**College Recruitment Packet**

**Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It’s always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules.**

**Freshman Year**

This is the time you should start your recruiting

* Establish a strong GPA
* Continue playing club soccer and train at the highest level possible
* Begin the college exploration process by starting to think about college preferences
* Create an email address that is used exclusively for soccer only
* Watch soccer games live or on television
* Prepare Individual Player Profile for tournament and showcase player profile books
* Focus on improving the elements of your game that need to be strengthened
* Attend College Recruiting Seminars
* Get Fit or Stay Fit

**Sophomore Year**

Coaches cannot call or write you yet, only send general information and camp information, so

don’t be disappointed if you write a coach and they do not write you back.

• **Keep your grades up!**

• Begin compiling a list of possible colleges or universities that meet your interests and

 research their academic and athletic programs

• Take the PSAT test.

• Write a cover letter and soccer resume and send it out to possible schools.

• Review NCAA Clearinghouse eligibility requirements. The summer before your junior

 year, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

• Select junior year courses to fulfill these requirements.

• Play at the highest level possible. Keep a record of athletic achievements.

**Junior Year**

As of September 1, coaches can return correspondence and write letters, but cannot call until on

or after July 1 before your senior year

• **Keep your grades up!**

• Send coaches updated resume and player profile, send dates of tournaments and league

 games.

• Organize a filing system on colleges that respond to your inquiry and indicate interest.

 You will need names and phones numbers of coaches and also when they indicated

 interest.

• Make a list of all the colleges/universities you have been in contact with and rank them in

 order starting with your favorite school (based on what you know at this point) down to

 your least favorite school. Start by calling the coach at your least favorite school. You

 will probably be nervous when you talk to this coach however, by talking to a coach at

 your least favorite college/university, you will gain confidence for when you contact the

 coaches who are higher on your priority list.

• Most likely, if you are calling a coach, you will get his or her voicemail. Practice leaving

 a message beforehand. You can even call yourself and leave a practice voicemail on your

 cell phone. If you do get in touch with a coach, make sure you take notes on the

 conversation. Also, keep a list of your top five questions to ask and make sure that these

 questions cannot be answered by looking on the Web site.

• Play in College Showcase tournaments, summer tournaments or participate in ID events.

• Attend any recruitment seminars at these tournaments. Also attend College Fairs and

 Summer Camps that will help you with the college recruiting process and have college coaches

 on staff.

• Consider attending the summer camp of a school of interest.

• Narrow your search to 10 or so schools and engage in regular correspondence with the

 coach.

• Make unofficial visits (at your expense) to selected schools. Meet with the coach and see

 the team play, if possible.

• Take the SAT or ACT tests. Make sure scores are sent to your schools of interest.

• Check your status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

• Select senior year courses to complete Clearinghouse requirements.

• Stay in touch with your high school counselor.

• Obtain financial form (FAFSA).

**Senior Year**

As of July 1, you can now talk on the phone with a coach. If you are a top level player, expect

some phone calls. If not, call the coach yourself. A letter followed by a call shows interest in the

program.

• **Don’t let down in your class work. Finish strong.**

• Check status with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

• Narrow your search to 5 schools.

• Complete FAFSA form again with recent tax information.

• Respond immediately to any interest shown by colleges

• Schedule and complete official visits (at schools expense). Meet with the coach and the

 team and stay overnight if possible, see the team play.

• Stay in touch with your high school counselor.

• Narrow down your choices and get your applications done early.

• Keep coaches updated on your achievements by sending them your resume through the

fall and play in high level events in November and December.

• Provide your coach and counselor with your interest college list. Discuss college interest

with your coach and counselor.

• Make a decision!

**Make a List of Colleges**

Draft a tentative list of colleges that interest you. Your list may include schools by:

* Location
* Major
* Academically
* Soccer Program
* Playing Time
* Coaching Staff/Style
* Team Dynamics

**Educate yourself about the Colleges on your List**

After you have created your list of schools, research the schools by:

* Using school web pages
* Personally visiting schools
* Talking to HS counselors
* Talking to club and HS coaches
* Talking to correct colleges student/athletes
* Researching books such as: Peterson’s Four-Year Colleges, The Big Book of

Colleges, Fiske Guide to Colleges, The Best 366 Colleges, or The College Board College

Handbook, Official Athletic Guide to Soccer

The University of Florida also maintains a Web page that list**s** links to US colleges and universities that offer bachelors and master’s degrees. That link is: **http://www.clas.ufl.edu/au/**

**Educate yourself about the Various Associations**

**NCAA Guidelines**

Students that plan to compete in athletics at the college level must meet certain eligibility

requirements set forth by the NCAA.

Students who plan to compete in athletics at the Division I or Division II college level must

complete the NCAA Clearinghouse form in order to be eligible. Division III does not use the

eligibility Center. To obtain more information visit the NCAA Clearinghouse web site at **http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net**

**What are the Divisions of the NCAA?**

**Division I**

For a list of member schools/sports link**:** [**http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=1**](http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=1)

**Division II**

For a list of member schools/sports link**:** [**http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=2**](http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=2)

**Division III**

For a list of member schools/sports link: [**http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=3**](http://web1.ncaa.org/memberLinks/links.jsp?div=3)

**What is the NAIA?**

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has different eligibility

requirements for student-athletes.

For a list of member schools and information about association visit the following links: **http://www.naia.org.**

**What is the NJCAA?**

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is the governing body of

intercollegiate athletics for two-year colleges.

For information on schools and eligibility requirements go to: [**http://www.njcaa.org/**](http://www.njcaa.org/)

For a list of member schools by gender and sport**:** **http://stats.njcaa.org/member\_colleges/college-directory**

**What is the NCCAA?**

The National Christian College Athletic Association was incorporated to provide a Christian based organization that functions uniquely as a national and international agency for the

promotion of outreach and ministry, and for the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of

intercollegiate athletic competition with a Christian perspective. For information on schools

and eligibility requirements go to**: http://www.thenccaa.org/** For a list of member schools by

region: **http://www.thenccaa.org/sports/2012/6/6/MSOC\_0606122857.aspx?path=msoc**

**How to Contact a Coach**

**Initial Interest Letter/Cover Letters**

The letter you compose should be short and direct. The letter is a way to request information and

introduce you to the coach as a prospective student-athlete. Here are some things to include:

• You name, high school, current grade level.

• Your home address, email address, phone number. (It is suggested that you give them a

 home number instead of or in addition to your cell, since it may not always be

 convenient for you to talk to them on your cell phone).

• High school soccer experience, years of varsity experience, team accomplishments, and

 personal awards.

• Current club team, recent team accomplishments

• Academic interests

**Sample Letter 1**

Date

Coach’s Name

University Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Coach \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is XXXXXXXXX and I am currently a junior at All Star High School in Jacksonville,

Florida.

I am the starting forward on my school team and have led them in goals scored for the

past three years. My team won the state championship in 2013 and was the runner-up in 2014. We

are currently ranked third in the state. I was named honorable mention all-state in 2014, second

team in 2012 and 2013.

I play for the Amelia Island Youth Soccer U17 Boys Team. I have played at the elite level since U-13. My team won the Florida State Championship for the past three years. In 2013, we advanced to the semifinals of Regionals. I also play forward for my travel team. My coach, Steve Smith, said he would be glad to speak with you on my behalf.

I have spent time doing research on what colleges would be a good match for me academically and

athletically. I am interested in majoring in psychology with a minor in English. I am very interested

in your College and your program and would appreciate receiving information from you.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

(Include your mailing address)

**Athletic Resume/Profile**

You should put together a resume that includes your basic personal information, athletic

accomplishments and provides information about your past teams, camps, tournaments and other

soccer experiences. Don’t forget to include athletic accomplishments in other sports as well.

Coaches like to see athletic versatility and talent. Then list your scholastic accomplishments,

include standardized test scores if available, and any extracurricular activities, such as school

clubs or volunteer activities. Let the Coach know of any showcase tournaments you will be

attending with your club team. That is a great way to be seen by a prospective coach.

**Sample Resume**

**Profile of XXXXXXXXX Graduation Date: June 20XX**

0011 Wayward Way

Fernandina Beach, FL, 32034

Phone: 904- 123-4567 (h)

Cell: 904-123-4567 (cell)

E-mail Address:

Parents Name:

**Personal Information:**

Height: 5’10” Weight: 166 DOB: 1/02/98

**High School Information:**

Name:

Address:

Phone Number

High School Coach:

Coach Home Number:

Guidance Counselor:

**Academic Achievements:**

**Athletic Achievements:**

Club Soccer:

High School Soccer:

Other Sports:

**Extracurricular Activities:**

**ODP Experience:**

**Academic Achievements:**

**Educational Goals:**

**Comment: If you do not have any of goals or achievements that fit into the categories above, delete the category.**

**How to plan a Campus Recruiting Visit**

* **Visit schools while in session**
* **Visit the soccer coach**
* **Bring transcripts and athletic resumes**

**What is An Official Visit?**

Although you are always welcome to visit college campuses at your own expense, you are

limited to five official visits in which the college pays for part of all of your expenses.

Completion of the SAT and ACT and a high school transcript are prerequisites to an official

visit, and you may only go on an official visit after the first day of your senior classes in high

school. Usually an official visit consists of an overnight stay where you will have a member of

the soccer team as your host. You will meet the coach and the team, learn more about the

program, attend a class and possibly attend a sporting event. You may also meet other recruited

athletes there for a visit. While there, talk to people and learn as much as you can.

Here are some things you should do in advance of a visit:

• Decide where to meet the coach.

• Get their number to avoid a mix-up.

• Get the time schedule for your visit.

• Ask for the names of your contacts on campus.

• Find out who is paying for any tickets or meals.

• Ask what to bring.

• Ask to meet with department chair in your area of interest.

• Ask to meet with admissions to understand procedure and ask questions.

• Try to see the campus on a regular school day while class is in session.

• Visit with players. Talk with the freshmen and sophomores to get their perspective on

 first-year experiences.

• Take notes regarding your visit.

• Always write a thank-you letter to the coach after your visit.

**Questions to Ask Prospective College Coaches**

From the 2015-2016 NCAA College-Bound Student-Athlete publication, pages 23-28

***About Athletics?***

• What positions will I play on your team?

• What other players may be competing at the same position?

• Will I be redshirted my freshman year?

• What are your training and conditioning expectations?

• What is your coaching style?

• How long do you plan to remain as the coach?

• What are preferred, invited and uninvited walk-on situations?

• How many students receive scholarships?

• Who else are you recruiting for my position?

• Is medical insurance required for participation?

• Does the college provide the insurance or must I purchase it?

• What is the cost of the insurance?

• If I am injured while competing, who is responsible for my medical expenses?

• What happens if I transfer to another school?

***About Academics?***

• Ask about the major program you are interested in? How good is the Department?

• What percentage of players on scholarship graduate?

• Do you have academic programs that support your athletes?

• If you have a diagnosed and documented disability (i.e. ADHD, ADD, etc), what kind

 of academic services are available?

• Are there restrictions in scheduling classes around practice?

• How many credit hours can you take in season and out of season?

• Is summer school available? If I need to take summer school, will it be paid for by the

 College?

***About College Life?***

• What is a typical day for a student-athlete?

• What are the dorms or housing options?

• What are they residence halls like?

• How many students are there in a room?

• Do I have to room with another soccer player or is my roommate a non-athlete?

• Can I pick my roommate?

• Do student-athletes have to live on campus? Are there any exceptions?

***About Financial Aid?***

• How much financial aid is available for both the academic year and summer school?

• What does your scholarship cover?

• How long will the scholarship last?

• Can I work while playing sports?

• What kinds of employment opportunities are available to me?

• Can I be employed in-season, out-of-season or during vacation periods?

• What is not covered by the scholarship?

• Am I eligible for financial aid? Are there any restrictions?

• Do I have to maintain a certain GPA to keep my academic scholarship?

• Under what circumstances can my scholarship be canceled or reduced?

• Does the school have a policy governing the renewal of athletics aid?

• What scholarship money is available after eligibility is exhausted to help complete your

 degree?

• What scholarship money is available if you suffer an athletic career-ending injury?

• Will my scholarship be maintained if there is a change in coaches?

**What questions should you ask teammates?**

• How many hours a day will athletics keep me from my studies?

• Does the coach discourage you from taking classes in your major that may conflict with

 practice?

• What percentage of athletes will graduate in four years? Five years?

• Is free tutoring available? How do I arrange for it?

• Do you like the coach?

• Do you like the size of the town?

• Is the town affordable?

• What is the composition of the team?

• Does the coach have a “B” team?

• Does the coach take all players that show up or do they also cut players?

• How many classes will I miss due to athletic commitments? Can I make up tests or work

before absences?

• How much does the team travel?

• How many hours a day do you study?

• How many players are on the roster?

**Information for parents and Guardians**

**Some of these items pertain to NCAA schools only. It’s always best to check with the umbrella organization to verify recruitment rules. The governing organizations meet on a regular basis and can change rules.**

**Amateurism and Academic Eligibility**

If you child plans to compete, practice or receive an athletic scholarship at a NCAA Division I or

II college or university, you must meet the NCAA eligibility requirements. It is best for your son

or daughter to register with the eligibility center at the beginning or end of their junior year.

Once registered, they must ask their high school counselor or register to have their academic

transcript sent to the eligibility center. Test scores must also be submitted. The eligibility center

must be listed as a separate recipient of the test scores. The eligibility center will not accept test

scores submitted on the academic transcript. They will review the records and send a

preliminary report. A final report is issued once a final transcript showing high school

graduation is submitted. Have questions call: 877-262-1492. You can check their eligibility at

the clearinghouse Web site: [**www.ncaaclearinghouse.net**](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)**.**

**Financial Aid**

If your child is eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics and is accepted as a full-time

student at a Division I or II school, they may receive athletics-based financial aid from the

school. That aid could include tuition and fees, room and board, and books. Division III schools

do not award financial aid based on athletic ability. A Division III college may award aid based

on need or academics. Some parents are uncomfortable pursuing private out-of-state Division III

institutions because of the sticker price. Do not think that just because a college costs $40,000 or

more per year that you cannot afford to attend. The cost of college all comes down to your

ultimate out of pocket cost, which is not necessarily the tuition price inside the college catalogue.

Although Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships, there are definite avenues to

receive financial assistance. A non-qualifier may receive only need-based financial aid (aid not

related to athletics). A non-qualifier also may receive non-athletics aid from private sources or

government programs (such as Pell grants). For more information contact the college’s financial

aid office. Here are some important things to know about athletic scholarships from Division I

and II schools:

• All athletics scholarships are limited to one year. There are no four-year athletic

 scholarships.

• Athletics scholarships may be renewed annually for a maximum of five years within a

 six-year period of continuous college attendance. Athletics aid may be canceled or

 reduced at the end of each year for any reason.

• Athletics scholarships are awarded in a variety of amounts, ranging from

 full-scholarships (tuition, room and board, etc.) to small scholarships (books).

• The total amount of financial aid a student-athlete may receive and the total amount of

 athletics a team may receive can be limited. These limits can affect whether a student-

 athlete may accept additional financial aid from other sources. You must inform the

 college financial aid office about scholarships received from all sources, such as civic or

 booster clubs.

• The athletics scholarship can be a benefit to your family, but is always best to have a

 plan to pay for college if an athletic scholarship is canceled or reduced.

**What is the FAFSA?**

The first step for obtaining financial aid is to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal

Student Aid) at **www.fafsa.org.** The biggest mistake a lot of families make is not filling the

FAFSA out because they think their family income is too high. This could not be further from

the truth. Every family, regardless of income, has an EFC (estimated family contribution)

number and the LOWER your EFC, the more aid you will receive. Even if you may not receive a

significant amount of financial aid, you should still complete the FAFSA because it can act as an

insurance policy for your son/daughter’s education. If there is a change or loss of income or an

emergency in your family; you will not be eligible for college funds if you do not complete the

FAFSA on an annual basis.

The first date you may submit the FAFSA is January 1 of senior year. Submit the FAFSAS on

this date or as soon after as possible! University financial aid budgets are limited and are

awarded on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you submit your FAFSA, the better your

chances of receiving aid. Each college/university has a specific deadline and at a certain point,

the money does run out.

**National Letter of Intent**

The National Letter of Intent is a voluntary program administered by the NCAA Eligibility

Center. When you sign NLI, your child agrees to attend the institution for one academic year. In

exchange, that institution must provide athletics financial aid for one academic year. If you have

questions about the NLI call 317-223-0706 or visit the NLI Web site at [**www.national-letter.org**](http://www.national-letter.org)

**Agents**

During high school, agents may contact your child and show interest in representing them.

NCAA rules do not prevent meeting or discussions with an agent. However, your child may

jeopardize their eligibility in a sport if they agree, verbally or in writing, to be represented by an

agent while attending high school or college, regardless of whether the agreement becomes

effective immediately or after their last season of college eligibility. Accepting gifts, either the

athlete or parent, can also jeopardize college eligibility.

**Scouting/Recruiting Services**

During high school, you might be contacted by a scouting/recruiting service. The NCAA does

not sanction or endorse any of these services. Remember, a scouting/recruiting service cannot

base its fee on the amount of the student’s scholarship. There cannot be any money back

guarantee.

## College Recruiting & You

Every year U.S. colleges award more than $1 Billion to nearly 150,000 student athletes. Over 1/3 of all NCAA athletes are on athletic scholarships.

Every year talented student athletes who desire to play collegiate sports do not get the opportunity to get noticed and miss an experience of a life time.

Every year there are quality college sport programs struggling to fill team positions.

Every year there are parents of student athletes who do not know what to do to help their child get recruited.

There's a lot of information on athletic scholarships out there. The problem is that most people just get overwhelmed with the rules and the ideas, and can't figure out a plan of action. Which means they stay frozen in their tracks and usually end up doing nothing effective.

If you're like most parents or college bound athletes, you have only vague ideas about how you'd go about getting a sports scholarship or just an opportunity to participate in college sport programs. You know you're good enough, and your coaches assure you that you can play at the college level, but where do you start?

You ask your coach, but besides contacting a limited number of college coaches he or she knows, they are not responsible to organize a scholarship search for you. You talk to your guidance counselor, but they really only know about academic scholarships. You talk to your friends and teammates, but they're clueless.

You can't afford to pay a recruiting service or consultant $1,000 or more, but you need help.

Each year thousands of student athletes and parents market themselves to college coaches. Some are very successful, some are not. It's not a difficult process if you have a road map and the basic resources to give your student athlete the best possible advantage. Regardless of the type of college sport, the process is the same - you have to get noticed to get recruited!

This is where the Student Athlete College Recruiting Guide can provide a clear Road Map, a Step-by-Step Process giving you detailed instructions, examples, templates and the confidence you need to start & finish the Recruiting Journey.

The key to success is to remember that this process is not a sprint, it’s a multi-year marathon and the journey starts with a common sense plan. Working the plan, as a Parent / Student team, spending a little time each month can open doors you never thought possible that lead you to a collegiate sports experience of a life time.

Let's play ball!

## Can my Student Athlete compete at the college level?

Let's be realistic. College sport positions and athletic scholarships aren't available to everyone. You should be aware that most student athletes will not be able to play Division 1 sports. There are too many athletes and only so many Division 1 schools. However, the vast majority of colleges or universities are not Division 1 schools and yet they have very competitive sports programs.

You or your student athlete will have to meet some important conditions to get to the next level. There is a significant level of student athlete competitors seeking to fill college sports positions and potential scholarship offers. You may be a “star” athlete at your high school, but you will need to know if you match up with other high school star athletes around the country.

You’ll need to identify your academic and athletic abilities and what division level student athlete you are to target the right schools where you have the best chance of competing for an opportunity, receiving a scholarship or incentive package. Ask all of your coaches and others you know that will be honest and candid with you. Ask them what they think of your athletic abilities and at what division level they believe you could compete in.

You may find that the truth hurts, or perhaps you’ll be surprised to find that you have underestimated your abilities. This is a critical 1st step in the process. You may waste your time if you focus your efforts on colleges with the wrong athletic division and academic requirements. You want to make sure you are targeting the right academic schools in the right athletic talent division.

To compete at the college level, coaches are looking for a student athlete who possess the applicable sport specific tools such as strength, speed, hitting, hitting for power, fielding etc. After that they look at character and mental toughness that make-up the will-to-win, attitude following failure, performance under pressure, respect for family and teammates.

## Common Myths, Misunderstandings & Misconceptions

Many student athletes and their parents fall into common recruiting myths & misunderstandings and they miss recruiting opportunities or even fail to execute an effective plan altogether. Don let the following misconceptions prevent you from finishing the race and taking next step in the journey:

1. If I'm good enough, the coaches will find me.

A very small number of recruited athletes are “discovered" by college coaches. The majority of student athletes have to take the initiative to contact coaches.

1. My high school coach will take care of my college athletic recruiting responsibilities to get me recruited with an athletic scholarship.

High School coaches are a great resource for college coaches. Few high school coaches have either the time or knowledge to take charge of your recruiting. It's your responsibility to market your talents and get your name in front of college coaches. The average high school coach has personal relationships with less than 3% of the collegiate opportunities across the country. You have to take charge of your own athletic career!

1. I'd have to be the best athlete on my team to get a scholarship.

Even if you're not a national superstar who is already being recruited, an accomplished, talented athlete has a great chance of being recruited, if you let the coaches know about yourself in the right way.

1. My team has to have the best winning season ever to get noticed.

So your Team didn’t win the State championship this year that also means that except for one, all other teams in the state did not win as well. College coaches rarely look at the entire team season in evaluating a player. A talented athlete has a great chance of being recruited if you let the coaches know about yourself in the right way.

1. College coaches do not like being contacted by student athletes or parents.

On the contrary, coaches hope to hear from good athletes who are interested in their program. Some blue-chip athletes come to their attention naturally, but there aren't enough of them for a coach to fill his or her roster. In many cases there are many more opportunities available than there are available student athletes. Coaches do not have the time, budget and energy to tour the country to find qualified student athletes. They expect you to come to them.

1. If college coaches are not visiting my school to watch me play, then I'm probably not good enough to play at the college level.

The college coaches for your sport are busy coaching the same time you are playing. While some sport programs use scouts, the majority do not have the budget or the staff to visit every school for every recruit. They depend on you sending them your profile & film.

1. I can wait until my senior year to look for an athletic scholarship.

The recruiting process will take time, you will need to start as early as possible. The best plan is to begin contacting coaches when you have JV or Varsity stats and film to show, usually by your junior year. You’ll want to get on the coaches radar as early as possible.

1. A Division I scholarship is the only opportunity for the high school student athlete.

Less than 1 % of high school student athletes receive a fully funded Division I scholarship. There are hundreds of outstanding Division II & III colleges around the country that provide scholarships, grant money, discounts and an outstanding education!

1. If I'm not good enough to play at the Division I level, then I'll play at the Division II level.

While that may work out for you, there are hundreds of outstanding Division III colleges around the country that provide extremely competitive programs, grant money, discounts and an outstanding education!

1. The only colleges to consider are the Division I big name schools.

Don't get fooled by the name game. This is about getting a quality education while being able to extend your student athlete career and have fun. Unless you are a top 1% athlete, it’s not about going professional. It’s about getting noticed, getting recruited and getting educated at the right college for you.

1. Once a student athlete is a senior, it's probably too late to be recruited.

Other than the Division I schools, the major of athletic recruiting takes place during your senior year. Eighty percent of the college programs make their final recruiting decisions after January 1st of the student athlete's senior year. However, the earlier you start the better!

1. Utilizing a recruiting service is the best way to get a scholarship or financial aid package.

College coaches rarely use recruiting services. However, many college coaches do use collegiate scouting organizations. I would only recommend an organization that has established coach relationships, works with qualified student athletes and offers some type of guarantee.

1. The best way to get discovered is to go to college camps because this is where a student athlete can get discovered.

College coaches and/or scouts primarily focus on student athletes already on their lists. Every college will market their camp to you. Camps are expensive, time consuming and do not always have the same college coaches participating. Many have local high school and student coaches teaching the camp. You have only few opportunities to use camps to your advantage based on your student athlete marketing plan. So be cautious, think it through, seek advise from your high school coach and spend your time and money wisely.

These common recruiting misunderstandings can cause you to miss real recruiting opportunities that could be the difference in thousands of dollars in college tuition cost or even the chance to play for at he team of your dreams! Focus on finishing the race and taking next step in the journey.

## What do College Coaches expect?

A very small percentage of high school student athletes receive college opportunities, scholarships or incentive packages because the coach “happened to find him or her.” Only the top elite athletes, the top 100 nationally receive enough media coverage and recognition that they are automatically recruited without having to make an effort. The other 99% have to take the initiative to contact the colleges and coaches where they have an interest. Most schools recruiting budgets are small, and coaches rely on you to contact them first. College coaches are very busy, they don’t have the time or budget to travel around the country to see you or your student athlete compete.

Cover letters, profile-resumes, stats, video and references become key tools for the coach in the recruiting and evaluating process. You might think that it’s too self-promoting to make the initial contact with a coach and to “market” your student athlete. However, this is the norm. If you don’t do it, other student athletes will get the opportunity, get noticed and get recruited because they and their parents will have made the effort and received the attention. These days, college coaches expect you to do this, it’s an expected practice!

Through my own college recruiting journey, I’ve had the opportunity to meet, speak with and, in some cases, develop a personal relationship with coaches. I have found a consistent set of expectations that coaches have of potential student athlete recruits:

Coaches expect you to be Proactive! Think about the number of student athletes that participate in sports in any large populated state such as New York or California. In popular sports such as football, baseball or soccer, there are tens of thousands of youth athletes. With so many athletes out there, it is impractical to think that a coach can learn about everyone and recruit all qualified athletes. Getting noticed is a huge challenge. So how is it possible to get noticed? The most effective means of recruiting is to recruit yourself by being proactive!

Coaches expect you to prepare academically! College Coaches expect that you understand that preparation academically is of primary importance to the recruiting process. This means preparing in the classroom as much as on the field. Failure to take care of your academic standing often means failure to achieve athletic goals. As an example, since Division III institutions do not offer athletic scholarships, academic performance is just as valued as athletic performance in the recruiting process.

**Understand this:**

Regardless of how talented your athletic abilities are, Your Grades will make the biggest difference in admissions and financial aid outcomes! Every college has academic Scholarships or Grant money that is awarded students and student athletes who demonstrate academic achievement. High academic achievement means you will be accepted into more colleges, have greater college choices, your tuition costs will be much less each year and allows you to get noticed and stand out from the pack.

College Coaches expect you to make the first contact with them. In most cases, if you’re not interested in their institution they will not force themselves upon you. Here are a few common sense rules of engagement college coaches would expect of you:

1. Be an effective communicator. The student athlete (not the parents) should write or e-mail the coach when appropriate. The student athlete should always call the coach back when they call you.
2. Little things count, be sure to review your letters and/or e-mail messages and spell their name and their schools name correctly.
3. Be honest. If you are interested in their program great, tell them. If not, say so, don’t waste their time or yours.
4. Provide your student athlete contact information, make sure to note when you are available. Share your cell phone number and e-mail address.
5. Complete applications, follow-up and send grades and teacher recommendations to the schools you have an interest. Get all the paperwork taken care of as early as possible.
6. Prepare your questions for them so when they call or when you visit you’re prepared, and have something to talk about. This shows that you are interested.
7. Do your homework. Know about the athletic program, the coach’s name, the division they’re in, their current record, any program history etc.

Keep in mind most coaches are working with limited budgets, very little time, staff and resources. You have to be persistent, prepared and polite to get noticed at any division. If nothing else, every coach wants players who can enhance their program. Character is a key component of integrity. Show your character!

## What can you expect from your High School Coach?

High school coaches are a great resource for college coaches. They will provide their top athlete list to all of their college coach contacts. They’re a valuable and powerful reference that college coaches will want to talk to about your student athlete.

They are an excellent source for a positive student athlete recommendation letter. Work hard to keep your relationship with the coach a positive one. Do not get caught up in the parent - coach “my athlete doesn’t get enough playing time” discussion - argument. If your student athlete is good enough, they’ll get enough playing time.

Consider developing your relationship with the high school coach by volunteering in some capacity to assist the coaching staff and the team as a whole, perhaps through the team booster club. I would suggest that if you can operate a simple digital video camera, offer to film each game or athletic event, providing a copy of the event for the coach and/or his coaching staff. Of course you would retain the master copy for your own video to supply college coaches when required.

Understand that few high school coaches have either the time or knowledge to take charge of your recruiting plan. The coach’s job is to coach the team. The average high school coach has personal relationships with less than 5% of the collegiate opportunities across the country. Consider yourself very lucky and be grateful if the coach has the time, ability and interest in providing any real college assistance let alone recruiting opportunities.

It's your responsibility to market your talents, get your name in front of college coaches and control your own college career!

## What can you expect as a Parent?

Let's talk about your involvement as a parent in the recruiting process... You must commit time to this!

Parents: the recruiting reality is that your involvement is as important as your student athlete’s ability to play at the college level. You must commit your time to this process!

Your son or daughter has his or her hands full with academics and athletics. It’s important that they do their best in these two areas because their ability to get potential scholarship offers, grant awards and/or incentive packages depends on it!

You need to take the lead in mapping out the plan, contacting schools, writing letters, writing E-mails, replying to coaches' inquiries, completing questionnaires and tracking communications. It's a big job and will get more complex as more coaches respond. This process is very similar to researching and preparing for the big career job interview. It takes time, patience and a clear focus on the goal to win the race.

This can be very overwhelming for your student athlete, so they will need your help, guidance, organization, patience and common sense decision making. When coaches start to write and call your student athlete, your son or daughter can get caught up in all of the attention. Keep them on task. Don't let them get side tracked from their primary responsibilities - academics & athletics!

## So what to do? You have three options:

1. Do nothing, cross your fingers and hope for an opportunity and a scholarship
2. Let an expensive recruiting service determine your student athlete's opportunities
3. Do it yourself marketing

The choice should obvious. You can do it, We can help... Let's get started!

## Step #1: Select the right schools to contact

Choosing the right college takes careful thought, consideration and common sense. It’s best to know what kind of student you child is and what type of learning environment they are be best suited for. It would be a shame to go through the lengthy college search and financing process only to find out in the first semester that your college choice has too few students in a small town with no activities of interest as their grades suffer and they long to be anywhere but at that college.

The Internet is the best research resource you have.

Start with the “College Planning Guide - Beginning the Search”

Also reference the “College Planning Guide - College Resource Links”

When you have a pretty realistic assessment of your academic & athletic abilities, I recommend finding a couple schools above your level, a couple of schools below so you have something to fall back on, and the rest right in the ballpark.

## How many schools should we consider?

From a recruiting standpoint, I recommend at least 20-25, but preferably 40-50. This is where your insight comes in. Your son or daughter’s world of reference is probably small, so they’ll only think of a few schools. However, you will have some ideas of where you want them to check besides. Write to those schools in addition to the ones he or she selects. You never know what will happen, and you want to have a number of options open months down the road when it is time to make the decision. It's a numbers game, the more schools you market to the greater than chances and opportunities of receiving a scholarship or larger financial aid package. Be careful not to dismiss colleges too quickly, consider marketing to colleges outside of your initial distance radius. You never know what opportunities you may miss.

## Gather college & college coach's contact information while researching

While you research potential colleges, use this time to also gather information for your marketing letters. You’ll need the names of the coach and/or the recruiting coordinators, E-mail and mailing addresses of the schools on your list. I recommend that you go to each school’s website to find out about their academic and athletic programs. This is not only a good way to find out the name and address of the coaches, but an excellent way to research the school and your sport at that school as well as costs and other decision factors.

There are several excellent, free sites to start with:

National Collegiate Athletic Association [http://www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org/) Go to the Sports & Champion section, find your sport, review each division, copy/paste the information into a spreadsheet to sort by state, division etc. You can use Google or yahoo to find each college's web site. You can copy/paste each college's web site information (both academics and athletics sites in your spreadsheet). This worksheet will become an invaluable tool as part of your overall research and future communications log. More on that later. Be sure to find the coach's name, E-mail, mailing address and phone number if possible. It may take a little time and energy to locate it.

Another free college search tool is the College Board web site <http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>. They have an excellent collection of tools especially for college searching using a detailed criteria. It too is not perfect because the directory also does not contain the actual coach's contact info.

## Next steps in the College Recruiting process to be considered and planned for:

Step #2: Write the right Student Athlete Cover letter

Step #3: Write the right Student Athlete Profile Resume Step #4: Coach’s Letter of Recommendation

Step #5: Plan & Prepare to Use Video Effectively

Step #6: Consider how you will use Technology

Step #7: Sending your Student Athlete Marketing Package

Step #8: Understanding the Student Athlete Questionnaire

Step #9: Tracking Your Communications

Step #10: NCAA Rules, Regulations & Resources

Step #11: Prepare to speak with College Coaches Step #12: Questions to Ask the Coach

Step #13: Sending out Updates to College Coaches

Step #14: Choose the right Sports Camps

Step #15: How do I know if my student athlete is being recruited?

Step #16: Follow-up Updates to College Visits

Step #17: The College Decision Matrix

## How do I know if my student athlete is being recruited?

Getting attention from college coaches is the dream of any young student athlete who has a genuine desire to participate in college athletics. Yet, many prospects and parents often think they are being recruited by colleges when they're really not. How can you determine if you are actually being recruited? Here are some helpful ways to assess your status with college coaches:

### You Are Not Being Recruited If…

* 1. If you have received information about a college from that institution’s admissions office, you are not being recruited to play athletics. You are being enticed through a highly effective direct marketing program to consider attending that college your freshman year. Colleges purchase mailing lists of prospective students who may fit their specific entrance requirements from several sources, but most likely they got your name and address from the companies that administered the standardized test you took during your sophomore, junior or senior year in high school.
	2. If you have received a letter from a college coach asking for information about you in the form of an introductory letter and questionnaire, you are not being recruited. The good news, however, is that you are in the first stage of the evaluation process. Getting on the radar screen is the initial and most crucial stage of the process. The number of questionnaires you have tells you how many coaches know about you. Period.
	3. If a college coach sees you at a tournament, a travel or club team event or meet, you are not being recruited. While it is rare for college coaches to discover talent at these events (they usually enter the gates with a list of players they have already evaluated on paper and on tape), keep your fingers crossed that they see you make a great play, hit a double off the wall, come from behind in a race or shoot the round of your life.
	4. If you receive a letter from a coach saying that he or she will keep up with you during your senior year, you are not being recruited. Coaches have a long list of prospects and they will keep all their options open until they decide on the top few athletes they will decide to invite to their campus for official visits.
	5. If a college coach calls your high school or travel team coach to ask for information, you are not being recruited. Again, the good news is that if a coach has gotten to the stage of calling others about your abilities, you are at the very least on their list of players to seriously consider.

### You Know You're In Recruiting Trouble When…

1. You have only a few questionnaires (or none at all) from college coaches and they are not the ones you have in mind. There are nearly 1,000 colleges carrying most sports across the nation. How many know about you?
2. You believe it when somebody tells you that if you are good enough college coaches will find you. That old saying no longer applies in most cases. With competition fierce for scholarships and roster spots, if your profile and videotape are not made available to a wide range of coaches, there is a good chance you will not be evaluated.
3. You do not have good statistics and videotape to give college coaches upon their request. Most coaches make their first evaluation of prospects based on the substantiated numbers they have posted. If you pass muster there, coaches will want to evaluate you on videotape before spending money to come and watch you in person.
4. You have narrowed your choice of colleges down to less than five colleges you will consider attending. The chances that you fit those specific coach’s needs (athletically, position, size, speed, strength, statistics and grades) are not in your favor.
5. You think walking on is a great option. If you are a true competitor, you will want to play in college, not just practice and sit on the sidelines while scholarship athletes are the only ones receiving significant playing time. Colleges love for you to walk on because you will be paying, in most cases, the entire fee to attend that school. However, walk-ons rarely see much playing time and typically miss out on things like making travel squads and living in the dorms with your teammates. If you must take this route, do your best to secure the status of “invited walk-on.”

**Feeling Overwhelmed? Don't be... Win the Race!**

# Each year thousands of student athletes and parents market themselves to college coaches. Some are very successful, some are not. It's not a difficult process if you have a road map and the basic resources to give your student athlete the best possible advantage. Regardless of the type of college sport, the process is the same - you have to get noticed to get recruited!

I’ve presented many facets of the recruiting process, but it would be impossible to cover all the variables in an article like this. I hope I've removed the mystery and I have been able to give you some of the tools necessary to prepare and guide you through the process. If you follow the

road map I’ve given you, I trust you will do just fine.

The key to success is to remember that this process is not a sprint, it’s a multi-year marathon and the journey starts with a common sense plan. Working the plan, as a Parent / Student team, spending a little time each month can open doors you never thought possible that will lead you to a collegiate sports experience of a life time. It's at that point I hope you would consider the race having been won.