

Student-Athletes: Top 10 Recruiting Tips

Start the recruiting process early

If you wait until your senior year in high school, the only sport you will likely be playing in college is inter-murals. It's never too early to start thinking about where you would like to play and which colleges is the "best fit" for you. Don't wait until the last minute to decide to kick it into gear.

Don't rely on your coach to find a scholarship- this is YOUR education, so it's your responsibility

Be the driver...not the passenger. If you rely on someone else to find your scholarship, you might not like the end result. While college coaches like hearing from a current coach endorsing or supporting your abilities, ultimately, you being in contact with college coaches is not only your responsibility, but has the most impact. If you want that scholarship, you need to be the primary contact for the college coaches.

Academics matter: You are a STUDENT - Athlete

Many times, students don't understand the importance of academics in the college recruiting process and the emphasis college athletic programs place on good grades. Good grades and high standardized test scores make the student much more attractive to a college coach. Here is a simple formula:
ATHLETICS + ACADEMICS = COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

NCAA Division I is not the only option

Understand that NCAA Division I is not the only, sometimes, even the best option. You can find athletic scholarships in most sports at the NCAA Division II, NAIA, and/ or junior college levels. These schools offer a quality education, an opportunity for a high school athlete to continue his/her athletic career, and a scholarship to help cover costs. Don't rule out NCAA Division III schools, either. Although these schools don't offer athletic scholarships, they do offer

academic scholarships, merit scholarships, grants, loans, and other financial aid.

Make sure you understand the recruiting process

Take the time to understand the college recruiting process. You need to know the difference between 'head count' sports and 'equivalency' sports. You must know the terms 'contact period' , 'quiet period' and 'dead period'. You must understand the NCAA guide regarding academic preparation and make sure you are qualified in all ways. The more you understand the recruiting process, the better chance you have in play in college, better yet ... land a scholarship.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket - Create competition

College coaches talk to, and have interest in, many athletes each recruiting season, but only sign a select few. If you have a college that is extremely interested, you still need to explore other possibilities. Until you sign a National Letter of Intent or other required commitment documents, you must keep your options open. College coaches will agree that you need to be pursuing and communicating with as many schools as possible, so you don't end up with egg on your face.

Character Counts!

This might seem like an old-fashioned concept, but sportsmanship is one of the most important parts of college sports. Coaches are always watching, and if you are the type of player that enjoys taunting or mouthing off, you will most likely not be the type of player that would want on his or her team. While helping a player from the other team off the ground might not be as glorious as your perfect touchdown dance...college coaches will appreciate your sportsmanship much more than your excessive celebration penalty. College coaches certainly want good players, but mostly want good teammates, good students, and good citizens. Remember, you are an ambassador of the team, university and your family both on... and off the field.

Always play like someone is watching

We've all played in those games where all you want is get it over with and get out of there. Whether you're killing the other team, you're getting killed, or you just have better plans after the game. One thing that you must remember is that you never know who might be watching. That is why it is crucial to always

practice and play with all your effort....like someone is watching....because they are! Until the final buzzer, the final gun, or the last out...you must give 100%. Every time.

Be diligent!

Being persistent does not mean sending one letter, email or leaving a voice message with a few college coaches ... then waiting for the phone to ring with scholarship offers rolling in the door. You have to understand that your contact with any coach, in whatever form, may be your only introduction. And you aren't going to land a roster spot with one letter, email, or voice message. Be prepared to hear nothing from many of the schools you contact. Unless you are a highly recruited athlete, you must contact numerous schools, numerous times, with a strategic plan to find the right fit.

Have a game plan ... and stick with it!

The final recruiting tip is to follow the plan. It's hard work. If you want it bad enough, you'll stick with it, invest a few hours each month ... and you will find a place to play.