

## Tips to Guide You Through the Scramble Process

If you find on Match day that you didn't match to any programs, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- You are not a failure. Unfortunately sometimes people do not match to the programs they interviewed with. This does not mean you are a poor candidate. It is simply the nature of the match
- There are still plenty of good programs available, and they are looking for residents
- While it is competitive, you still have a chance of getting a residency. Every year, a lot of candidates attain residencies after match day through the scramble.
- In addition to going through the scramble, continue to plan for your back-up option, either searching for another position or pursuing a residency a year after graduation.

Next steps:

- You will likely have a few hours before the list of unmatched programs comes out. It is understandable that you may be upset upon finding out that you didn't match, but if you are going to fight for one of the remaining sites, you'll have to "put your game face on"
- Alert the people who wrote you letters of recommendation that you will be participating in the scramble and you may need additional letters of recommendation within the next week. If they are unable to do so with short notice, consider asking another reference to be ready to provide a letter of recommendation
- Be sure your CV is updated (and check for any potential errors, of course)
- Don't be afraid to let your peers know that you didn't match. I actually had a lot of classmates write me when they found out I didn't match and gave advice on sites that were still available. Some of them had even interviewed with these sites, so they had a really good idea about the feel of the program and the residency directors.
- This is a great time to utilize your network, start talking to references, faculty, advisors, and supervisors, etc. Let them know you are looking for opportunities and ask if they know of any openings or knows someone that knows of openings.

When the list of unmatched programs comes out (on the match website):

- Start sending emails and calling residency directors. The email should generally say something along the lines of, "Unfortunately I did not match to any programs this morning, but I am dedicated to attaining a residency position." Attach your CV to each email that you send. It helps if you call the residency directors as well. This helps them to see that you are very interested in the position.
- Be patient. Some programs didn't contact me for a week after Match Day (most directors were at the APhA Annual Meeting 2011).

Additional tips:

- It's called the "scramble" for a reason. I was getting 10 emails one day, and only 2 the next. It is important to keep good notes on each program and what you have sent each program, when they plan on making a decision, and when you have interviews with each one.
- Programs may call you back during the day; so let your work manager or rotations preceptor know that you are in the scramble, and hopefully they will be supportive of you taking calls at work if need be.
- Interviews: most programs will conduct phone or skype interviews with possible on-site interviews afterwards. Treat these like you treated your on-site interviews: PREPARE. If you don't know about the program, you don't seem interested. Be prepared for questions such as, "why do you think you didn't match?"
- If you have some downtime, begin preparing materials for application to sites that you are most interested in. Some sites will email you asking for specific post-match materials, while some won't specify. If they don't specify, I found they were impressed if I went to their website and found the application materials for the original match process.