STATESIDE COLLEGE ATHLETICS

# From Ireland to Stateside

A sample client journey: application to signing day




EXAMPLE ONLY · FICTIONAL ATHLETE

Founded by Oisín Spillane
Irish international · NCAA Championships athlete

Honest US college guidance for Irish track & cross country athletes.

HOW TO READ THIS

# Meet Ciara

This document follows one fictional athlete, Ciara, and her family through the full Stateside process. It shows exactly what happens at each stage, what you receive, and what's expected of you. Names, schools and numbers are invented, but the process is the one real families go through.

| Athlete profile (fictional) | |
|---|---|
| Athlete | Ciara Doyle, 16, Fifth Year |
| Club / coach | Riverbank AC, coached by Mary (stays her coach throughout) |
| Events | 1500m, 3000m, cross country |
| PBs at application | 1500m 4:31 · 3000m 9:48 · top-15 at national schools cross country |
| Academics | Solid student, aiming for H2s and H3s in the Leaving Cert |
| Goal | Run in the US on a scholarship and study something business-related |
| Family's worries | Cost, being far from home, and not knowing where to start |

## The journey at a glance

| When | Step | What happens |
|---|---|---|
| Oct, Fifth Year | 1. Application | Parent fills in the short form on the website |
| Within 48 hrs | 2. Fit call (free) | 15-minute call with parent and athlete |
| Nov, Fifth Year | 3. Assessment (€300) | Deep-dive call, then a written plan within 5 working days |
| Jan–Jun, Fifth Year | 4. Recruitment support | Profile, coach outreach, calls with coaches |
| Throughout | 5. NCAA eligibility | Eligibility Center registration, academic and amateur status |
| Aug–Nov, Sixth Year | 6. Offers & signing | Comparing offers, asking the right questions, signing |
| Spring–Aug, Sixth Year | 7. Visa & moving | I-20, student visa, and preparing for life in the US |

**One promise that runs through everything**

Ciara stays with her own coach the whole way through. Stateside never changes an athlete's training. Our job is the American side: the information, the plan, the outreach and the decisions.

STEP 1 · APPLICATION

# Filling in the form

Ciara's mum, Siobhán, found the website through a friend in a club WhatsApp group. The form takes about three minutes on a phone. Here's what she sent:

| Field | What Siobhán entered |
|---|---|
| Parent name / email / phone | Siobhán Doyle · siobhan@example.ie · 08X XXX XXXX |
| Athlete name & school year | Ciara Doyle · Fifth Year |
| Events & PBs | 1500m 4:31, 3000m 9:48, cross country |
| Planned start in the US | 2028 |
| Biggest question right now | “Is she actually good enough, and how much would it cost us?” |

Within 48 hours, Siobhán gets a reply with a link to book a free 15-minute call at a time that suits.

STEP 2 · FIT CALL (FREE)

# A 15-minute honest chat

This call is about one thing: is this worth doing, and is now the right time? Oisín speaks with Siobhán and Ciara together.

- **What Oisín asks:** Why America? What does Ciara want from college? Where is she in school? What's the family's rough budget?
- **What the family asks:** Is she in the right range? What would the process look like? What does it cost?
- **Honest outcome for Ciara:** Her times are in a realistic range for some Division I and many Division II and NAIA programmes, and Fifth Year is a good time to start. The assessment is worth doing.

> **If it's not the right time**
>
> If an athlete isn't in range yet, Oisín says so on this call and explains what times would change the picture. No family is asked to pay for an assessment that won't help them.

After the call, Siobhán receives a payment link for the €300 assessment and a booking link for the deep-dive call.

STEP 3 · ASSESSMENT · €300

# The deep dive and written plan

A 60–75 minute video call with Ciara and her parents, followed by a written plan within five working days. Below are excerpts from Ciara's plan.

## A. Where Ciara's times sit

| Level | Typical 1500m range for recruited women* | Ciara (4:31) |
|---|---|---|
| Division I: top programmes | Around 4:15 or faster | Not yet |
| Division I: mid-level programmes | Roughly 4:20–4:35 | In range |
| Division II | Roughly 4:35–4:55 | Strong |
| NAIA | Roughly 4:40–5:05 | Strong |

*Illustrative ranges only. Every programme is different, and coaches weigh cross country results, improvement over time and potential, not just one PB.

## B. Honest verdict

Ciara is a realistic Division I mid-level recruit today, and a priority recruit for many Division II and NAIA programmes. A strong cross country season this autumn and a 1500m in the 4:2X range next summer would widen her options considerably. Full athletic scholarships are rare for an athlete at her current level; partial athletic aid combined with academic aid is the realistic target.

## C. Target school list (excerpt)

| Tier | School (fictional) | Why it fits |
|---|---|---|
| Reach | Northern State University (D1) | Strong distance group; she'd need to keep improving |
| Target | Lakeside University (D1) | Business school she likes; coach recruits Irish athletes |
| Target | Mountain West College (D2) | Top-10 national XC team; generous combined aid |
| Safe | Prairie Valley University (NAIA) | She'd score from day one; small classes, low cost |

The full plan lists 12–15 schools, balanced across athletics, academics, location and likely cost.

## D. Next 90 days

- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (Oisín walks the family through it).
- Build a one-page athlete profile with results, times and academic details.
- Ask Mary (her coach) for a short reference and race schedule for the season.
- Film two race clips this cross country season for coaches who ask.
- Questions for the family to settle: budget ceiling, preferred regions, and whether NAIA is on the table.

STEP 4 · RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

# Reaching out to coaches

The Doyles chose ongoing support (from €100/month, agreed after the assessment). Ciara sends the emails herself. College coaches want to hear from the athlete, not a middleman. Oisín prepares her, reviews everything, and helps her follow up.

## Sample first email (written by Ciara, reviewed by Oisín)

> **Subject:** Irish distance runner, Class of 2028, 1500m 4:31 / 3000m 9:48
>
> Dear Coach Harris,
>
> My name is Ciara Doyle and I'm a Fifth Year student and distance runner with Riverbank AC in Ireland. I'm very interested in Lakeside University's business programme and your distance group. My PBs are 4:31 for 1500m and 9:48 for 3000m, and I finished in the top 15 at our national schools cross country championships. I've attached my athlete profile and race schedule for this season.
>
> Would you be open to a short call to learn more about your programme?
>
> Kind regards,
> Ciara Doyle

## Tracking every conversation

| School | Emailed | Reply | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northern State (D1) | Jan | Polite, “keep us updated” | Send summer results |
| Lakeside (D1) | Jan | Coach call booked | Strong interest |
| Mountain West (D2) | Jan | Coach call + academic check | Strong interest |
| Prairie Valley (NAIA) | Feb | Wants to make an offer | Hold until autumn |
| Six others | Jan–Feb | Mixed | Following up |

## Before every coach call

- A 20-minute prep session with Oisín: what the coach is likely to ask, and what Ciara should ask.
- Key questions: How many distance runners do you recruit each year? What does a typical week of training look like? How do you work with athletes' home coaches over summer? What academic support is there?
- After the call: a quick debrief, and an honest read on how interested the coach really is.

STEP 5 · NCAA RULES & ELIGIBILITY

# Staying eligible the whole way through

Eligibility is where families most often get caught out. Oisín guides the family through every step; final decisions always rest with the NCAA and the college.

## What the Doyles did

| Area | What it means for Ciara |
|---|---|
| NCAA Eligibility Center | Registered in Fifth Year. Required before she can make official visits or sign with a Division I or II school. |
| Academic certification | Her Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert results are reviewed as international transcripts. She keeps a broad subject mix, including English and Maths, throughout Senior Cycle. |
| Amateur status | She doesn't accept prize money above expenses or sign with an agent. Club and school racing are fine. |
| Contact rules | NCAA rules control when coaches can call, message and make written offers. Written offers of athletic aid can't be made before 1 August of her final school year. |
| NAIA | Separate eligibility process through the NAIA Eligibility Center, if NAIA schools stay on her list. |

## What's changed recently

- **No more National Letter of Intent.** The NCAA scrapped the NLI in October 2024. Athletes now sign a written athletics aid agreement instead, and once it's signed, other schools must stop recruiting them.
- **Roster limits.** Since July 2025, Division I schools that opted into the House settlement cap rosters at 45 for track and field and 17 for cross country, with no fixed scholarship limit. In practice, roster spots are tighter at some schools and aid is more flexible at others.
- **Rules keep moving.** Oisín checks the current rules at each stage so the family is never working from out-of-date advice.

**Why we never call ourselves an agent**

Stateside is an independent consultant, not an agent. Fees are flat, never tied to scholarship amounts, which keeps athletes clearly within the rules.

STEP 6 · OFFERS & SIGNING

# Comparing offers and making the call

By October of Sixth Year, after a strong cross country season, Ciara has three written offers. The headline percentage is only part of the story, so Oisín helps the family lay everything out side by side.

| | Lakeside (D1) | Mountain West (D2) | Prairie Valley (NAIA) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Athletic aid | 40% of cost | 50% of cost | 60% of cost |
| Academic aid | $6,000 / yr | $10,000 / yr | $5,000 / yr |
| Total yearly cost | $58,000 | $42,000 | $34,000 |
| Family pays / yr* | ~$28,800 | ~$11,000 | ~$8,600 |
| Renewal terms | 4 years, written | Year by year | 4 years, written |
| Course fit | Excellent | Good | Good |
| Training group | Strong, larger | Strong, close-knit | Smaller |

*Fictional figures. Real offers vary widely, and costs should always be checked with each college's financial aid office.

## Questions Oisín helps the family ask every coach

- Is the aid guaranteed for four years in writing? Under what conditions can it be reduced?
- Does academic aid stack with athletic aid, or does one replace the other?
- What's the full cost of attendance, including health insurance, flights and fees?
- Where do I fit in your roster plans, and how many distance runners are you signing this year?
- What happens if the coach leaves?

## How the Doyles decided

Ciara chose Mountain West. It had the best balance of cost, coaching and a training group she loved on her visit, even though it wasn't the highest-profile offer. Ciara and her parents spoke to the coaches and made the decision themselves. Oisín's role was to make sure they had the full picture and the right questions.

**Signing day**

Ciara signed her athletics aid agreement in November of Sixth Year. Once signed, recruiting stops. Other schools can no longer contact her, so the family made sure they were certain before she signed.

STEP 7 · VISA & MOVING

# Getting there and settling in

## The visa (checklist the Doyles followed)

| | Step |
|---|---|
| 1 | Ciara is admitted to Mountain West and confirms her place. |
| 2 | The college issues her Form I-20, after the family shows proof they can cover the costs not met by aid. |
| 3 | Pay the SEVIS fee and complete the online DS-160 visa application. |
| 4 | Attend a student (F-1) visa interview at the US Embassy in Dublin, with the I-20, passport and financial documents. |
| 5 | Arrive no earlier than 30 days before the I-20 start date. |

Visa rules and fees change. Families should always confirm current requirements with the US Embassy and the college's international student office. Stateside offers guidance, not immigration or legal advice.

## Life in the US: what Oisín prepares Ciara for

- **The first semester is the hardest.** Jet lag, a new training system and new classes all land at once. Expect a dip before the lift.
- **Training changes.** Higher volume, more racing and a team culture. Ciara and Mary (her home coach) agree a summer plan to bridge the gap.
- **Academics are continuous.** Weekly assignments and mid-terms, not one exam in June. Stay on top of it from week one.
- **Practical setup.** A US bank account, phone plan, health insurance through the college, and a budget for flights home.
- **Homesickness is normal.** A plan for calls home, Irish teammates or alumni to connect with, and someone to talk to on campus.
- **A check-in after the first month.** One call with Oisín to see how she's settling in.

WHAT IT COSTS

# Simple, flat and upfront

| Service | Price | What's included |
|---|---|---|
| Fit call | Free | 15 minutes with parent and athlete to see if it's the right time |
| Scholarship Assessment | €300 | 60–75 min deep dive, honest verdict, target school list, timeline, written plan within 5 working days, one follow-up question by email |
| Recruitment support | From €100/month | Ongoing help through outreach, coach calls, eligibility, offers and signing. Scope agreed with each family after the assessment |

## What we do, and what we don't

| We do | We don't |
|---|---|
| Give an honest read on an athlete's level, even when it's “not yet” | Guarantee scholarships, offers or specific schools |
| Build the plan, school list and timeline | Change or interfere with an athlete's training |
| Prepare and review outreach, and prep every coach call | Take commission or fees tied to scholarship amounts |
| Guide families through eligibility, offers and visas | Make decisions for the family, or speak for the athlete |

**Thinking about America?**

Fill in the short application at **statesidecollegeathletics.ie**, and you'll hear back within 48 hours to set up a free 15-minute call.

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