

# Guide to Preparing for the Recruiting Process

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## **Table of Contents**

4 Goals You Should Set Before You Start the Recruiting Process	2
The 3 Steps in the Best Approach to Getting Recruited	4
The 3 Reasons to Re-Think Which High School You Attend	6
5 Things Every Recruiting Video Should Have	7
10 Basic Points to Hit on Your Resume	8
What Level Can You Play in College?	10
6 Things to Consider in Your College Search	11
The 4 E's of Attending Sports Camps and Combines	13

## 4 Goals You Should Set Before You Start the Recruiting Process

Getting recruited to play sports in college can be an arduous process for many high school athletes and their families. There is a ton of rules, strategies, tips, and ideas that you need to know and understand in order to play the recruiting game. Recruiting for many high school athletes begins as early as eighth grade, so you can get prepared for high school.

It is important to get prepared for the recruiting process before high school starts. The NCAA and NAIA look at every year of classes taken during high school, not just Junior and Senior Year like many families believe. It is smart to know exactly which classes you need to take in order to be eligible to compete at an NCAA school. But that's just one aspect of the recruiting process. What else should you know?

Here are 4 goals to make before you start the recruiting process:

- 1) **Get Organized-** In order to do well in the recruiting process, you need to be organized. You will need to collect your academic and athletic information and compile together a resume or profile to send to coaches. You will also need to keep track of which schools you want to target, and what you need to send to each school. If you are talking to more than a handful of coaches, it will be crucial to know when you have had contact with each coach, and what you have discussed. That is a lot of different information to stay on top of! That's why it is so important to get organized early and stay organized. You can use spreadsheets, charts, calendars, or whatever you think will help you keep track of it all.
- 2) **Get Good Grades-** Student athletes get recruited because they are good students, as well as good athletes. You should develop and establish good study habits before you start high school. Make sure that you are completing all of your homework assignments, papers, and studying dutifully for your tests. College coaches want to work with athletes of good character and who recognize the responsibility of being a student-athlete by not neglecting their studies. Getting a high GPA and doing well on the SAT/ACT can also help you earn more scholarship money through an academic scholarship in addition to an athletic one.
- 3) **Do Your Research-** Part of getting recruited to play sports in college will be to know and understand the process. The NCAA enforces many rules and regulations regarding recruiting and it's crucial to know which ones might affect you. For example, you need to know the various contact periods allowed for your sport; this will help you organize your communications with coaches and also when to expect contact from them. Further along in the process, you will also need to research the schools you are interested in and their admission requirements.
- 4) **Get Committed-** The recruiting process is a lot of work. And you'll be doing almost all the work yourself; don't rely on anyone else to get you recruited, it's up to you. You should take some time and discuss your goals and make sure that

competing in college sports is definitely where you want to end up. Don't do it for your family or friends, do it for you. So before you start on anything, you need to make sure that you are committed to the whole thing. From start to finish, you will be the one involved in everything, from putting together your video and resume, to emailing and phoning coaches. When you dedicate yourself to finding an opportunity to play in college, you are more likely to achieve that goal!

## The 3 Steps in the Best Approach to Getting Recruited

High school student athletes all have similar characteristics. They commit themselves to training and competing, master a student-athlete schedule, and contribute to their school. They are also coachable, cooperative, and goal-oriented. Needless to say, those student-athletes usually develop into very well-rounded individuals and go on to succeed well past high school. It's characteristics like these that will help you in your recruiting process.

The recruiting process is long and takes the same dedication as participating in high school sports. You will need to get organized, and schedule time to work on your recruiting throughout the year. Before you get the process started, here are three tips to consider and better prepare yourself to get in the game.

### *Commitment*

The recruiting process isn't something you just breeze through. If you are seriously interested in finding a scholarship opportunity to play sports in college, you have to commit yourself to this goal. Athletes are working towards goals all the time, and there will be hundreds of other high schoolers just like you who want to get recruited. That means that you have to fully dedicate yourself to reaching this goal. That means getting organized, staying on top of communications with coaches, studying for the SAT/ACT, and much more. If you are willing to pledge yourself to the recruiting process, you will be able to reach your ultimate goal.

### *Attitude*

If you are going to get the attention of college coaches, you need to have the right attitude. Firstly, be proactive. No one else is going to get you recruited. You need to take control of your recruiting and be responsible for accepting the process. You can get help and support from teachers, parents and coaches, but do not rely on them to get you recruited. You also need to be mature and professional. There's a chance that not every coach you contact will be interested in you, and that's okay. You need to be respectful and mature about their decision, then move on to the next one. It will not do you any good to get upset at the coach and say things that might get you in trouble. Adopting a positive attitude will help you and your family through the process, and it will become a project, rather than a chore.

### *Be Open*

When it comes to the recruiting process, the more the better. The more schools you consider, the more coaches you contact, and the more effort you put into it will all help generate better results. In order to have success in getting recruited, you need to leave your options open. If you are too specific in your school preferences, you will have fewer options to research and you may not find the best fit for you. While it is a great idea to know what you want in your school, you also have to make sure that you are not limiting yourself on possible opportunities. For example, if you know that you want to major in accounting, you should definitely research schools with that subject. But make sure to

explore schools in all division levels and in several regions of the country. You never know what school you may find if you don't expand your horizons!!

## The 3 Reasons to Re-Think Which High School You Attend

For many families, they don't put much thought into the high school that their student will attend. Either it's the local high school or it's the same school that their older siblings may have gone. But if your kid's goal is to get recruited to play college sports, you need to put more thought into which high school you send them to.

An athlete's high school experience could make a big difference in their ability to get recruited. This is because your choice in high school has a direct impact on the athlete's success during their four years there. In order to get recruited by a college coach, a high school athlete needs to do well in both their academics and their athletics. If a student struggles in the classroom and doesn't get good grades, this could keep them out of many colleges they are interested in. Also, if the athlete doesn't get the support and training they need to develop into a possible college player, then no college coach will be interested in them.

Here are 3 reasons to rethink your high school choice:

**Sport Availability-** This one is the most important (and probably the most obvious). If your sport is not offered by the high school that you plan on attending, this is a huge red flag. While it is possible to compete for a club team if there is no high school team available, college coaches are more interested in student-athletes who do both. High school teams and club teams offer different competition levels, additional training, and more consistent development.

**Academic Success-** Your athlete will need the resources and support to get good grades while in high school. These four years are meant to prepare a student for high education and the better they do, the more prepared for college they will be (not to mention possibly earning an academic scholarship). The high school you attend should have a strong support system or counselors, advisers, teachers, and coaches. Academics should be the number one priority when selecting a high school or college, as education has an impact on the rest of their lives.

**Coaching Staff-** High school is a crucial time in an athlete's career, especially if they are working to get recruited to play college sports. The coach that your student-athlete works with can have a direct impact on the success of that child. The coach should be looking out for their athletes and working hard to support them and ensure that success. It is important that the athlete and the coach work together to develop and enhance the player's strengths, while also keeping an open line of communication. When it comes time to evaluate the player to determine what level they can compete in college, the coach and athlete should be able to discuss it honestly and proactively.

## 5 Things Every Recruiting Video Should Have

Your recruiting video is an essential part of the recruiting process. College coaches want to see a highlight tape of your game and practice footage so they can get an idea of who you are as a player. Before they are able to see you in a game or at a camp, they need to be able to evaluate you and determine if they see you as a prospective student athlete.

A well-made recruiting video is essential to promoting yourself as an athlete. The first minute of your recruiting video will have the biggest impact on college coaches, so make sure it grabs their attention.

Here are 5 things that your recruiting video should have in order to have the most impact on a college coach.

**Quick Intro-** Whether you introduce yourself or use a title slide, you should make sure to have your name, contact information, high school, position, and jersey number and color available to the coach before watching the video. This is so they get to know you and so they can identify you on the tape. But don't make it too long or you might lose their interest.

**Spot shadow or Spot Light-** It's not always clear who they should be watching during a game so having a spot shadow or light on you during play is very important. Coaches need to be able to identify you on a tape if they are going to be able to evaluate you as a player. So make sure to choose clear, focused game footage so it is easy for them to do so.

**Game and Practice Highlights-** In order to evaluate you more completely, college coaches are going to want to see highlights from games and footage from practice. This allows the coach to see you in both competition and training, both of which are essential to athlete development. Make sure to keep the video between 3-5 minutes; most coaches don't have the time or patience to watch anything longer. If they like what they see, they might ask for more video which you can send later.

**Multiple Angles-** Having game footage from multiple angles helps keep your video interesting and shows more of your abilities to college coaches. Being able to see your technique, skills, and strengths from different perspectives helps keep a coach's attention during the video and take notes on you as a player.

**Offensive and Defensive Footage-** If applicable to your sport, it's always best to use highlights that demonstrate both your offensive and defensive skills. For example, basketball players shouldn't have a dozen highlights of themselves making layups; they should also use clips of them playing defense since it is imperative to be strong in both.

## 10 Basic Points to Hit on Your Resume

Getting recruited to play sports in college is very similar to looking for a job. You need to find colleges you are interested in and send them your information. When you start contacting college coaches, you will need to have a resume prepared for them. A professional resume is the best way to present yourself to a coach and highlight for them your academic and athletic achievements. By sending coaches a resume, you are demonstrating to them that you are organized, qualified, and serious about your college recruiting.

Resumes are meant to outline your athletic and academic statistics for coaches so they can get a glimpse of you as a student-athlete. They use it as a reference when comparing recruits against each other, so it's important to present yourself clearly and professionally. You need to make sure that your resume offers everything that a coach needs to have in order to seriously recruit you.

**Cover Letter-** A cover letter is used to introduce yourself to a coach and explain to them why you are interested in their program. You can briefly describe your current athletic status and your athletic strengths. Make sure to thank them for taking time to read your resume as well.

**Video Link-** The easiest and cheapest way to have coaches see your recruiting video is to upload it to a video-sharing site like YouTube, then include the link in your resume. This is much simpler and convenient for busy college coaches.

**Current Statistics-** You need to include the most current stats and times you have from your recent or current season. If you also have stats from past seasons, you can include them too; this way college coaches can see your progress over your high school career.

**Current GPA/Test Scores-** College coaches also need to see where you are academically. You need to have your most current GPA and SAT/ACT scores if you have them. If you haven't take the tests yet, let the coach know when you plan on taking them, and follow-up with them when you do.

**Current Team Information-** Make sure to let coaches know which teams you currently play for, both high school teams and any club or travel teams you may be on.

**Recent Events & Results-** List any recent events/competitions (up to a couple of months old) and the results for them.

**Upcoming Events-** If you know your teams' upcoming games or tournaments, you can include them so coaches can look into attending and watching you play in person.

**Contact Information-** After you introduce yourself, coaches will need your contact information if they are interested in you as a prospective student athlete. Make sure to include your mailing address, phone number (both home and cell, if applicable), and

email address. You can also let them know the best time to contact you to ensure easier communications.

*High School Information-* List the name of your High School and the phone number in case the coach needs to contact someone in the front office regarding your information.

*References-* You should have at least two references listed as a part of your resume. Include both their phone number and email address. Having references allows college coaches to contact people who know you well and talk about your qualifications. You should use your high school and club coaches if you can, as they are the best references to attest to your abilities as an athlete.

## What Level Can You Play in College?

High school athletes spend four years competing and developing strength and finely tuned skills. They work their coaches to compete at the highest level they can at their school. But high school sports are much different than college sports and the competition level is drastically higher in some divisions. So you're a great competitor in high school, and maybe one of the best on your club team; but how do you know what level you can compete in college?

When you know what level of college sports you can compete with, you will have more success in targeting the schools that will be the best fit for you. Here are 3 things you can do to help you determine the best division level for you.

### *Have a Conversation with your coach(es)*

Your high school and club coaches are the best resources for you to help determine what level of college sports you should aim for. Because they help train and manage your sports career, they are most familiar with your skills and abilities, and your position on the team. You should have a discussion with your coach and ask them to evaluate your athletic ability. While many high school athletes dream about playing Division I sports, the reality is that most of them are not Division I level athletes. So being able to have an honest discussion with your coach about where you could play in college is very important in being able to find the best opportunity for you.

### *Go to a Third Party Camp or Combine*

Camps and combines are hosted by schools and organizations to help high school athletes get their stats and skill levels verified. Once you have completed the camp, you can speak with coaches and officials about your results and have them evaluate your time at camp. They can also talk with you about your strengths and weaknesses, so you know what to work on when you leave.

### *Take a Look at Your Academics*

College coaches want strong students as well as strong athletes, so understanding your academics will help you find the right school. You are attending college to earn a degree while you play sports, so it is very important to find the right balance between the two. Talk to your academic advisor or do research on the admissions requirements for the schools you are interested in. You will gain a better perspective on exactly what college level you will fit into.

## 6 Things to Consider in Your College Search

Making the decision in which college you are going to attend is one of the biggest ones you'll make in your life. So it is not to be taken lightly. That's why it is so important to find the best college for you. This means a good balance of academics, athletics, and being able to enjoy your surroundings. In order to find the college that best fits you, where you will succeed, you have to do your research.

There are tons of things to think about when looking at colleges, especially when parents also have a say in where you go. They have one idea of colleges for you, and you might have something completely different. So where do you start?

Here are 6 things to consider in your college search:

**Size-** Do you see yourself at a small school or a large school? Think about how you like your classes to be. If you like small classes with personal attention from a teacher, then you might do better at a smaller school. If you like bigger classes and a larger campus, then maybe you want to go to a large school. You can get a good sense of how you feel about a school's size when you actually visit a school, so it's a good idea to take a trip to any schools you are seriously considering.

**Major-** Many high school athletes already know what they want to study in college, and some don't. Whether you know what you want to major in or you are bouncing between a couple of possible subject areas, this should be one of your main criteria in selecting a school. What you choose to get your degree in can help determine your future and your career path. So if you know what you want to study, make sure to target schools that have your major.

**Climate-** If you know that you don't want to live or go to school where it snows, then make sure to keep this in mind when you search for schools. You should become familiar with the climates in each of the regions of the U.S. That way, when you start targeting schools, you won't be surprised by weather conditions that you aren't expecting. Now, some people might not think that the weather is an important part of where you go to school but if you know you won't be happy in a certain type of climate, this will directly affect your success at that school.

**Distance from Home-** If you want to be able to travel home frequently, then take into consideration how easy it is to travel from your school back home. Some kids want to get as far from home as possible; and some kids want to be reasonably close so that travel home for the holidays isn't a nightmare. Traveling from school should be one of the items you budget into the cost of the college for your family. If you can't afford trips home from the school, then you might want to consider something closer.

**Cost-** Many student athletes who earn scholarships still overlook the actual price of attending college. For most, they will only be earning a partial scholarship, not a full

ride. You need to have a discussion with your parents to determine exactly what you can afford, with and without the help of financial aid.

**Comfortable-** Your time at college should be one of the most influential experiences of your life. As a student-athlete, you will be able to study and earn your degree while being able to continue to participate in your favorite sport. But take a second to ask yourself this question: would you want to go to this school if you couldn't be on the team? There are certain circumstances (injuries, sports teams get cut, ineligibility) in which athletes may find themselves without a team to be on. You need to be at a school in which you will still be successful, even without being on the sports team.

## The 4 E's of Attending Sports Camps and Combines

Depending on your sport, going to a camp or combine is a crucial part of your recruiting process. College coaches want to see high school recruits attend camps for several reasons. One of the most important is having the third-party verification of your skills and abilities. Many colleges and universities offer some camps during the summer which can be a great benefit if the schools you are interested in are one of them.

Here are the 4 E's of camps and combines and why they are so important to the recruiting process.

### Exposure

Colleges who host camps and combines offer direct exposure to that coach and university. So it is very important to take advantage of any camp taking place at a school that you are interested. Being able to attend a camp offers direct contact with the school and gives you a glimpse of student life at that college. When you make your plans to attend a camp/combine, make sure to get in contact with that coach ahead of time so that they are familiar with you before you show up.

### Evaluation

Many coaches aren't able to travel to watch you play whenever they want, so they rely on reports from camps and combines to evaluate distant athletes. Getting verifiable reports of stats and times from camp allows college coaches to take interest in athletes even when they can't be there in person. Being evaluated at a camp/combine also allows you to send information to coaches at schools you are interested in. Take advantage of having those stats and send them to college coaches.

### Education

Going to a camp or combine is beneficial to high school athletes in many ways. One of those ways is being able to learn what college coaches are looking for in prospective student-athletes. At these camps you get direct coaching and evaluations from college coaches and staff which means you can learn from them and ask them questions about your skills and abilities. They can also help you determine your strengths and weaknesses so you have an idea of what you need to work on when you go home.

### Exercise

This might be obvious, but attending a camp will also be beneficial to your training. Training year-round is important for many athletes so you can use the camp as a training goal in order to perform your best at camp. You should plan on training up until the camp or combine, and then use what you learned to develop or change your training plan. The exercises and drills that you complete at camp are most similar to what you would use in college, so it's a good idea to take some of that with you when you leave.