

Five ways parents should help with recruiting

By: **Joe Leccesi, NCSA Head Recruiting Coach** | February 20, 2018

*USA TODAY High School Sports has a weekly column on the college recruiting process. Here, you'll find practical tips and real-world advice on becoming a better recruit to maximize your opportunities to play at the college level. Joe is a former college-athlete and coach at the NAIA level, where he earned an NAIA National Championship. Joe is just one of many former college and professional players, college coaches, and parents who are part of the **Next College Student Athlete** team. Their knowledge, experience, and dedication along with NCSA's history of digital innovation, and long-standing relationship with the college coaching community have made NCSA the largest and most successful athletic recruiting network in the country.*



Parents often take on many roles in the recruiting process. Some become their child's sport agent, while others act more like a personal assistant, sending emails

on behalf of their athlete. Recruiting, however, is a time when your child needs to take charge, and that makes it hard for many parents to find their true role in the process. The following five tips will help make it easier and a more positive recruiting experience for everyone.

Don't do the work for your athlete

This is an “easier said than done” task, so I’m just going to reiterate it once more—*don't do the work for your athlete*. College coaches want to connect with your child and get to know them. If you're the one emailing, calling and speaking to the coach, it's very difficult for them to do that.

In an interview with **Positive Coach Alliance**, Anne Walker, the Margot and Mitch Miliias Director of Women's Golf, explains how important it is for coaches to build a relationship with their recruits. “What we're seeing far too often is: in comes the student-athlete with their parent, and the student-athlete doesn't utter a word,” she says. “We're seeing that a lot and that's really unfortunate because when they leave, I'm not going to coach dad or mom...I'm going to spend four years with that kid.”

Instead, encourage your student-athlete to feel confident around coaches. Remember that coaches are used to shy teenagers and they just want to know your student-athlete. Remind your child to answer questions with more than one-word answers and engage in the conversation by asking questions, too.

Make connections, help build a recruiting team

Your student-athlete's high school or club coach can play a significant role in their recruiting. Because of NCAA regulations, college coaches may reach out to a recruit's current coach first and ask them to help initiate a time to talk. Even more, their current coach will provide recommendations about your child's work ethic and character. This information is invaluable for college coaches as it helps them decide which prospects to pursue.

Also, you want to reach out to your student-athlete's guidance counselor and inquire about academic eligibility. The NCAA Eligibility Center requires every college-athlete to complete 16 core courses before they graduate high school. Your child's guidance counselor can help your family build an appropriate course schedule. Additionally, their counselor is responsible for submitting a final transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center at the end of their senior year.

Building good relationships with your student-athlete's coaches and high school staff will help your family move forward in the recruiting process. It's always best to be up front and honest with their coach about your athlete's options, and we recommend setting meetings earlier than later, so everyone is on the same page.

Read More: [**How Your Current Coach Can Help Your Recruiting**](#)

Model the right sideline behavior

College coaches evaluate you as much as they evaluate your student-athlete. They know choosing a college is a family decision, so it's beneficial for them to get to know you, too. You can impress them by setting a good example from the sidelines. Coaches notice when parents are being overbearing or complaining about playing time.

Also, be respectful of the coach's time. Often parents want to introduce themselves to coaches when they're evaluating prospects at a showcase or tournament. This actually isn't the best time to get their attention. Most coaches attend these kinds of events already knowing who they want to evaluate. So, instead, make sure your child reaches out to the coach ahead of time by emailing them highlight film. That way, they know who your child is, and when you approach them, they're expecting it.

Read More: [**How College Coaches Evaluate Parents On The Sidelines**](#)

Don't limit their options and keep the conversation going

If I had to guess, I would assume your student-athlete has their eye on a Division I program. Am I right? Here's the thing: DI spots fill up quickly and there are several competitive opportunities out there—that might even be a better fit for your athlete. I'm not saying Division I isn't an option, but what's the harm in researching other programs?

As your family visits schools, you may realize that your child's preferences begin to change. That's why it's so important to build a college list that includes a variety of schools. You can start locally—check out a few different divisions near home, including NAIA, if you can. See the campus in person and watch the level of competition. Keep the conversation going. Add and subtract schools as they begin to refine their likes and dislikes.

You can also network with college-athletes—maybe start with former teammates who have gone on to play in college. Ask them about their experience, so your family can have a better understanding of which factors matter most to your athlete when choosing a program.

Make sure they love the school outside of athletics

The transformation from high school to college comes with a lot of changes and being a college-athlete on top of that can be stressful. You never know what will happen. What if your student-athlete decides they don't want to play anymore? Or, I hate to say it, but what if they are injured?

Bottom line: you want to be prepared in the case that your child decides not to continue their sport. Transferring schools can financially and academically be a setback. You can avoid this by making sure that your athlete is attending a college they absolutely love, including their classes, living situation and campus life.

Read More: [Deciding If College Sports Is Right For You](#)

These tips can help you find your role as a parent in the recruiting process, but don't forget that simply being a caring, supportive parent goes a long way, too.