

# A Guide to College Recruitment - Baseball

By Gene Frost

After working with over 1,400 players as a private instructor, I have had many questions from parents and players about how to get recruited by college coaches. A new industry has been created over the past 10 years that focuses on helping families to get exposed to college coaches with product and service offerings that can cost thousands of dollars. After walking with 31 players who were recruited to play college baseball, the first thing I can tell you is to relax. Simply put, if a player is talented enough to play college ball, coaches will typically find them. But how they find them varies and you will learn more about this in this article.

It is very important to understand there are very few full scholarships given to baseball players due to the total number of scholarships allowed for baseball. As of the Fall, 2019, NCAA Division I schools have 11.7 scholarships to be divided among 27 players. These schools can carry a roster of 35 players leaving room for 8 walk-ons. All players on athletic scholarship must receive a minimum 25% scholarship. They must also maintain at least a 2.3 GPA. Division II schools have 9 scholarships to offer for baseball and have more lenient academic requirements. Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships. Instead, they get very aggressive with financial aid packages and each school establishes their academic requirements versus being regulated by NCAA. NAIA schools have 12 scholarships to offer and the athlete must finish two of the following academic requirements:

1. Finish in the top half of their graduating class
2. Have at least a 2.0 GPA
3. Score minimally an 850 on the SAT or 16 on the ACT

Junior college programs have 24 baseball scholarships to offer and provide players the opportunity to play 1-2 years for athletic and academic development before transferring to a 4-year college. A high-school diploma or GED is the only academic requirement. By understanding the various scholarship opportunities by level of play helps you develop a plan to play college ball. Also know that scholarships are typically for one year and must be renewed each year. In 2017, about 9% of high school baseball players went on to play college ball. Less than 2% played at the Division I level. These statistics are a great lead-in to our first point of emphasis.

**Focus on your skill set!** Many players focus on attending showcases and other events for exposure while also contacting coaches by mail and email. Your primary focus should be developing your fundamentals and mechanics! The cream rises to the top so if you are a solid player, you will get noticed without having to spend a lot of time on exposure. College coaches are quick to complain about the number of letters and emails they receive from players who are not talented enough to play college ball.

Attending showcases and playing a lot of games each Summer does not improve your skill set. Clinics, camps and private instruction builds your skill set. Finding a team coach that focuses on player development is hard to find but they are out there. It is important to remember, a college coach is not concerned about how many games your team won, they are concerned about your personal statistics. Too many players focus on getting on a winning team versus finding a coach focused on player development.

**Earn good grades!** Your GPA is a direct reflection of your work ethic and your level of responsibility. You must maintain a minimal GPA in college to remain enrolled as a student so a coach needs to see you can do that once you arrive on campus. Another major reason to earn good grades is to earn academic scholarships. There are very few full scholarships to play college baseball so you want all the financial help you can get. College coaches start building their recruiting databases during a player's freshman and sophomore years in high school. Keep in mind Freshman grades show up on your transcripts. No pass, no play.

**Keep all social media professional!** We are bombarded with social media today and it's easy to forget that it becomes a reflection of our heart and soul. College coaches want a personal relationship with their players. They want to know that each player is a good fit for the school and the baseball program. How will you handle adversity? How will you handle responsibility? How will you handle authority? What kind of teammate will you be? If you are on the edge of society in your social media or using offensive language or discussing controversial topics, a coach will probably run from you. It is important to remember that as a ball player and student of the college, you are a representative of the coach and the school. If you screw up, it makes the coach look bad and they do not want their job on the line over something one of their players has done.

**Choose a good fit.** What type of education do you want in college? What do you want to major in? What are your academic goals in college? The answers to these questions help define where you should attend college. By defining this, you can create a list of schools you desire to attend and focus on them for recruitment. Academic requirements, size of enrollment, costs, religious preferences and location are factors that must be considered when creating a list of target schools. "What does the school have that I want?" Will I progress as a ball player by attending that school?

**Establish a plan for exposure.** Division I, Division II and junior colleges primarily recruit through school ball and travel ball programs. Most NAIA schools use camps for recruiting purposes. You need to establish what level of college ball you are capable of playing through the use of scouts, showcases or level of competition played. Once you understand this, it will help you with your target list of schools. A personal video is the most effective way to impress a coach. I have produced many of these videos for the players I have worked with and the format I use is unique to anything being used today! The video addresses everything a college coach wants to see but offers much more that they never see. Remember, a coach wants a personal

relationship with you and your family. He wants to know you will be a good fit so the video I produce provides information to help with this. I also incorporate various technologies that measure swing metrics and throwing metrics along with slow-motion video analysis. The player explains the science behind their mechanics and this impresses coaches greatly!

**Be a team player!** Coaches do not like the “I” word. They want to hear the “we” word. Insecure, selfish people use the “I” word regularly in conversation and these types of players do not make good teammates. Selfish players are also not as coachable. They routinely drain a team’s energy and become a stress point for the coach. Be a team player.

**Develop your manhood!** My last point of emphasis is the most important because it determines your map into adulthood. Real men take care of themselves! They don’t rely on others to wake them up, or feed them, or manage their schedule, or tell them what to do and when to do it. Real men take initiative to do all those things on their own. A huge complaint of college coaches is their inability to be just a baseball coach. Due to the lack of manhood among players entering college, coaches must be a father, counselor and mentor as well as a coach. There’s a story of a Division I player that’s in his first semester of college and he’s ready to quit school and go home. The school is a national powerhouse in college baseball and his parents live only 30 minutes from the college. This player’s roommate informs the coach of the player’s thoughts on quitting. The coach calls the player to his office to discuss the situation and discovers the player is overwhelmed. For the first time in his life, he must wake himself up and manage a daily schedule. He must make good grades and attend baseball practices and games. And there’s an expectation of performing well. He’s simply overwhelmed and wants to go home. The coach assures the player that he has plenty of support and they will get through it together. The player decides to stay in school and goes on to become the number one pick in the Major League draft. Develop your manhood! Work on growing in responsibility, not independence. All young people want independence but growing in responsibility should be the primary focus. Take initiative to do things on your own versus waiting on someone else to do it for you. Your work ethic, attitude, level of responsibility, character, and desire to learn and grow in knowledge are all part of your manhood. Becoming a young man will impress a coach more than anything else you do!