

# College Recruiting Education Booklet

## 1 Introduction

Gaining acceptance into the college of choice is an increasingly challenging task. Earning a spot on a college sports team is even more difficult, but not impossible. In 2005, only 3.1% of high school athletes move on to play on NCAA teams.<sup>1</sup> Unless you are an elite player with college coaches beating down your door to recruit you, you will need to put in a significant amount of work to become part of that 3%. But don't let it intimidate or discourage you from pursuing your dreams. Although the college recruitment process may seem complicated and a bit mystical, it actually follows a rather defined path common across all NCAA division and to a lesser degree, the NAIA. There are also very specific steps you can take to give yourself the best opportunity of landing that coveted spot on the roster.

The intent of this booklet is to help explain the recruitment process and provide a framework to build a marketing plan for...you! You need to be prepared to aggressively market yourself to your targeted college coaches. What do you do? When should you do it? What colleges are right for you? We will address these questions and many others. However, this booklet should only be one of many resources you tap into. It doesn't have all the answers so seek out assistance from your high school guidance counselors, coaches, friends already playing in colleges, and don't forget your parents! However, one clear message you should get is that YOU must do the work. One of the most important pieces of feedback from college coaches gained during research for this booklet is that they want to hear from you. They don't want the phone calls and letters coming from your parent(s). You must be the one communicating with the coach.

ARVC would love to see every one of our members playing in college but there is a limit to what the club can do for you. Make sure you take advantage of all the resources available at ARVC (covered in section 7) but most importantly, be proactive, persistent, and take the initiative to act on your own.

And even if you are not successful in making a college team – do not forget the most important part of college – the education!

## 2 Navigating the University Sports System

College sports come in a variety of forms with the most familiar being NCAA Division I. These are typically the big name schools with the most sought after playing opportunities. However, there is a wide spectrum of college sports and it's important you understand what they are and the differences between them. Not everyone can nor wants to play Division I so our first step is to understand the university sports system.

### 2.1 *NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association*

The NCAA is an organization that colleges and universities (over 1,250) use to govern their athletic programs. All members must adhere to the detailed recruitment rules or face sanctions to

their programs. There are 3 divisions based on the number of sports required per gender and the athletic-based financial awards allowed. Division I schools must fund 7 sports for each gender (or 6 for men and 8 for women) and this must include 2 team sports per gender. Division II and III schools both must provide 4 sports per gender with the same team sports requirement as Division I. The primary difference is based on financial awards. Divisions I and II are allowed to provide a maximum number of athletic scholarships, which vary by sport. Division III schools are not permitted to award athletic scholarships. They may award financial aid based on academics, need, merit, etc.

Most sports, like men’s volleyball, are classified “equivalency sports” as opposed to some which are “head count sports” like women’s volleyball. Equivalency sports are allowed to divide scholarships among several students, providing “partial scholarships”. Head count sports are not allowed to spread out their scholarships and may only provide “full rides”. Here is a breakdown of the NCAA scholarships allowed for soccer and volleyball:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Division I</b>	<b>Division II</b>
Women’s Volleyball *	12	8
Men’s Volleyball	4.5	4.5
Women’s Soccer	12	9.9
Men’s Soccer	9.9	9

\* Women’s volleyball is “head count” based. Meaning only full ride scholarships are permitted.

## **2.2 NAIA – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics**

NAIA institutions view athletics as part of the overall education process with the emphasis on “student” in the term student-athlete. The NAIA has two divisions, Division I and II, both of which may award athletic scholarships. The NAIA does not serve as a regulatory body in the same way as the NCAA. Much of the recruitment process is left to the individual institutions, as long as they adhere to the general guidelines and intent of the NAIA. Therefore, there are not a set number of scholarships they are permitted to award nor do they have the same recruitment rules. The recruiting process outlined in this booklet is primarily focused on NCAA because it is the most restrictive. If you are interested in a NAIA college, you should contact them directly to find out their individual recruiting process.

## **2.3 NJCAA – National Junior College Athletic Association**

Junior colleges operate on a 2-year program. Athletes may play at a junior college and then transfer to a university, though their eligibility will be reduced by the number of years they played at the junior college. The NJCAA has three divisions. Divisions I and II may offer athletic scholarships though Division II has a lower monetary ceiling (they may not provide for room and board). Division III may not provide athletic scholarships. However, many Division I and II schools may elect not to offer scholarships so it is critical that you contact the college directly to find out what they offer.

## **2.4 NCCAA – National Christian College Athletic Association**

The NCCAA is a Christian-based organization functions both 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.<sup>2</sup>

The NCCAA has two divisions. Division I colleges offer athletic scholarships while Division II colleges do not. Many NCCAA colleges are also NCAA or NAIA members so you need to contact them directly to understand the opportunities available.

### 3 The Recruiting Process

#### 3.1 The Rules

NCAA Divisions 1 and 2 have the most restrictive recruiting rules. Coaches and staff involved in the recruiting process have to pass an exam to ensure they are aware of all the rules and regulations. There are also heavy consequences for failing to comply with the rules. All the details will not be covered in this section but there are some basic ones you should understand. They relate to the types of recruiting materials they are allowed to send and the types of contact they can have with your son/daughter. You can get more detailed information from [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org), “Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete”.

- Here are some definitions to help make the table easier to understand:
- Year: Current year in high school
- Recruiting materials: Any college/university materials sent to you from the athletic department
- Phone calls: Any telephone contact initiated by the coaching staff or you.
- Off campus contact: A coach comes to watch your high school game and/or comes to your home to speak with you regarding their university.
- Unofficial Contact: If you stop by a game or the coaches office during a visit to the campus that was FULLY paid for by you.
- Official contact: A recruiting visit paid for by the university allowing you to make an overnight visit to their campus (they cannot pay for a parent to accompany but you may pay the cost if they want to attend).
- Dead period: A prescribed set of days in which a coach may not have any verbal communication with you. The dates are different for each sport: check [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).

#### Division 1

Year	Recruiting Material	Phone Calls	Off Campus Contact	Unofficial Contact	Official Contact
Sophomore	Questionnaires and camp brochures only	From coach: NO To coach: OK	None allowed	Allowed-except dead periods	Not allowed
Junior	From Sept 1: Allowed	To coach: OK  From coach: March: Once From July 1: Weekly	In April: one visit to HS campus  After July 1: OK	Same as above	Not allowed
Senior	Allowed	To coach: OK  From Coach: Weekly	Allowed	Same as above	At start of classes: 1 per Univ: max of 5 (DIV I & II combined)

## DIVISION II AND III DIFFERENCES

Year	Recruiting Materials	Phone Calls	Off Campus Contact	Unofficial Contact	Official Contact
DIV II	After Sept 1 Junior year	From coach: Weekly from June prior to Senior year  To coach: OK	After June 15 prior to Senior year  Total of 3 in person	Allowed	Same as DIV 1
DIV III	Unlimited	No limit	Allowed after Junior year	Allowed	Same as DIV 1 but no limit

### 3.2 *The Key Steps*

You become a “prospective student-athlete” when you start classes your ninth grade year. Did you know where you wanted to go to college in ninth grade? Had you started looking at the sports programs at colleges in ninth grade? For most of you, the answer is no! There were many things on your mind but college was probably not at the top of the list (though it may have been for your parents!).

The important lesson here is **START EARLY!** College coaches do their heaviest recruiting with high school juniors. Bringing in top recruits is a very competitive business and they want to get their target students committed quickly. Not only does it help them beat other colleges to the punch, it also serves as a guide for what positions they still need to recruit.

There are 5 main steps each coach uses. They will all have their own unique process, but generally speaking, they will follow this format:

#### 3.2.1 **Create an A List**

They will create a list of their desired recruits starting their junior year. You want to make sure the coach knows your name **BEFORE** your junior year. The sooner you can get your name on their radar, the better.

#### 3.2.2 **Questionnaires**

The initial contact from a coach will be a questionnaire. They will send them to all the recruits on their A-list as well as any other students who contact them with interest in their program. The questionnaire is the equivalent of providing a resume for a new job. It is **CRITICAL** that you fill out the questionnaire completely and legibly. It is important that you complete the form and not your parent(s). Send the questionnaire back promptly. If you delay in returning it or send it back wrinkled, stained, or barely legible, it is a strong indicator to them that you are not very interested in their program.

#### 3.2.3 **Narrowing the A-list**

Once the coach receives the questionnaires, they will start narrowing their A-list. Initial decisions will be made on a variety of sport-related factors such as physical characteristics and playing experience. They may be looking for a specific type of player needed to fill out their roster. For example, a volleyball coach may need a middle blocker and if you are 5’5” tall, you’re not likely to meet their needs.

They will also work with the Admissions department to perform an initial evaluation regarding your academic potential for admissions. This will be based on your GPA, SAT/ACT

scores, course load, etc. There are specific academic requirements you must meet to be eligible for recruiting. Some of the requirements will be covered in the coming sections but you need to refer to the “NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete” for all the details. If you fail to meet the requirements, it doesn’t matter how good you are...the coach is not allowed to recruit you.

### **3.2.4 Official Visits**

Once the coach has created their short-list of recruits, they will start making official visits. The methods they use may vary and will depend on their budget and time constraints but generally fall into these categories and may be done in this order as well:

Attend High School Game: Even though you may have sent a skills video, they need to see you in action. Depending on when the coach makes the visit, they may or may not be able to speak with you. That is based on the NCAA recruiting calendar for your sport.

In home visit: The coach or an assistant coach will come to your home with a dual purpose. They want to evaluate you in person to determine if you are a wise investment but they also need to “sell” their program to you. They will want to meet with both you and your parents. They will probably show you a recruiting video, highlighting all the positive aspects of their program and university. This will be your first chance to truly show them your personality and your interest. Be well rested, dressed appropriately, and ensure your home is free of distractions.

Campus visit: Coaches will normally offer these only to their top recruits. An official campus visit means the university pays for your transportation, meals, and lodging for the visit. You will have the opportunity to talk with players and students. You will get a brief glimpse of the environment and personality of the university. If you are offered a visit, take full advantage! Be prepared with questions and learn everything you can to help you make your decision.

### **3.2.5 Scholarship Offer**

This is the golden ticket. Going on an official campus visit does not necessarily mean you will receive a scholarship offer. The coach will (usually) offer more visits than scholarships. If you do receive an offer and you want to take it, Congratulations! If you choose not to accept it, be sure you communicate with the coach promptly.

## **3.3 *Becoming More Recrutable***

College recruiting is a business. It is important you understand this because you must learn to “market” yourself to the coach. Later in the booklet we will cover Marketing Strategy but first you need to know how to make yourself an attractive recruit – how can you be more “Recrutable?”

### **3.3.1 NCAA Clearinghouse**

In order to play in a Division I or II sport your freshman year, you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse evaluates your academic performance to determine if

you meet the NCAA requirements as a freshman student-athlete in Division I or II College to be able to compete, practice, and receive a scholarship. Registration is mandatory and should be done after your junior year in high school. There is a \$50 fee and registration is done online at [www.naaclearinghouse.net](http://www.naaclearinghouse.net). (If you have already received a fee-waiver for the SAT then you may be eligible for a fee waiver for the clearinghouse as well).

Based on your academic record, the clearinghouse will give you one of the following classification for Division I or II schools (since Division III cannot offer athletic scholarships, they are not involved in the clearinghouse).

**Qualifier:** This means you are fully eligible.

**Partial Qualifier:** Typically referred to as “Red Shirting”. You are eligible to receive a scholarship but may not compete during your freshman year. You are only allowed to participate in practices in your home facility.

**Non-qualifier:** You may not receive an athletic scholarship nor may you practice/compete with the team during your freshman year.

There are very specific requirements regarding the types of class you must complete to be a qualifier. There are also GPA requirements, which vary based on your SAT/ACT scores. You need to fully understand the requirements right now or you risk failing to be qualified and jeopardizing your freshman eligibility.

All the information you need, in addition to some worksheets you can use to track your academic requirements are in the “NCAA College Bound Guide for the Student- Athlete”. Contact information for receiving your free copy is in the “Resources” section of the booklet.

### **3.3.2 Continued Athletic Improvement**

Do not rest on your laurels. Even if you are an elite athlete, there is always room for improvement. Get honest feedback from people you trust, whether it’s your high school coach, club coach or even friends playing on college teams. Be realistic about your strengths and weaknesses so you can focus on improving. Also, do not limit your energies to only the physical skills of your sport. Work on your strength, endurance, flexibility, speed, and mental toughness.

If a coach is watching you your sophomore/junior years, they expect to see continued improvement during your senior year. If they do not see you improve, they may doubt your commitment to the sport. Do not give them any reason to doubt you!

### **3.3.3 Be a Leader**

Coaches are not just looking for players – they are looking for leaders. They want the person who knows how to handle pressure and will step up and lead their team to victory. If they come to watch you play, they are observing more than just your skills. They also focus on how you play. How do you interact with your teammates? Do you keep a positive, competitive attitude? Do you listen to your coach and take directions well? Do other players feed off your positive energy? You need to ensure all the answers to these questions are a resounding, YES! A college coach knows they can work with you to improve your skills but they have no patience when it comes to poor attitudes.

### **3.3.4 Well Rounded Student**

College admissions are becoming more and more competitive. Even with the prospects of a potential athletic scholarship, you will benefit from presenting yourself as a well-rounded student. Admissions offices look for extracurricular activities besides sports. Be involved in your school, community, church, etc.

## **4 Creating a Target List**

Now that you have taken all the steps to ensure you are as “recruitable” as possible, it’s time to decide where you want to go! One of the mistakes many high school students make is setting their hearts on one particular school and not exploring any other options. You are much more likely to enjoy your college experience if you make your decisions on more important factors than just the name of the university. So the process outlined here starts with NO names!

### **4.1 Step 1: What is important to you?**

Before selecting names of universities, start by deciding what characteristics of the schools those are important to you.

Academic preferences: What subject areas interest you? Do they have a strong faculty in those areas?

Location: Do you prefer an urban lifestyle or something a bit quieter and leafy? Do you want to be in the East, South, and West?

Campus Size: Do you want to know all the people in your year or do you prefer the anonymity of large classes? Do you like small classroom environments with more teacher interaction or the diversity of a lecture class with 100 fellow students?

Personality Traits: Are you independent or do you need structure? Do you want to live close by home or are you ready to travel?

You need to be really honest with yourself when answering these questions. You might tell your friends you want to go to college in another state – but maybe in reality, you’re not ready to be too far from home. Or it could be the exact opposite. Perhaps you like to think of yourself as really outgoing but are actually more introverted and could end up getting lost in a sea of 1000 classmates, feeling lonely and regretting your decision. Complete honesty is the key in defining the type of school you want to attend. When you finish Step 1, you should be able to write a sentence describing your ideal university. As an example, “I want a university with classroom sizes less than 50 students, on a rural campus in the mid-west with a strong drama department and active on-campus student nightlife.”

Once you have established your priorities, you can begin your search based on those criteria. There are numerous resources you can use to perform your search. The website [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com) allows you to perform searches on a number of different parameters. You may also find one of Kaplan’s books, “The Unofficial, Biased, Insider’s Guide to the 320 Most Interesting Colleges” useful. You can find out information about it on the website [www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com). Combine tools like this with other informational sources to create your target list.

### **4.2 Step 2**

Now it is time to take your target list and research the sports programs. The most important factor to consider is your likelihood of playing. Obviously, you are putting in all the effort because you want to actually PLAY!

By now, nearly all universities have well-developed websites that can provide you a lot of information regarding their sports programs. If you are not sure of how to find information on your targeted schools, you can check the website [www.collegecoachesonline.com](http://www.collegecoachesonline.com). It will provide you contact details and limited information on a large number of universities.

Closely examine the media guides for the team. The player profiles are keys to understanding your playing opportunities.

- **Years of eligibility:** How many seniors and juniors are on the team? If it is a young team with a lot of freshmen and sophomores, then they won't be losing many players to graduation and thus, will not be recruiting heavily. This limits opportunity.
- **Positions:** Look at the position you want to play. If you play volleyball and are a middle blocker, do they already have 3-4 in that position? Or maybe they only have 2 and they are both seniors. What kind of holes will they have opening?
- **Geography:** Check where the players are from. Are they all local to the university? If so, it may mean the coach does not look to recruit outside his/her area due to preference or budget.
- **Physical traits:** How do you match up physically with the current players? In a sport where height is a benefit, are you far shorter than those on the roster?
- **Ability:** Obviously, the best way to compare your current ability with the team is watching a game/match. If this is not practical, then look at the high school careers of the players. Most media guides will have a short description saying what high school they attending, significant awards or recognitions received, etc. Do you have a similar sports resume?

### **4.3 Step 3**

Now it is time make the tough decisions. Do any of the schools on your target list lose their appeal once Step 2 is completed? Are a couple schools really standing out as a good fit from Step 1 and offer good playing opportunities from Step 2? These are the decisions you will need to make to narrow your list down to a few targets. If you keep a large list, you may have difficulty with the time and effort required over the next few months but that is a choice you need to make based on what is right for you.

## **5 Marketing Strategy**

The recruiting process is very similar to marketing and sales in business – but both sides play the salesperson! You need to take every step possible to “market” yourself to your colleges of choice. Meanwhile, the coach has to “sell” you their program as well.

An organized approach is important to ensure nothing gets forgotten, returned late, or any opportunities missed. Create a separate folder for each college. Make a checklist for the front of each folder. Any correspondence you receive from the coach should be dated and placed in the folder. Also keep a copy of anything you send to the coach and place in the folder. Any materials you need to complete and return should be logged onto the checklist. Once you return the material, enter the date. Life gets busy and it is easy to lose track of what you sent, what you

received, when you last heard from a certain coach, etc. This approach will create a good record of all correspondence.

Once you are organized, it is time to develop a “marketing strategy” for yourself. You need to build a strategy that works for you depending on the time and resources you have available. Don’t be afraid to ask people for help, even your parents. You might be surprised how wise and resourceful they are!

Here is an example of a very thorough marketing strategy – you can customize it to fit your needs:

- **Letter of Interest:** This is your way of telling a coach you are interested in their school and program. You should send it as early as your sophomore year, if possible. If you are already older, then just get it together as soon as possible. As mentioned earlier, coaches start their recruiting 1-2 years out so you want to be on their radar early! The letter is similar to a business resume (this is where your parents may come in pretty useful). It should be personalized to the university. The general content can be standard for each of your targeted schools but customize each one to show you are a specific interest in their school. It should also be limited to one page. It may seem difficult to edit down to that size, but coaches have limited time and are more likely to closely read a one-page letter. You should include all of the following:
  - Why you are interested in their program. What is it about the school that you like – academically, athletically, etc?
  - Your personal characteristics – your goals, leadership abilities, personal values, etc. How will those make you valuable to the team?
  - Your academic record in high school
  - Brief highlights of your athletic achievements
  - Request materials about their university and team – media guide, info on campus, team schedule, etc
  - Include your high school / club schedule
  - Mention desire to come to see a match (if possible)
  - Include player profile (see below)
  - Offer to send a skills video, if available (see below)
- **Player Profile:** It is not necessary to go to great expense to create a fancy, multipicture filled profile. A good profile can easily be created using a simple tool like a Microsoft Word™. It should only be one page and include the following key elements:
  - Physical traits important to the sport – for example, Volleyball players should include height, reach, vertical jump, dominant hand, etc
  - Academic performance – Graduation year, ACT/SAT, GPA, honors, etc
  - Playing experience and accomplishments
  - Personal information: Include a little something to show them who you are as a person, not just a player.
  - Contact information
  - Head shot: It helps for them to put a face to the name
- **Skills Video:** A well-done skills video can be a good tool to convince a coach to give you a further look. However, a poorly made video can also be damaging. If you decide to make a video, get some help from your coach or someone with a good knowledge of your sport. Another option is to edit down some game footage (obviously a game you played well!) to short clips.

- Media Clippings: If your name shows up in the newspaper regarding your high school/club performance, clip it out. Make copies and send it to the coach with your follow up contact.
- Follow up Contact: As a general rule, coaches will respond to any athlete who contacts them with an interest in their school. However, if you write to them during the middle of the season it may take them a few weeks due to traveling, practice, etc. Typically, they will either send a questionnaire or a “ding” letter. If you receive a questionnaire, it means you had peak enough interest for them to gather more information. It is a good sign but there is no commitment behind it, so don’t get too excited and drop all your other possibilities. If they don’t think you are a fit for their program based on the information you have provided, they may send a “ding” letter. It will basically say “thank you but no thank you”. Try not to be too discouraged. That is why you created a good target list – so you have more than one option! It is also very important to keep in mind that COACHES NETWORK! Recruiting is a competitive business but they also help each other out. Here is a description of a very common situation:

Coach Smith at Southern University (volleyball) is looking for a setter. You are a setter and you wrote to Coach Black at Northern University. Coach Black doesn’t need a setter but knows that Coach Smith does. Coach Black and Smith run into each other while out watching players at the Junior Nationals tournament. Black tells Smith that he’s gotten a letter from a setter that looks like a great fit for him. Black passes your information on to Smith. A few days later, you get a letter from Coach Smith with a questionnaire. You are a bit confused because you had never heard of Coach Smith and didn’t write to Northern University. You do a little research on the school and decide it looks pretty interesting. You fill out and return the questionnaire.

You just never know what will happen. That is why it’s important to maintain any relationships you develop. If the coach sends you a ding letter, ask them to keep you in mind if they know of other programs looking for a player like you.

- Web page: Web pages are a great tool for providing coaches up-to-date information. They can be built and maintained inexpensively on public servers or can be much more complex if you desire. You can also include more photos and video clips. By providing the coach with the web page address, they can check in at their leisure to keep a tab on you.
- Unofficial Campus Visit: If you are able to visit the college and attend a game, it is a great way both to see if you really like the school and for the coach to gauge your interest level.
- Showcases: These are camps specifically designed for college recruiting. The showcase organizers will arrange for coaches to attend the camp and see a large number of players they may not otherwise be able to see...all in one place over a day or two (typically 2 days). You will usually spend the first part of the showcase performing the different skills for your sport. For example, a softball showcase may start with timed base running, fielding ground balls, fly balls and batting practice. Then the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the showcase is live play. If you plan to attend a showcase, be sure to include that information in your letter of interest or follow up contact.
- Recruiting Agencies: There are many businesses that call themselves “College Athlete Recruiting Agencies”. It is important you fully understand what these companies can and cannot do before you pay for their services. They are not allowed to call college coaches

and provide individual player information. If you are short on time and can afford to pay, then they may be a good resource. They can help you with player profiles, skills videos, etc. However, they are not a substitute for you putting in the time and effort to contact coaches. College coaches are very familiar with the agencies and they are not necessarily well received. Many coaches will not even read material sent by the agencies. They understand it is a business and therefore, the agency is biased – they are being paid by you to make you look good.

## **6 Questions to Ask**

It is very easy to become overwhelmed when you make a visit (either official or unofficial) to a campus. In order to make the most of each visit, you need to spend time preparing questions for the coach, players, admissions office, students, faculty, etc. Listed below are examples of the types of questions you should consider. Do not be shy! It may be the only chance you will have to talk with future teammates and fellow students during this process.

When you meet with people at the university, be sure to take note of their full name (proper spelling) and contact address at the school. After you return home, write a short thank-you note to each person who spent time with you. Handwritten, personalized notes are become a rare thing in the days of email. However, it will be appreciated and is a simple way to make a positive impression.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE COACH:

- Are you interested in recruiting me or will I have to walk-on? (for unofficial visits)
- What is the policy for walk-ons?
- What position do you see me playing?
- What is the off-season workout schedule?
- If I suffer an injury or become academically ineligible or you decide I'm just not good enough for the team, what happens to my scholarship, if I have one?
- What are the graduation rates for athletes on the team?
- Am I eligible for any other sources of financial aid?
- Are there academic tutors available?
- Am I expected to arrive earlier than the beginning of the school year?
- Are there any team rules or policies I need to be aware of?
- What equipment does the team provide for the athletes?
- Will I have required study hall hours?
- How often does the team lift weights and condition?
- Is this a full-year commitment or can I play other sports? (if interested)

### QUESTIONS FOR ATHLETES:

- How do you like the coaches?
- If you could do it all over again, would you still choose this school?
- What don't you like about the program?
- Is it difficult keeping up with your schoolwork?
- How do the professors treat athletes?

- How accessible are the academic tutors?
- How many hours per day do you study?
- How much time do you devote to the team in the off-season?
- How are the living arrangements?
- Do all the athletes hang out together?
- What do you do socially?
- How do the other students on campus feel about athletes?

#### QUESTIONS FOR ADMISSIONS OFFICE:

- How does my academic record compare to other incoming students?
- Am I missing any required / recommended courses for acceptance?
- What is the average ACT/SAT score for incoming students?
- Besides academics, what other areas weigh heavily in the admissions decision process?
- What types of financial aid are available?
- What is the graduation record for the team?

## **7 Coaches Tips**

In speaking with college coaches while researching for this booklet, there were a few reoccurring topics. Below are the 5 tips they want to offer you:

*Ensure it is the player making the contact with coaches and not the parent*

The coach needs to know it is truly YOU interested in their program and not just your parents. Every coach has been burned by time spent recruiting an athlete who was only following their parents' wishes and ends up backing out at the last minute...or quitting after they've already accepted a scholarship (leaving the coach short a player and wasting a scholarship for the year). They can tell if the player is writing the letter / email – be sure it is done by you. Your parents can help but you need to take the lead.

*Be organized: Keep files on all school contacts*

As discussed in Section 4 Marketing Strategy, organization is important. Coaches do not appreciate receiving the wrong questionnaire back or getting letters address to a different university.

*Unofficial visits*

Coaches really like to see athletes taking the initiative to come visit if they are able. It is a great indicator of your level of sincerity and interest. Coaches are limited on the number of official visits they can budget so although you may not have received one, by making an unofficial visit you could possibly earn yourself more consideration for an offer.

*Sport camps of top choice schools*

Coaches attend top caliber camps because they can see a large group of athletes all in one place (similar to showcases).

*Put all key data in player profile, don't hide anything.*

Your player profile needs to provide all the key information – but be honest! Don't stretch your height an inch or two. Don't be generous with your base running speed. It will only jeopardize your integrity because they will find out the truth when they see you compete.

*"We network!"*

"Network, network, and more network". Coaches love to chit-chat and gossip about the latest great recruit they've found. They also share information. Continue any relationships you develop with coaches even if you do not have a playing opportunity with them. Ask them to keep you in mind if they know of a different school looking for a player like you.

## **8 Summary**

Our goal for writing this booklet is twofold; to help you understand the college recruiting process and to provide a framework you can use to give yourself the best opportunity to become a college student-athlete in your chosen sport. It is not an easy process and can be filled with both excitement and disappointment. Do not become discouraged if the path is rocky; instead focus on these five points:

- Start early
- Be open-minded
- Be realistic
- Be aggressive
- Be persistent

Use any and all resources you have for help. The next page lists some resources covered in the booklet and a few not covered. The web is a nearly unlimited source of information, so dig in with both hands and get busy! Good luck in your journey!

## **9 Additional Resources**

- Compare schools: [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)
- Compare sports programs: [www.collegecoachesonline.com](http://www.collegecoachesonline.com)
- Program details: Individual college websites
- Comprehensive info on NCAA: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)
- NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete:
  - Free copy by phoning 800-638-3731
- Communication tool: [www.universityathlete.com](http://www.universityathlete.com)
- Financial aid search: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)