candidate that voters will take most note of. The 500 character limit is not a long one, so here are some tips to make your nominee stand out above the crowd:

DO'S...

*If your student-athlete has been chosen to an Academic All-America national or district team in past years, make sure that is the **FIRST** thing you place in your nominee's bio. Experience has shown over the years that voting members at both the district and national levels are more likely to choose a "repeat" honoree.

*Abbreviate whenever possible. Your fellow SID's are very intelligent and can figure out that DIII means Division III—they can also ascertain that if you are referring to the NE-10 or the GNAC, that they are conference affiliations.

*Highlight **MAJOR** athletic awards first, i.e., All-America, All-Conference, etc. These awards carry major weight when considering your nominee's athletic accomplishments.

*Highlight **MAJOR** academic awards, but use caution on placing items such as "Dean's List" near the top of your nomination. Those items are better suited towards the end of your nomination bio.

*List or highlight any interesting human interest facts about your nominee. Voters are always looking for those factoids and that sometimes can swing a vote or two in your candidate's direction. For example, if you have a player who has overcome a significant injury or has had another event take place that has affected his/her career, make sure that is noted in your bio.

***Highlight championships won and any pertinent statistical notes. Team accomplishments carry as much weight as individual performance, so if your nominee played a role in leading his or her team to a conference, regional or national title, make sure it is prominently placed in your bio information. If your nominee ranks among the national leaders in a statistical category, frame it with a quick hitter, i.e., “leads DIII in caused turnovers and ground balls”.**

***Contact your colleagues or members of the Academic All-America Committee if you have a question or problem that can be solved.**

DO NOT'S...

***Do not use your nominee's first, last or combination of both names in your bio materials—it wastes valuable space. For example, do not begin a nomination form with “John Smith has been a very valuable member of the men's tennis team at State Tech”.**

***Do not use phrases such as “John Smith is a great kid who works hard every day at practice and in a game.” Again, it wastes valuable space and is usually not very well-received by voting members.**

***Do not bog down your nomination with loads and loads of statistics—edit them down to a manageable number and make them meaningful. For example, do not use “Has posted career averages of 19.7 points, 8.9 rebounds, 4.2 assists and 2.9 blocks that rank ninth, 10th, 12th and 14th all-time in school history.” A better use of space would be to say “ranks in school's top 15 in four career categories.”**

***Do not overstate your nominee's multiple honors. It's a waste of space if you write “2007 GNAC third-team all-conference, 2006 GNAC second-team all-conference, 2005 GNAC third-team all-conference” when you can just say “3X all-GNAC”.**

***Do not understate your nominee's multiple honors as well. If your student-athlete has been on the Dean's List all seven semesters of matriculation, then write “Dean's List seven times” or, if there is space, “Dean's List all seven semesters”.**

***Do not refer to any other organization's All-Academic team as an Academic All-America honor. For example, if you have a cross country nominee who was named to the Coaches' Association All-Academic team, do not write in his/her bio that he/she was named to the “USTCCCA Academic All-America Team.” Remember, CoSIDA and *ESPN The Magazine* sponsor the only sanctioned Academic All-America Program with that particular tag.**

***Do not hesitate to contact your colleagues or members of the Academic All-America Committee if you have a question or problem that can be solved.**