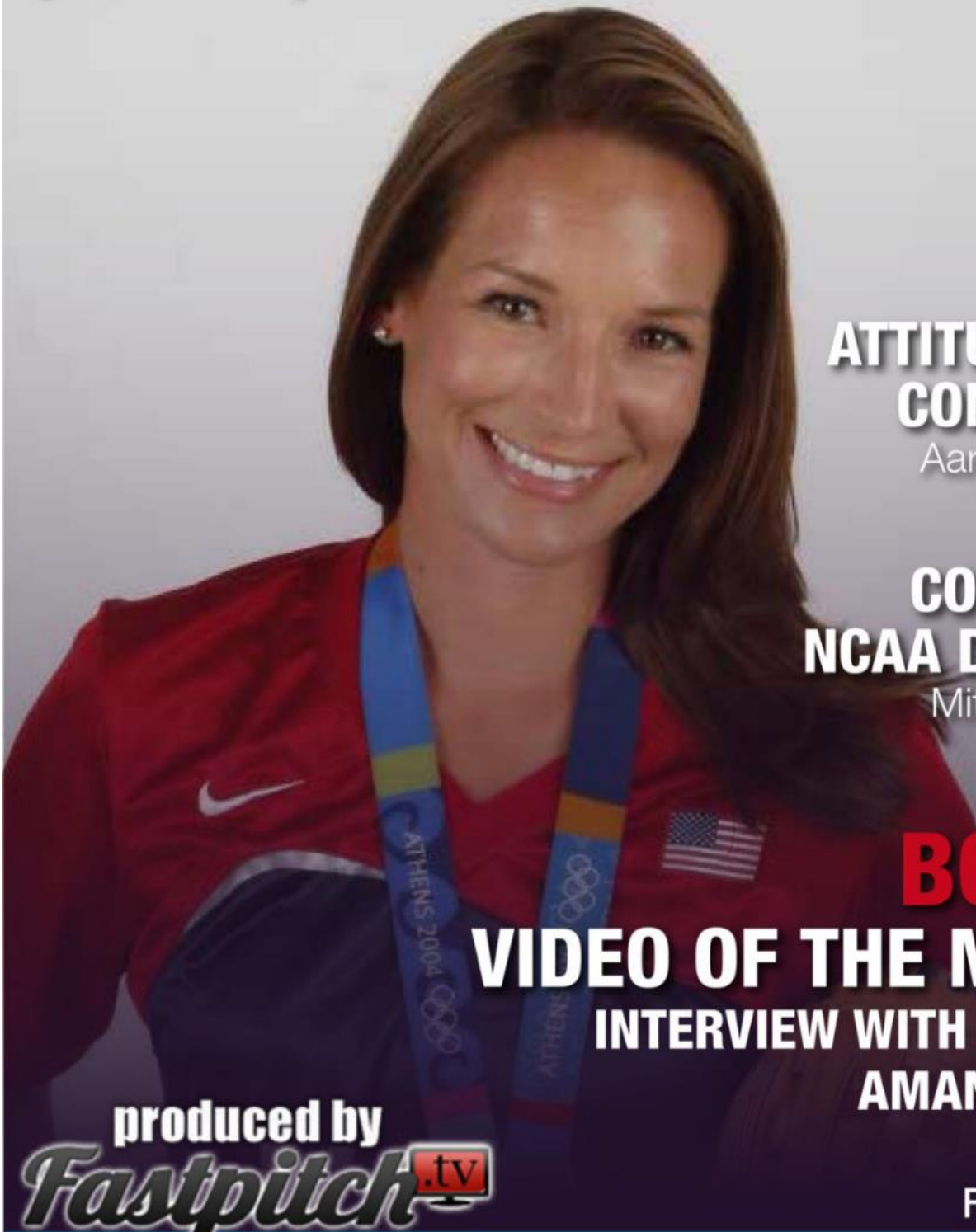


# FASTPITCH

## Softball

### MAGAZINE

ISSUE 54



**ATTITUDES ARE  
CONTAGIOUS**

Aaron Weintraub

**COMPARING  
NCAA DIVISIONS**

Mitch Alexander

**BONUS:**  
**VIDEO OF THE MONTH:**  
**INTERVIEW WITH OLYMPIAN  
AMANDA FREED**

produced by

**Fastpitch**.tv

FEBRUARY 2017

# CONTENTS

## COVER PHOTO

Interview with  
Olympian  
Amanda Freed



### **Bridging the Gap**

**Attitudes Are Contagious**

By Aaron Weintraub



### **Blast from the Past**

**Respect the Game**

By Brian Ingalls



### **School of Strength**

**Excuse or Statement: Part 3**

By Michelle Diltz



### **Softball Academy**

**Comparing NCAA Divisions**

By Mitch Alexander



### **Recruiting in the Fastpitch Lane**

**How to Prepare 12/14u Kids for Recruiting Through the Spring**

By Robby Wilson



### **Fastpitch Book**

**Pitcher Mental Toughness**

By Shannon Murray



### **Video of the Month**

**Interview with Olympian**

**Amanda Reed**

By Gary Leland



### **Drill of the Month**

**Cross Fielding - Fielding Drill**

By Gary Leland



### **Interview of the Month**

**Interview with Olympian**

**Shelly Stokes**

By Gary Leland





# SOFTBALL ACADEMY

with Mitch Alexander

## *Comparing NCAA Divisions*

Over the past five months, this column has provided interviews with four NCAA collegiate softball players. They currently attend schools at the Division I, Division II, Division III, and Ivy League levels. I included Ivy League as a separate level, even though they compete at the Division I level. However, their rules are restrictive enough that they warrant an individualized look. This collection of articles provided detailed information about how the players were recruited and what it's like to play softball at these different levels.

Below is a summary of the information collected for all three divisions plus the Ivy League. Keep in mind that the information provided may only pertain to the player and the school of the player interviewed and may be different at other schools. However, most of the information can be generalized to be fairly accurate for most schools within the same division.

Topic	Division I	Division II	Division III	Ivy League
Most helpful recruiting activities	Attending camps and clinics at schools	Emailing coaches and attending camps and clinics.	Open house / informal introduction	Emailing coaches and attending camps
Was the recruiting process stressful?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes



Topic	Division I	Division II	Division III	Ivy League
High school / travel positions played	Pitcher, OF, 1B, SS	Pitcher, 3B, SS, 1B, OF	Pitcher, 1B	Pitcher, SS
College positions played	Pitcher	Pitcher, 1B, 3B	Pitcher	Catcher
School perks for playing softball	Scheduling priority, free tutoring	Scheduling priority, free softball gear, access to private training facilities.	Scheduling priority, on-campus parking	Scheduling priority
College life	None to very little - Practice 20 hrs/week in Sept and Oct. Practice 8 hrs/week in Nov/Dec. Practice 40 hrs/week in January-June.	Little - Practice 10-12 hours/week in fall. Lift 2-3 times/week. In Spring, one day off per week.	Time to enjoy other things	Some
Roster size	20 (4 pitchers)	16	19-20	14
Fall Season	Games/Scrimmages on weekends	3-4 doubleheaders	1 doubleheader	2 doubleheaders
Spring Season	56 games. Play every weekend. Trip during spring break (2 weeks).	54-56 games. Play every weekend. Trip during spring break (1 week).	35 games. Play during the week, and weekends. Trip during spring break.	48 games. Play every weekend. Trip during spring break
Winter workouts	Strength and conditioning packet expected to be followed	Athlete is on their own to stay in shape	Athlete is on their own to stay in shape	Strength and conditioning packet expected to be followed
Summer workouts	One month off for recovery. Strength and conditioning packet emailed in June expected to be followed.	Athlete is on their own to stay in shape	Athlete is on their own to stay in shape / optional workout plan.	Strength and conditioning packet expected to be followed
Typical spring school day	Wake up at 8am. Go to class until 1pm. 2.5 hours of practice. 1 hour of lifting. Treatment in training room 1 hour. (Most programs have players wake up at 5 or 6 am and run before classes)	Wake up at 8am. Go to class until 12pm. 2-2.5 hours of practice. (Some programs have players wake up at 5 or 6 am and run/lift before classes)	Go to class. 2.5 hours of practice in the afternoon.	Wake up at 8am. Go to class until 12pm. 1 hour of lifting, 2 hours of practice. Classes 6-8pm. (Some programs have players wake up at 5 or 6 am and run before classes)



Topic	Division I	Division II	Division III	Ivy League
Are athletic scholarships offered?	Yes – 12 full scholarships that can be divided between players	Yes - 7.2 scholarships that can be divided between players	No	No
Are merit (academic) scholarships available?	Most (Stanford University and some others do not)	Most	Most (MIT, Caltech and some others do not)	No
Need-based aid available?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spring game schedule	Games start early February. Regular season ends early May. Playoffs and championships last through -June.	Games start early March. Regular season ends late April. Playoffs and championship last through mid-May.	Games start mid-March. Regular season ends late April. Playoffs and championship last through end of May.	Games start early February. Regular season ends early May. Playoffs and championships last through - June.
Coaches First contact	Can call after July 1 <sup>st</sup> of Junior year	Can call after June 15 <sup>th</sup> of Sophomore year	Any time	Can call after July 1 <sup>st</sup> of Junior year

The chart shows the similarities and differences between these four different levels of play. These four levels exist because not all students are looking for the same experiences with regards to both academics and athletics. Players who are skilled enough and desire a career in sports or coaching will probably be seeking out Division I schools. Players who desire a career in other aspects of sports may be interested in Division II or III. Players who are most concerned with academics will probably be interested in Division III or Ivy League schools.

Scholarship money is another area of consideration. Only Division I and Division II provide athletic scholarships. Division I, II, and III schools mostly all provide merit (Academic) scholarships, although many of the top schools like Stanford, MIT and Caltech do not. Ivy League schools only provide need-based grants. If scholarship money is of paramount importance, discuss options with the



coaching staff and admissions coordinator. For example, it's still possible for exceptional pitchers to receive a full-ride athletic scholarship, although this is becoming a rarity. Most of the time, when an athlete says they are receiving a full-ride, they are really referring to the total package, not just the athletic scholarship. For example, if a particular Division I school has an annual tuition listed as \$45,000, the athlete may be receiving \$25,000 as an athletic scholarship, \$15,000 as a merit scholarship, and \$5,000 as a grant.

In Division I, the average athletic scholarship is \$20,700/year. In Division II, the average athletic scholarship is about \$10,500/year. Private Division III merit scholarships average \$18,000/year, but can be up to full tuition! In addition, student-athletes and their families need to consider that athletic scholarships for both Division I and Division II are only for ONE year, and are renewable at the coach's discretion. This means that if the student-athlete gets injured, has poor grades, behaves poorly, or for many other reasons, their scholarship (and roster spot on the team) can be removed. Merit scholarships can be for one or multiple years. Many are for two or four years. Academic merit scholarships often have minimum GPA requirements to maintain the scholarship for the following year.

There are many things to consider when selecting an NCAA division: amount of travel to/from games, number of hours of practice, athletic scholarship availability, difficulty level of recruiting, level of competition, type of college life outside of softball, roster size, etc. Many students do not consider all of the attributes and consequences of playing at each NCAA level, or for specific schools. They only consider a few major attributes or sometimes, just one – school name/reputation. According to the NY Times, 33% of fresh-




man will transfer schools. Most students transfer because they are unhappy with one or more aspect of the school or their situation. This is something that is more difficult for Division I or Division II athletes to do. Student-athletes should spend adequate time researching and considering their options and make informed decisions when selecting an NCAA division and of course a college or university.

*Mitch Alexander is the creator of [www.varsityfastpitch.com](http://www.varsityfastpitch.com), a new web site to help students play softball in college. His area of focus is on youth sports and college recruiting. His wife Marie was one of the first female student athletes in the country to play Little League softball after Title IX was passed and played in the first Little League World Series. Over the years, both have managed and coached Little League and select/travel teams at all levels and helped spark a love for softball in their student athletes. Mitch can be reached at [Fastpitch2001@varsityfastpitch.com](mailto:Fastpitch2001@varsityfastpitch.com).*

**Use the code  
fptv 10  
to save  
10%**

**FASTPITCH TV STORE  
ITEM OF THE MONTH**

Sponsored By  


**Strike Zone Mat**

YouTube

FASTPITCH TV

The graphic features a background of yellow softballs on a red field. A central white mat with a red play button icon is shown. The mat has a green and yellow border and the text 'www.varsityfastpitch.com' at the bottom. A red softball bat is positioned vertically on the right side of the mat. The 'FASTPITCH TV' logo is on the bat. The 'YouTube' logo is in the bottom right corner of the mat area.