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STUDENT-ATHLETE GUIDE TO BE RECRUITED

By Steve O'Brien

Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruited

By Steve O'Brien

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Created in the United States of America

Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruited

by Steve O'Brien

Steve O'Brien is a former student-athlete who played hockey at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) from 1995-1999. Steve was team captain in his senior year leading the team to the Hockey East Regular Season Championship. Steve was named top defensive defenseman in Hockey East ('99) and participated in The Frozen Four two consecutive years ('98 and '99).

Steve played professionally for 7 years in North America and Europe.

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Steve is also the creator of **Goal: College Athlete** (www.goalcollegeathlete.com). The website was created to 1) **inspire** young athletes to reach their full potential and play collegiate sports at the highest level possible and 2) give them a **better understanding** of why reaching their full potential will positively enrich their lives: [Click to About Us – Goal College Athlete](#) for more information.

Steve graduated from UNH's Whittemore School of Business and Economics and received his MBA from Coventry University as a Merit graduate.



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INTRODUCTION

Why I Wrote This Guide

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**INTRODUCTION: WHY I WROTE THIS GUIDE**

My name is Steve O'Brien and I played hockey at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) from 1995-1999. I played on great teams, received an excellent education and built tremendous friendships. In short, I had a amazing experience athletically, academically and socially. It was one of the best periods of my life. **Playing collegiate sports (no matter what level or sport) is something few people get to experience and it can't ever be taken away from you.**

I wrote this guide to help you: The young athlete who wants to be recruited to play his or her sport at the college level. The guide provides in-depth strategies and a step-by-step plan to help you attract college coaches' attention, engage with them and get you on their recruiting lists. **If you can be successful doing this with multiple coaches and schools, the chances of getting the best offer possible and finding the school that fits best for YOU greatly increases.**

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The guide provides strategies and tips helping young athletes in their recruiting process including:

- **Example emails** that get coaches' attention.
- **Call scripts** when calling coaches and leaving voicemails.
- **A self-evaluation technique** to assess your athletic and academic ability to determine what level of college sports is best for you to pursue.
- **Instructions** on how to build an effective “**target list**” of schools.
- **Be Proactive** - why and how you must be proactive and pleasantly persistent with coaches.
- **Be Professional** – your recruiting process should be treated with the same level of dedication: focus, time, effort and maturity as you put into your sport and studies.
- **Numbers Game** – You have to reach out to many coaches and programs, multiple times and stick to your recruiting strategy through the good and the bad (no matter what).

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**IT'S ABOUT THEM NOT YOU**

While it is easy to think about yourself during the recruiting process, researching the coaches and their needs as they strive to build the best program possible can help give you an advantage over other potential recruits (who send the “same old” generic messages, mostly telling the coaches all about themselves, that usually get erased and deleted).

Finally, I wrote this guide to let young athletes know that if you want to be successful in your recruiting process you have to OWN IT, take a professional approach, and drive the process yourself. This is what college coaches want to see from the individual athlete! (Not from their parents and recruiting agencies)

“If you want to be successful in your recruiting process you have to OWN IT, take a professional approach, and drive the process yourself.”

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HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

There is no ONE way to read this guide. For some it might be best to go through every section one-by-one and execute everything step-by-step. For others, you might cut right to different sections like “[Why Email is Crucial to Be Recruited](#)”, “[Utilizing YouTube](#)” or “[Cleaning up your Facebook page](#)” to help in your current recruiting strategy. Some sections will be more valuable to some potential recruits than others. Utilize the guide the best way you see fit.

WHAT YOU SHOULD TAKE-AWAY FROM THIS GUIDE

There are 3 main points for hopeful college athletes like yourself to take-away from this guide regardless if you read the whole thing or only a few sections:

1. The majority of athletes trying to play college sports MUST be Pro-Active in their recruiting efforts. Pro-Active means being pleasantly persistent with the coaches on your list, sticking to your plan (no matter what) and executing the strategy **YOURSELF**.

2. Executing the strategies and processes in this guide will not only help you get coaches’ attention but will provide coaches a more professional and serious impression of **YOU**, positioning yourself as a more attractive recruit.

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3. Use the examples and tips within the guide to help YOU think “outside the box” when it comes to your recruiting strategy. Points of emphasis in the guide including “**Sending RELEVANT emails/messages**” and “**It’s about THEM (the coaches and schools) and not YOU**” will help differentiate you from everyone else and get coaches attention.

There are a lot of people and “experts” out there telling you to “reach out” and “connect” with college coaches but no one is telling you exactly how to do that the proper way. This guide fills that void and gives you a great start in your GOAL of playing college sports.

THE RECRUITING PROCESS IS IMPORTANT AND DESERVES YOUR DEDICATED FOCUS

Today, there are plenty of articles, websites and blogs providing advice and best practices to high school athletes and their parents, helping them in the recruiting process with the ultimate goal of playing their sport at the college level. Most of these articles provide valuable information including: NCAA guidelines, core courses needed, building a list of schools, contacting coaches, creating a video, etc. that every athlete aspiring to play college should know. This guide is

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different because I dig a little deeper and describe specifically the attention to detail, aggressiveness and persistence (albeit with a tremendous level of respect and professionalism) you need to not only get the chance to be recruited by a school of your choice but to also give you more opportunity and leverage to get the best offer possible. Your recruiting process is very important and needs dedicated time, planning, research and execution every step of the way – **the same level of dedication you put into your sport and school work.** If YOU are dedicated to this process, college coaches WILL take notice. (Although there are some great recruiting agencies that may have your interests at heart) NO ONE can provide the time, effort and passion needed to give you more options and opportunity to be recruited than YOU.

Selecting the right college and team is extremely important. In some ways it will, either directly or indirectly, dictate your career options, the network and friends you build, where you may live, and your success long term. This process can

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also be stressful on families as well: You want very badly to play the sport you love at the college you want and your parents want what is best for you. Trying to attain this can be difficult so I want to provide some action items to focus more on DOING and less on WORRYING.

You should see this process as a great opportunity. If you consistently keep a positive mindset and implement the strategies provided, you WILL differentiate yourself from other potential recruits and give yourself a better chance in receiving your ideal offer. The coaches WANT to see young athletes be pro-active in this process. Give them what they want, have fun with it and seize the opportunity.

**“I want to provide some
action items to focus more
on DOING and less on
WORRYING.”**

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**GUIDE SECTION OVERVIEW**

I will break this process down for you in 4 main sections:

- 1. Building the Proper List of Schools to Target**
- 2. Optimizing Your Personal Brand**
- 3. Pro-Active Recruiting Strategy: Planning and Execution to Get Attention and Be Recruited**
- 4. Making the Best Impression and Negotiating Offers**

SECTION 1: Building The Proper List of Schools to Target

This section will help you focus on targeting the right schools in your recruiting efforts. This includes a thorough self-evaluation of your athletic and academic ability which will enable you to pro-actively and efficiently focus on the best schools for you, and give you the best chance to get attention and engage with coaches. Topics include:

- **Validation – How Good Am I?**
- **Comparing Yourself to Other Athletes**
- **What Others Think of Your Athletic Ability**

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- [Evaluating Your Academic Standing](#)
- [Building Your Target List](#)

SECTION 2: Optimizing Your Personal Brand

In this section, I will talk about cleaning up and optimizing your personal brand to help you be recruited. Topics include:

- [Facebook and Social Media](#)
- [Utilizing YouTube](#)
- [What Types of Video You Should Create](#)
- [Creating an Online Athletic Profile](#)
- [Setting up a Dedicated Email Account for Your Recruiting Process](#)
- [Creating an Email Signature – What it Should Look Like](#)
- [NCAA Eligibility Center](#)

SECTION 3: Pro-Active Recruiting Strategy: Planning and Execution to Get Attention and Be Recruited

This is the major section of the guide. The goal of this section is to provide you with knowledge and best practices to help you get on a coach's radar, engage

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with them, and schedule a next step (i.e. call, meeting, unofficial visit, meeting at a camp, etc.), and to do this with as many coaches and programs on your target list as possible. Topics include:

- **Being Pro-Active is a Good Thing**
- **The Strategy and Process Needed to be Recruited**
- **Do it YOURSELF**
- **It's About THEM (The Coaches and their Programs) Not YOU**
- **Don't Assume You Know What Coaches Are Thinking**
- **Why You Need to Understand the Evolution of Role Players in College Sports**
- **Learn the Program and Coach's Backgrounds**
- **What Do You Want to Study? Have a Clue**
- **Why Should You Do All this Research? To Be Recruited**
- **Why Email is Crucial to Be Recruited**
- **Examples of Relevant Emails to Send to Coaches**
- **Remember: Numbers Game**
- **When You Should Send Emails to Coaches**
- **Pro-Active Follow Up**
- **Calling Coaches**

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In the final section, topics that will be covered include showing the proper respect to coaches, how you present yourself when meeting coaches, honest and open communication, and the mentality you need to negotiate offers and make the best decision. Topics include:

- **Be Respectful To The Coaches and School**
- **Be In Shape When You Meet Coaches**
- **Dress Accordingly To Be Recruited**
- **Negotiating Offers and Taking Control of the Process**
- **Don't Feel Rushed**
- **Honest Communication and Creating The Bidding War**
- **Go With Your Gut**

Now that we have reviewed the 4 major sections, let's dive in with **SECTION 1:**

Building The Proper List of Schools to Target.

SECTION 1

Building The Proper List of Schools to Target

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**SECTION 1: BUILDING THE PROPER LIST OF SCHOOLS TO TARGET**

The ultimate goal of this guide is to help you engage with coaches and get the **best offer for YOU**. Why is building the proper list of schools important?

- **Provides you with targets schools: ones that are realistic** from an **academic, athletic** and “fit” perspective. This will increase your chances of gaining coaches’ attention, getting on more recruiting lists, and hopefully receiving multiple offers.
- **Helps focus your time and energy on the right schools.** If you have a list of schools that are unrealistic from an ability and “fit” perspective, you are taking your time and energy away from the schools that are in need and are actively looking for a player like you.

To help you build your target list of schools we will discuss:

- **Validation – How Good Am I?**
- **Comparing Yourself to Other Athletes**
- **What Do Others Think of Your Athletic Ability?**
- **Academic Evaluation**
- **Building and Organizing Your Target List of Schools**

Let’s get started with Validation.

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“ You must be honest with yourself and find out where you stand in terms of ability. ”

VALIDATION – HOW GOOD AM I?

Prior to starting any planning you must be honest with yourself and find out where you stand in terms of ability and what level of college sports is realistic for you to participate in from an athletic and academic standpoint. This might take some pride swallowing, but in the end, will save you a lot of time and enable you to be more focused on the planning and execution of your recruiting strategy.

First, as a pre-cursor to the steps I describe below for all players, if schools are proactively trying to recruit you, you probably have a good feeling you can play at the level and division of the schools that are interested. The next question you would want to ask yourself is: Do I want to play at a higher level than the schools that are interested? If the answer is YES, you should follow the guidelines I have set forth below.

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHER ATHLETES**

Second, do an honest self-evaluation of yourself and what type of player you are. Compare yourself to players you know and played against who currently play college or high school players you play with or against who have already committed to a school. How do you feel your ability is compared to these players? Are you at the same level of them in terms of skill, strength, speed and intelligence as a player? Do you bring more or less than these players/athletes in terms of leadership, attitude and work ethic? These are some of things you have to ask yourself to give you a better sample of schools to pursue. Again: BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

WHAT DO OTHERS THINK OF YOUR ATHLETIC ABILITY?

Third, ask people you respect including your coaches, teammates, former teammates that are playing college now, their parents, coaches that you have gotten to know at camps, coaches you play against, etc. **two questions:**

- Do you think I have the potential to be recruited at the college level?
- What level do you think I am capable of playing?

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Ask for an honest answer. (**See Comments on next page about Asking Others.**)

Now, people are human so you might get a range of answers (the reason you have to ask multiple people). Some might say there is no way that you will play college, others might say you will be a professional and others might be somewhere in between. You have to analyze these answers as a whole (not just take one positive or negative) and go with your gut. By asking other people, you are trying to decipher if the level or division you believe you can play at is in the same ballpark as what others think – overall. For example, maybe they think you are a Division 1 level player but at a lower level Division 1 school and you think you are more a mid-to-high Division 1 level player. If this is the case: You are in the ballpark and on the right track in building a list of schools to target. If everyone says you are a Division 3 level player and you think you are a Division 1 player, you may have to look yourself in the mirror and change your strategy (**see Comments on next page about Changing Strategies**). I never want to tell an athlete something is unattainable (especially those with a huge passion for their sport and work their tail off every day), but if you are in this position you may have to change direction.

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Comments on Asking Others About Your Ability...

I know asking other people to honestly tell you what they think of you as a player can be awkward and sometimes you won't like the answers you hear but more often than not reaching out to a range of coaches, players who play college currently and others will only help and give you more information. Also, these people now know you are serious about this process and may be able to give you great advice on next steps or refer you to a coach or school because you were top of mind to them. It is really just another great way to build out your network within your sport. Believe me, the higher level you play at, it seems, everyone knows everybody (i.e. It is a small world).

Comments on Strategy Change...

If you are dying to be recruited by a Division 1 school or at a higher level than people think you can play right now, you may have to take a year or two to play at a junior college, club (junior) team or take a post graduate year at a prep school etc. (obviously these choices depend heavily on what sport you play, some sports fit better than others) to mature and develop your skills and body to play at that higher level. In my mind, there is no shame in this strategy as long as you want it bad enough and are willing to work. Note: If you are not willing to dedicate yourself to your sport, it is a complete waste of time and money for you and your parents. I don't see the need to rush to college. That time might be better spent focusing primarily on your sport for a year and maturing as a person overall. The upside: you can achieve your goal of playing for the school or in the Division you always wanted to. If you dedicated yourself to your sport the entire year I do not see a downside. If you did not get the offer you had hoped for you are still going into college athletics more prepared and mature: bigger, faster, stronger and more intelligent than you were the year before giving you more of a chance to be an integral part of your team as a freshman.

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ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Fourth, you have to get an overall perspective from where you stand with schools from an academic perspective. Schedule a meeting with your guidance counselor to go over your academic records (GPA, SATs, standardized test scores, etc.) and organize them for your personal academic profile. Get their opinion on what schools would be easy for you to get into, what schools would be 50/50 and what schools are a stretch. This is very important for a couple of reasons. If there are schools that are 50/50 or a bit of a stretch, but you really would like to go to a particular school, your athletic ability might be what tips the scales in your favor and gets you admitted. Also, some strong and reputable academic institutions need players on their rosters to raise the overall team's academic index and profile. So if you are a great student, this might give additional opportunities and a greater chance to play at a great school and program due to your hard work both in the classroom and playing field. Remember, no matter what division or sport, coaches want winning and competitive programs and they will do what they can recruiting-wise (academically and athletically, within reason) to field that competitive team year in and year out.

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CREATING AND ORGANIZING YOUR TARGET LIST OF SCHOOLS

After you complete your self-evaluation, asked others what level they believed you can play at, and gone over your academic profile while taking into consideration schools that are already interested, you should be able to build a list of schools to pro-actively prospect and follow up with: informing them of your desire to be a part of their program and academic institution. Building this list should be done in a organized way and you should have a minimum of 15 schools (the more the better at the start) on this list. To get this list started, go to each school's athletic website and identify the names, titles, emails and phone numbers of each head and assistant coach in your sport. (An excel spreadsheet is a great way to organize this).

Second, add notes to schools on your list where you have a personal connection. Maybe you have played with a player currently on the team, maybe you have a family member who played for the team in the past or is an alumni of the school, you could have been at a camp that an assistant coach was working. Whatever personal connections you can think of jot them down. They might prove valuable in drawing attention to you down the road. Save and File this spreadsheet for now. We will get back to it.

Now that you have built your target list of schools you are ready for the next section, which is **Optimizing Your Personal Brand**.

SECTION 2

Optimizing Your Personal Brand

“Use social media to your advantage...it provides the perfect platform to show coaches exactly what you want them to see.”

SECTION 2: OPTIMIZING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Now that you have **Built the Proper Target List of Schools** you are ready to start Optimizing Your Personal Brand. What does it mean to optimize your personal brand and why is it important?

Many of you realize that coaches will likely search your name on Google, Facebook, Twitter and other social networks if they are seriously considering recruiting you. The first reaction that most of you may have is fear, “What if a compromising picture of me is out there? What if somebody posted something inappropriate on my Wall? What if I posted something inappropriate on somebody else’s Wall?” Why not turn this around and **use social media to your advantage?**

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If you think about it, Facebook and an **Online Athletic Profile** provide the perfect platform to **show coaches exactly what you want them to see.**

You can create your own brand and highlight and delete anything you want because everything is 100% in **your control.** To help you make the most of your personal brand we will discuss:

- **Facebook – how to use it to your advantage**
- **YouTube – how to best use it**
- **Video Creation – this includes skill, game highlights and reference videos**
- **Online Athletic Profile**
- **Email**
- **Dedicated email account for your recruiting process**
- **Professional username**
- **Powerful Email Signature**
- **NCAA Eligibility Center**

Let's get started with **Facebook...**

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA: START CLEANING IT UP**

Before you contact one school or coach, you must take care of your personal brand.

When I was trying to get recruited to play hockey in the mid-90s, we didn't even talk about personal brand. Basically, if a coach wanted you to be a part of his or her program, all your high school coach had to say was that you were a good kid. As long as your coach didn't say you were a jerk or a cancer to the team, the college coach took his or her word for it and kept the process rolling.

Today, with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the entire blogosphere/web in general, you need to be careful about what information/photographs of you is on the web. You are crazy to think that any college coach who is thinking about recruiting you is not going to Google your name and search for you on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other Social Networks where teenagers are “hanging out.” You must do a serious web audit of your online image. Your Facebook profile and Twitter account must be cleared of all content and photos that have the potential to negatively impact your image. I am a former college athlete who graduated in 1999. I would say the majority of head coaches (and many assistants as well) are either around my age or older. We went to high school and thru most of college before the internet or mobile phones were mainstream. From my observations and interactions

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with teenagers today, I feel there is a pretty wide disconnect between what information/messages/photos/video they view as appropriate to share in public and what information/messages/photos/video people my age and older believe to be appropriate. Right or wrong, the problem for high school athletes is that the coaches are the ones who make the decision on whether you get recruited to their school. You have to play by their rules and make sure you only have personal content that they deem appropriate or they will cross you off the list.

I recommend taking the ultra-conservative route when it comes to your personal brand and social media presence. Clear out the content and images that could be perceived as negative during the recruiting process, add academic and athletic content that highlights your achievement, ability and character. Don't try to hide your social media presence, use it to your advantage to be recruited.

“Don’t try to hide your social media presence, use it to your advantage to be recruited.”

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“The purpose of utilizing YouTube is to make it easy for the coaches to view your videos and give you a better chance to get noticed.”

UTILIZE YOUTUBE: HIGHLIGHT ATHLETIC ABILITY AND CHARACTER WITH VIDEO

YouTube and video are very important in your strategy to be recruited. Why? They are a great tool to help grab a coach's attention and get them to engage with you. This engagement could be a phone call, a meeting, a school visit, letting them know you will be attending their camp, anything that gives you a next step and more exposure to the coach and program.

Why use YouTube? First, after you upload a video to YouTube, a link is created to access that specific video and you will also be provided a link of all videos within your YouTube channel. This is very valuable within your **email strategy**, which I will describe later. You will be able to send these coaches a link to your video(s) or YouTube Channel. Now a coach is one click away from seeing you in action and getting a better understanding of what you can do as a player. Also,

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there is a greater probability of a coach clicking on a link to a video rather than getting a packet in the mail, opening it and inserting the video into his or hers computer or DVD player. Many of those packets sit in coach's offices and never get opened. That's a fact. **Another reason for utilizing YouTube and creating your own channel is that you can upload multiple videos giving coaches one central place to click thru and watch all of your videos.** Finally, YouTube videos can be easily integrated into web pages. For example, you could easily embed your YouTube recruiting videos on:

- A recruiting profile page you have set up
- Your Facebook page
- A personal website
- Your high schools sports website

In short, the purpose of utilizing YouTube is to make it easy for the coaches to view your videos and give you a better chance to be noticed.

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**WHAT TYPES OF RECRUITING VIDEOS SHOULD YOU CREATE?**

I believe you should create a range of videos focused on your athletic ability and character. Some videos that I would create if I were trying to be recruited would include:

- **Personal video**
- **Individual Skill video**
- **Game Highlights video**
- **Reference videos from:**
 - **Current High School or Club Coach**
 - **Current Teammates**
 - **Parents**
 - **Opponent Coach**
 - **Teacher/School Administrator**

Let's get started by talking about the **Personal Video**...

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You should create a short video (2-3 minutes) that will allow coaches to see you and get to know you. Just you in front of the camera. Here is what you could mention:

- Your name
- Sport
- High School
- Year of Graduation
- GPA and Test Scores (academic awards)
- Athletic highlights (stats, times, awards)
- What qualities you will bring to a program

You will be sending this video via email so you can also mention that you would like to schedule a call, meeting or school visit, and that your contact details (phone and email) are in the email you sent them with the YouTube link if they want to coordinate a date and time.

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“ Create specific videos for specific coaches and schools where you reference what they are looking for, based on your research, and what you can bring to their program. These videos could be extremely powerful in getting you on a coach’s recruiting list. ”

If you wanted to take the Personal Video a step further you could create videos personalized to that particular program. In upcoming sections, I mention the **research** you should do on your target schools. You could utilize this research to create specific videos for specific coaches and schools where you reference what they are looking for, based on your research, and what you can bring to their program. These videos could be extremely powerful in getting you on a coach’s recruiting list.

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INDIVIDUAL SKILL VIDEO

This should be no more than a 3-minute video showing off your skills. It can be you just free styling. It doesn't have to be anything crazy. For example:

- Basketball player: record a video of you running, dribbling, passing and shooting
- Track & Field: running form or event
- Lacrosse player: running, passing, shooting, stick skills
- Hockey player: skating, stick-handling, shooting
- Skiing: use training or race video taken by your coach

You want to give the coach a glimpse that you are in fact a legit athlete. You are not going to prove the world to them in this video, nor should you. I will say if you can do something special that other athletes can't, put it in the video. The goal is to get a little more exposure and get a coach to respond, engage and set up a next step.

GAME HIGHLIGHTS

If your high school games are being taped and you can get access to those recordings you should also create 3-4 minute highlight tape. You don't have to show great plays all the time (although don't leave any out). You can also show the

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little things you do well, and that college coach's love. For example:

- Football: throwing a block
- Hockey: winning face-offs
- Soccer: Consistent quality corner kicks

I am not an expert in every sport but you get the point.

REFERENCE VIDEOS

I actually think reference videos could be more important than any highlight or skill video. Reference videos would have others highlighting your athletic and academic ability as well as other positive characteristics including your character. Your coaches, teammates, teachers, parents, opponents, other teams coaches could all be potential reference videos for you. Why do I think this is important? As the old saying goes "Self-praise is no praise at all" but if you have others praising you, it will hold more weight with college coaches.

You can provide these individuals with some questions as a guide but obviously let them expand and talk about you naturally (especially if they have a lot of good stuff to say).

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Questions you could have individuals answer on a video could include (let's say in this example the athletes name is John Smith):

CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL OR CLUB COACH

- What qualities as an athlete and a member of your team come to mind when you think of John Smith?
- Can you provide some details around John Smith's work ethic and coachability?
- Can you provide some insight on John Smith's leadership qualities, relationship with teammates and overall character?

CURRENT TEAMMATES

Current teammates are great ones to create a video with because if they are trying to be recruited as well you could record videos for each other.

- What qualities as an athlete come to mind when you think of John Smith?
- Can you provide some details around John Smith's work ethic?
- Can you provide some insight on John Smith's leadership qualities, character and being a teammate?

“Coaches are often concerned about over the top parents who are way too involved in every detail of a potential recruit’s career.”

PARENTS

You might think it is crazy to create a video of your parents talking about you but coaches are often concerned about “over the top” parents who are way too involved in every detail of a potential recruit’s career. If you can create a video of your parents that shows their support while communicating that they are normal, grounded people, this will only be a positive for you. All things being equal, if it were to come down to you and an athlete whose parents were potentially “over-the-top” and “pushy” the coach is going to be much more willing to give you an offer. Coaches don’t want the additional stresses and difficulties some parents can add to their jobs and programs by being overbearing. Questions for your parents might include:

- In what type of program and school would you like to see John?
- Over the years what has most impressed you about John as an athlete?
- What qualities do you think John will bring to a college team?
- What is your best memory of John playing sports?

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If you can get a coach of one of your opponents to do a video for you this could be extremely valuable. If an opponent's coach knows about your skill/level of play and is willing to talk about it in a positive way this can be very powerful in hitting a cord with college coaches. College Coaches know what it is like to strategize and try to contain a quality opponent and having a coach talk about you in that way is a big statement about you as an athlete. Questions for an opponent's coach might include:

- What comes to mind when you think of John Smith as a player?
- Would he be the type of player your team would acknowledge and strategize against prior to a game?
- How does he rate among the best players in the conference?

Remember, you can edit these videos before posting.

TEACHER/SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Having a teacher or school administrator do a reference video for you can help a college coach better understand how important academics are to you as well as giving credibility to your character outside the athletic environment. Coaches

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want to know they are recruiting good people and not just good athletes. Questions you could have a teacher or school administrator answer could be:

- What comes to mind when you think of John as a student and member of your high school community?
- Can you give some background of John's academic work ethic and preparation when it comes to exams/projects?
- Please describe John's character and attitude outside athletics?

Remember, these questions are just a guide. If you can think of some better questions that would provide better answers and position you in a better light to college coaches you should use them.

I would try to keep these questions at a very high level (not overly specific) and let the individual talk and expand their answer naturally. These videos should not be long, 2-3 minutes per video tops. These coaches do not have the time to watch long videos nor do they want to. Also, remember the goal of these videos: to engage with coaches and schedule a next step (i.e. visit, meeting, phone call, etc.), not to tell your life story.

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HOW TO CREATE THESE VIDEOS

Skill Video: I think the skill video should be professionally done (if you can afford it) or done with camera that will provide a clear, professional looking video. You could have your parents, brother, sister or teammates do the filming.

Another good idea is to ask your audio/visual department at school to come to practice and do some individual filming of you and your teammates (if they are trying to be recruited as well). They would probably do a great job, cut you a nice video and maybe create your YouTube Channel for you! You never know unless you ask.

Highlight Video: If your current coaches film games and breakdown video you could ask them to try to produce a highlight video of you. 10-12 positive clips should make for a nice highlight video.

Reference Video: First, you have to ask the individual (i.e. coach, parents, teammates, etc.) if they are willing to do the video. If they agree, send them the questions I mentioned above as a guide and get them thinking of how they would like to answer. In terms of the recording, there are a couple of different, inexpensive ways to do this. They could record the video from a laptop or PC that has a webcam. This way they could do it in private and make sure they got it right before

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“Creating an online athletic profile page is one of the most important tools to maximize your exposure to coaches.”

sending it to you. You could also record these videos via a mobile or smart phone. These videos don't have to look as professional as your skill video. Obviously, if you have access to a video camera, this might be the easiest thing to do.

You can take these videos and upload them to your YouTube Channel, Online Athletic Profile (next section), Facebook page, school websites or anywhere that might give you increased exposure. In upcoming sections, I will discuss how video and your YouTube Channel will complement your email strategy to get the attention of more college coaches.

CREATE AN ONLINE ATHLETIC PROFILE

Creating an online athletic profile page is one of the most important tools to maximize your exposure to coaches. An online athletic profile is basically a webpage(s) highlighting your athletic and academic achievement. It gives you the ability to promote yourself, show coaches how serious you are about playing

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college sports and the passion you would bring to their programs. It also provides details of your academic record and standardized test scores. Similar to creating a YouTube Channel, an online athletic profile provides you a link to your profile which you can use in your email strategy, a topic I will discuss in greater detail in following sections. When coaches receive your email they can just simply click on the link to your profile and get a much better understanding of who you are as a student-athlete and person.

Your email strategy and your online athletic profile go hand and hand. You are not creating an online athletic profile to somehow be found by a coach searching the web. No matter what some recruiting services and websites say, this does not happen. This profile is created to be used in relevant emails you will be sending college coaches to get their attention and hopefully create a next step for you in the recruiting process.

How do you setup an online athletic profile? There are many websites that offer this service (both paid and free). One website I would recommend is beRecruited:

<http://go.berecruited.com/12641> (copy and paste link into browser)

beRecruited enables you to create a FREE professional looking online athletic

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profile (they offer additional services for a price but I will let you decide if you want to upgrade your account). When you create your beRecruited profile (<http://go.berecruited.com/12641>) you will be given a website link to your individual online athletic profile.

When you setup your online athletic profile, here is some information you may want to include:

- **General Details:** name, sport, age, year, high school, club team, city, state, contact information (phone and email), photo
- **Athletic Details:** height, weight, position/event, statistics/times, awards
- **Academic Details:** GPA, SAT scores, ACT scores, Major you may want to pursue
- Short statement on what you want to achieve. Example: *“My goal is to join a competitive women’s soccer team with a tremendous liberal arts program”*
- NCAA Clearinghouse ID
- References (athletic and academic) and their contact information
- Video (The service you choose should allow you to upload videos or integrate with your YouTube channel)

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- Game schedule or camps you will be attending (when and where they are)
- Links to newspaper articles you were highlighted in during your high school career
- Student-body and community service efforts

As I mentioned, creating an online athletic profile is a **MUST** if you want to implement the strategies in this guide most effectively. Combining your profile with the email strategy I will provide in Section 3 will maximize your effectiveness in connecting with coaches and giving you a better chance to be recruited.

“Creating an online athletic profile is a **MUST if you want to implement the strategies in this guide most effectively.”**

“Your email strategy is probably the most important part of this (whole) process.”

SETUP A DEDICATED EMAIL ACCOUNT

Your email strategy (which I will explain in great deal in Section 3: “Pro-Active Recruiting Strategy: Planning and Execution to Get Attention and Be Recruited”) **is probably the most important part of this process** and will make or break whether you engage in recruiting discussions with college coaches and the amount of schools you can draw interest from. You should have a dedicated email account for your recruiting process. Here are some reasons why:

- **Organization is Key**
- **Your Email Username Should Look Professional**
- **Email Signature**

ORGANIZATION IS KEY

You have to be very well organized. Creating a new email account for this process separate from your personal account will help you be more organized and efficient. You can manage all of your recruiting emails from one dedicated inbox which will

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be easier when sifting through your emails and you also won't be distracted or thrown off track by personal and other emails. Keep focused and organized, get your own dedicated email account.

YOUR EMAIL USERNAME SHOULD LOOK PROFESSIONAL

Your username should look professional and should not have any nicknames or numbers within it. These types of usernames can look like spam in a coach's inbox and your messages will probably get deleted before they are even opened. Also, using nicknames and numbers within your username comes off as being immature. You could have created the account and username years ago for fun but when you are sending emails to coaches they probably won't get the "inside joke" and see the humor in it. The emails you are sending will usually provide the coach with their first impression of you and I would hate to see the coach get a negative one based on an email username. Take the conservative approach here, sign up for a new account and keep it simple and professional. For example, if I were going to set up an account in gmail I would try to set up an account with the username: steveobrien@gmail.com. If the account is already taken try some variations. For example: steve.obrien@gmail.com or use your middle initial stevetobrien@gmail.com. **You should be able to find a simple yet professional username.** If you are really struggling try some variations using your last name before your first name. I highly recommend not using numbers in your username.

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EMAIL SIGNATURE

You should also have a dedicated email account so you can insert a strategic email signature into all of your emails that you will be sending to coaches. Why do you need an email signature? First, it makes your emails look more professional and it is also another symbol to coaches that you are serious about this process.

Most email service providers (i.e. Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) enable you to create and add an email signature to your emails. You should add information and links to the signature that you think is relevant to coaches. This information could include: Your name, Year of Graduation, Position, High School (or Club Team), GPA, SAT and ACT scores, Link to Online Profile, Link to YouTube Channel, Link to Game Schedules. etc.

Let's do an example: Jennifer Smith is junior point guard at Lexington High School in Lexington, Massachusetts. She is graduating in 2014. Her email signature might look something like this:

Jennifer Smith '14

Junior | Point Guard | Lexington High School

GPA: 3.3 | SAT: 1010 | ACT: 86

[Jennifer Smith Basketball Profile](#) (*Hyperlink to Online Athletic Profile*)

[Video: Highlights and References](#) (*Hyperlink to Video/YouTube*)

Phone: 888-555-1212

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This signature would appear at the bottom of all of Jennifer's pro-active emails to college coaches. It is just another way for coaches to quickly learn more about you and hopefully take action to engage with you in the recruiting process.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER/CLEARINGHOUSE

To play sports at the college level a pre-requisite for all student-athletes is to register at the NCAA Eligibility Center and make sure you meet the academic requirements to play in the NCAA. The NCAA Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes who wish to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. This is a MUST and should be done as soon as possible. You can create an account and complete your online registration at the start of your junior year of high school.

As you enter into the recruiting process one of the first questions coaches are going to ask you is if you are cleared to play NCAA athletics thru the Eligibility Center. The best answer is Yes, but if your grades and test scores are not quite there yet the coaches are going to want to hear that you are signed up at with Eligibility Center and your are currently working toward achieving Eligibility. If you haven't

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registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center a coach may feel you are not serious about this process and cross you off the list. More information on the NCAA Eligibility Center can be found here:

http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp

Now that you have **Built the Proper List of Schools to Target** and **Optimized Your Personal Brand** you are ready to start your **Pro-Active Recruiting Strategy: Planning and Execution to Get Attention and Be Recruited.**

SECTION 3

Pro-Active

Recruiting

Strategy: Planning and

Execution to Get Attention and

Be Recruited

“ Now is where the real work starts – getting the attention of college coaches. ”

SECTION 3 - PRO-ACTIVE RECRUITING STRATEGY: PLANNING AND EXECUTION TO GET ATTENTION AND BE RECRUITED

You have now **built a list of schools and coaches to target** and **optimized your personal brand**. Now is where the real work starts – getting the attention of college coaches. This is the key part of the Guide and therefore the most important piece of your whole recruiting process: a pro-active, step-by-step plan to initiate conversations and engage with the coaches on your target list. In addition to concrete steps, I also discuss the importance of YOU (the recruit) driving this process and the mentality and confidence you need to “stay the course” and complete the entire plan.

In this section we will discuss:

- **Being Pro-Active is a Good Thing**
- **The Detailed Strategy and Process Needed to Be Recruited**

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- **Do it YOURSELF**
- **It's about THEM not YOU – Do your homework on THEM (The Coaches and Programs)**
- **Don't Assume You Know What Coaches Are Thinking**
- **Why You Need to Understand the Evolution of “Role Players” in College Sports**
- **What Do You Want to Study? *Have a clue***
- **Why Should You Do All This Research? *To Be Recruited***
- **Why Email is Crucial to Be Recruited**
- **Examples of Relevant Emails to Be Recruited**
- **Remember: It's a Numbers Game**
- **When You Should Send Emails to Coaches**
- **Pro-Active Follow-Up**
- **Calling Coaches – Phone Script Examples**

Let's start with why Being Pro-Active is a Good Thing....

**“I want you to have the mindset
that this process is business not
personal and your experience
when you get there will be the
opposite.”**

BEING PRO-ACTIVE IS A GOOD THING

I read a statistic that close to 90% of college athletes had to be pro-active in their recruiting efforts to play for and get admitted to the university they currently attend. You see these high school basketball and football press conferences and All-American games, where young athletes stand up and tell the media where they are going to sign after a process of being heavily recruited by several Division 1 programs. This is not the norm for most young athletes trying to get recruited. **I want you to know that being pro-active is what most athletes HAVE to do and I want you to embrace the process. I want you to take it as a challenge and set goals. I want you to follow through and be extremely positive (even when things don't go your way). I want you to be persistent (albeit pleasantly). I want you to realize right now, this is a NUMBERS GAME. I want you to go after the schools you think that are out of reach and also the ones you think you are too good for and treat them with respect. I want you to be extremely professional and prepared. I want you to have the mindset that this process is business not**

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personal (and your experience when you get there will be the opposite). I want you to realize the importance of this process and that the school you choose will have lifelong effects. I want you to have fun with it. No matter what the results, if you give everything you have to this process it will only be a positive experience no matter what school you end up choosing. Putting yourself out there can be difficult because it feels uncomfortable, but this is how you are going to get ahead. Everyone feels uncomfortable because it is hard to sell yourself. Push yourself to be pro-active and you will be rewarded.

“Putting yourself out there can be difficult because it feels uncomfortable, but this is how you are going to get ahead. Everyone feels uncomfortable because it is hard to sell yourself. Push yourself to be proactive and you will be rewarded.”

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**THE STRATEGY AND PROCESS NEEDED TO BE RECRUITED**

There are plenty of blogs and websites out there that tell you to be pro-active and contact coaches to get noticed. They will tell you to email the coach, mail a packet with video and follow up with a call to make sure they got it. This is all well and good but what most young athletes need is some more details and tactics (i.e. A STRATEGY) to help them get the results they are looking for. **I think without direction this can lead to frustration, lack of motivation in pursuing the process, fewer options and in the end a feeling that no one thinks you are good enough, hoping the one or two schools who have shown interest offer you something reasonable.** I want to share with you a plan that will help you get the results you are looking for, get coaches attention, keep you motivated and give you, not the coaches, more control of the process.

“A plan that will help you get the results you are looking for, get coaches attention, keep you motivated and give you, not the coaches, more control of the process.”

“The biggest piece of executing this strategy and process is the person driving it.”

DO IT YOURSELF

The biggest piece of executing this strategy and process is the person driving it. If you want to get noticed by these coaches and programs **YOU MUST BE THE PERSON DRIVING THE PROCESS.** Not your parents, not your coach, not a recruiting agency.....**YOU!** The one common theme I hear from all coaches in regards to recruiting is that they want the actual high school athlete contacting them, not their parents. They WANT to know that you WANT to be a part of their program. This is a BIG DEAL and not one to be overlooked or to say “It doesn’t really matter.” Picking the right recruits is one of the biggest and toughest jobs a coach has and if he or she is not hearing from you they really can’t measure how much you want to be a part of their team and will probably select someone else who is showing that passion and determination for their program.

“You must be the person driving the process. **Not your parents, not your coach, not a recruiting agency.....YOU!”**

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If a coach receives a compelling and relevant email or voicemail from a high school student-athlete who wants to be a part of their program, it can be extremely powerful and holds a lot more weight than someone else doing the work on your behalf. I can't be more adamant about anything in this guide: **Execute this strategy and process yourself. Yes, you should take guidance from your parents, coaches, teammates and maybe even a recruiting agency, but YOU have to DRIVE the process.**

DO YOUR HOMEWORK: IT'S ABOUT THEM (THE COACHES AND THEIR PROGRAMS) NOT YOU

Before you contact a coach you have to do your homework. **You have to start thinking about the coaches needs before your own.** Most young athletes trying to get recruited send emails, leave voicemails and email videos that are all about themselves and never even mention anything about the university, the specific athletic program or the coach. Before you attempt to send any messaging (calls, emails, video or direct mail) make sure you know something about the program and have a clear, concise message on why you would like to play for that program and **how they will benefit from what you will bring to their team.**

“You have to start thinking about the coaches needs before your own.”

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I detailed how to build out a list/spreadsheet with a minimum of 15 schools to target. I would prefer to see you have 20-30 (this will also depend on what sport you play and what level of academic institution you would like to attend). As I said before, this is a numbers game and the more schools you target, the more options it will give you when it is time to negotiate and make a decision on a school (I will explain more later).

I mentioned to write down any personal connections you may have at schools on your target list. If you don't have personal connections at a specific school try to get in touch with current or former players (possibly via Facebook and LinkedIn). Ask them if they have a few minutes to talk about their experience with the program (athletes usually like helping out other athletes).

Get in touch with these people and ask questions like the following:

- What type of player is attractive to the coach?
- Does the coach emphasize a certain system or strategy?
- If Yes, what is that particular system?
- Does the coach value a strong work-ethic?
- Is the coach a big advocate of strength and conditioning?
- Is the coach looking for top students?

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- Is the coach looking for a player with speed or physical play at a certain position?
- Is the coach more of an offensive-type of coach or defensive?
- How much authority do the assistant coaches have? Do they make final decisions on recruits?
- Does the coach value character players?
- Does the coach value team players and ones that get along with their teammates?

Add questions that might be relevant to your sport. Take notes on the answers and feedback you receive. You will be using it in your email strategy which I will discuss in more detail later in this guide.

DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT COACHES ARE THINKING

It's easy to think that all college coaches want the same type of players – good players, right! - and they all think the same way. This is a dangerous misperception many young athletes (and their parents) have about college coaches. I do understand the reason for this mentality. At the high school varsity level: stronger, faster and better athletes usually stand head and shoulders above the rest of the competition and their own teammates. These players have always been the GO TO PLAYERS on their teams, are heavily relied upon and their performance usually dictates whether their team wins or loses. It's not the same in college sports. The

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players on your college team and the other teams were ALL GO TO PLAYERS on their high school teams. No longer are the stronger, faster and better players HEAD and SHOULDERS above their teammates and the competition. The difference in talent and ability is minimized greatly, competition becomes fierce and the level of play rises. College athletes must evolve and adapt to this different situation or risk failure (see Comments – The Evolution and Your Career below, P. 56). They start specializing their skills and focusing on specific aspects of the game/sport where they can provide value to their team. In other words, **role players are born and are an integral part of all college sports.** Here are some examples:

- **Basketball:** A player may not have the scoring prowess they had in high school but focuses on becoming a shut down defensive player and rebounder.
- **Football:** Big sport of transition where many successful high school running back transition to playing fullback, safety and linebacker (I would imagine at least half the NFL played running back in high school).
- **Hockey:** Top scorers in high school and junior hockey transform their games and focus on being more physical, penalty killing and winning face-offs.
- **Gymnastics:** Top all-around gymnasts in high school start focusing their attention on one or a couple of events to make the overall team better.

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- **Track & Field/Cross-Country:** Runners/Sprinter who won every event in high school start focusing and training for specific events (longer or shorter) to not only help their team, but sometimes just to beat out their teammates and compete at meets.
- **Soccer:** A star on a high school or club team adapts to coming off the bench in the late minutes while maintaining performance and focus at a high level.
- **Skiing (Alpine):** A strong slalom skier who may have had a tendency to DNF (Did Not Finish) now focuses more on finishing races in order to score team points.

WHY YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE EVOLUTION OF ROLE PLAYERS IN COLLEGE SPORTS

Yes, that was long winded but **the reason I wanted to describe the evolution of role players is because college coaches NEED them desperately to build and maintain a successful program.** They are their programs lifeblood and coaches are searching for them constantly. Coaches also value role players differently. Some coaches want a great leader who is selfless and will do anything for his teammates, other want players who are extremely coachable and will follow the systems and strategy to a T, another might need an impeccable student, while others might be

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“College coaches NEED role players desperately to build and maintain a successful program. They are their program’s lifeblood and coaches are searching for them constantly.”

looking for a player who does one thing really well (even if they lack heavily in other areas). You really never know unless you ask. So make sure you leverage your personal connections and find out as much as you can about the mentality of the coach and the culture of the program. Finally, even if you do not have a personal connection you can find a way to connect with current or recently graduated players to find the answer to these questions. If you can't get a phone number or email, send a friendly note via Facebook or Linkedin and tell them who you are and what you are looking to find out. People like helping people, especially athletes and as I have said before it will only give you more information, build new relationships and broaden your network.

Most of you might be thinking, “I am going to be the GO TO PLAYER in college as well, not a role player!” I hope you have this mentality. It shows that you are a competitive person and have great pride in your ability. I hope you join a team and are the best player or athlete they have ever seen at the program. I hope you win Team MVP all 4 years and become an All-American.

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The focus of this guide, though, is to be as relevant as possible to coaches and schools you want to target and get their attention in your recruiting. This is the primary goal: **joining the program at the school you want.** I could be wrong but I don't believe telling coaches how great you are is the best strategy. **This is what everyone else is doing and you need to differentiate yourself, be relevant to the coaching staff and send the proper messages to get their attention.** In addition, putting in the extra work in the beginning to find out what a specific coach is looking for will help you find a better match for yourself which increases your chances of being happy in a program and wanting to play all four years.

Comments on The Evolution and Your Career...

The evolution I mention above is something you should keep in the back of your mind. I hope that you are ultra-successful right out of the gate as a freshman but for most this is not the case and for the first time in their life some athletes realize they are not one of the better athletes and can't handle it mentally. It happens every year, at every program in college sports and some players give up on a season (sometimes a career) because they can't handle this new situation. They start making excuses, blaming the coaches and their work ethic and focus suffers. This is what separates many college athletes from the people that don't make it. The character to realize that this is not going to be easy (nothing worth anything ever is), that you may have to change your role and stay as positive as possible no matter where you stand on the team or how much playing time you are getting. Understand your college career is a marathon and not a sprint. There will be ups and downs, day to day and month to month but the ability to remain focused, work hard and smart everyday and maintain a positive outlook is crucial to being successful.

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**LEARN THE PROGRAM AND COACH'S BACKGROUNDS**

In addition to finding out the mentality of the coaching staff and culture of the program you should read the bios of the entire coaching staff (maybe you find out you know someone who has played with a coach to get a personal introduction), research the history of the program, see how they are doing this season and also review the roster of players on the current team. This will be part of your strategic messaging to coaches which I will describe in more detail later and can also come in handy when you are having conversations with coaches.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY? HAVE A CLUE

The last research/homework I want you to do is write down why academically you would want to attend a particular school. Now, some of you may know exactly what you want to study or major in when you get to college. If you do, write it down and why. Then find out what the name of that particular course of study. For example, the business school at the University of New Hampshire is called the Whittemore School of Business and Economics. If you are not quite sure (don't worry most 15-18 year olds are not) do some research into what courses of study your target schools offer and see if any draw your attention and interest. No, you don't have to

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know your major or what you are going to study right this minute but before you even try to engage with a school or a coach you should have a general understanding of what they offer from an academic perspective. Trust me, if you do end up meeting with the coaches they will ask you “What are you thinking about studying?” and giving them an indication that you know what the school offers academically sounds a lot more professional than “Uh, I don’t know.” You know what I mean.

WHY SHOULD YOU DO ALL THIS RESEARCH? *TO BE RECRUITED*

You are probably saying to yourself, “Wow that’s a lot of research!” Well, it’s really not that much research. It could take you less than 30 minutes to read the coaches bios, program history and current roster. Once you got a hold of some of your personal connections or players/current graduates of the team, it would only take 10-15 minute conversation to get a general feel for the mentality of the coach and culture of the program. Information you are going to want anyway before you make a decision on a school. Another question you are probably asking yourself is “Why am I doing all this research?” The answer is because you want to be MUCH more RELEVANT in your emails, calls and videos than every other athlete trying to get a coach’s attention. You want these messages to grab their attention and make them

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stop and think and hopefully respond to you. **College Coaches get hundreds, if not thousands, of calls, emails, direct mail, video, etc. and you must separate yourself from the pack and get their attention.** BE RELEVANT and remember: It's about THEM not YOU.

**“BE RELEVANT and remember:
It's about THEM not YOU.”**

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“The more effective you are at communicating via email the better chance you have of getting on a coach’s recruiting list and the better chance you have of getting an offer.”

WHY EMAIL IS CRUCIAL TO BE RECRUITED

One of the biggest things I want you to take away from this guide is how important your email strategy is in your recruiting process. It is HUGE. Why? Because it is the only way coaches in the majority of all college sports and divisions can communicate with you before your senior year of high school. For most sports, coaches can’t call you over the phone until your senior year but they can start communicating with you via email (and Facebook, social networks, etc.) starting the first day of classes of your junior year.

The more effective you are at communicating via email the better chance you have of getting on a coach’s recruiting list and the better chance you have of getting an offer. This is a great opportunity because I believe the majority of emails coaches get from athletes are “All about Me” emails that are irrelevant and get deleted.

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quickly. This is your chance to create quality emails that are relevant, attention grabbing and ones that will trigger a response and get you engaged with more schools and programs.

You can utilize email in so many ways to schedule a next step or gain exposure with coaches:

- To schedule calls with coaches (they can ask you to call them)
- Schedule unofficial visits
- Let coaches know you will be attending their camps or others in the area
- Let coaches know what showcases/tournaments your will be participating in
- Send them a link to your online profile/videos
- Make them aware of your grades/test scores

The key to get these next steps is creating relevant, attention grabbing emails. Utilizing the research you have done to hit a cord with coaches in a more personal way.

In the next section, I will walk through examples of relevant, attention grabbing emails that will give you a better chance of getting a coach to respond. Use these emails as a guide in helping you “think outside the box”, when you start to compose your emails and remember: **It’s about THEM not YOU.**

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT EMAILS TO SEND TO COACHES**

Now, let's walk through an example of how we would target a coach and his staff with a relevant email. For the example let's say you are a Men's Basketball player and you have some Division II programs in the mid-west on your target list, one of them being the University of Southern Indiana. Now you want to get their attention and are ready to send them an email letting them know of your interest. During the research process you have learned that the head coach, Rodney Watson, and his staff highly value players who:

- Take pride in their defense
- Abide by and execute the team system consistently
- Are great students

Prior to emailing the coaches, do a Google search of the head and assistant coaches. When I googled: "Rodney Watson recruiting" I came across this article, among many other articles, interviews and videos of Coach Watson:

<http://www.evansvilleliving.com/city-view/articles/rebuilding-strong>

I referenced this part of the article:

"What impressed me about last year was how everyone changed their roles. Guys went from being second line players to the front line; they moved up on every

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opponent's scouting report," Watson says. This year's team, ranked in the Division II top 10, features Brandon Hogg, a senior from Edwardsville, Ill., and Lawrence Thomas, a sophomore from Springfield, Ill., transitioning from second line to front line players. "They've stayed together, played for the right reasons," Watson says. "We all need to have goals, and they have only one common goal: to win the game first."

Your email should have 3 points to offer the coach:

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Benefit**
- 3. Request**

The email should also be short, concise and to the point and I will continue to reference **PBR** or Purpose, Benefit, Request.

Now if you are looking to grab Coach Rodney Watson's attention you could send a relevant email (see next page) referencing the article and Coach Watson's quotes:

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EXAMPLE EMAIL: REFERENCING A COACH'S QUOTE

Subject: Coach Watson: Your Quote in Evansvilleliving.com

Hi Coach Watson,

I came across this quote from you on Evansvilleliving.com and I wanted to connect: *"What impressed me about last year was how everyone changed their roles. Guys went from being second line players to the front line; they moved up on every opponent's scouting report."*

My name is Steve O'Brien and I am very interested in becoming part of your program. Much like your current players did for you this year, I pride myself in being a team player, abiding by the team system and doing whatever it takes to win. I am a junior point guard and in the top 15% of my class academically at Braintree High School in Braintree, MA. I want to major in Business and have been researching USI's College of Business program.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.steveobrien.com (example link: not clickable)

Coach Watson, I will be visiting the Southern Indiana campus in late May and was hoping you (or one of your assistants) would have some time to meet? I would also be open to scheduling a call prior at your convenience? Please let me know if this is possible.

I appreciate your time and I am very eager to learn more about your program and what type of student-athlete best fits your system.

Regards,

Steve

Steve O'Brien '14

Junior | Point Guard | Braintree High School

GPA: 3.2 | SAT: 1510 | ACT: 22

Steve O'Brien Basketball Profile ([Add Hyperlink to Online Profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add Hyperlink to Video/YouTube Channel](#))

Phone: 888-555-1212



“If the subject line is not attention-grabbing your email might go into the coach’s abyss of email, never to be read again.”

Now let's breakdown this email:

Subject Line – This is critical. You need a subject line that is going to not only grab the Coach's attention but also get him or her to open it. Some athletes think just because they send an email, the coach will read it. Trust me, coaches delete or disregard many more emails than they actually read. They do not have enough time in the day to read every single one. Furthermore, many coaches will see your email with their mobile phone. Most people, statistically, only read the subject line and the first line of an email from their mobile phones before they decide to keep reading or disregard making the subject line that much more critical. If the subject line is not attention-grabbing your email might go into the coach's abyss of email, never to be read again. You NEED an attention-grabbing subject line. In the example, by referencing a quote Coach Watson had in a particular article (www.evansvilleliving.com) you greatly increase your chances of the coach opening

“Referencing a quote...greatly increases your chances of the coach opening the email”

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the email. Put yourself in the coach's shoes, if someone sent you an email and in the subject referenced an article that you were quoted in wouldn't you open it? Of course you would, it is human curiosity and everyone likes to read something that is positive about themselves.

Email Body – Here is the breakdown of the **Purpose**, **Benefit** and **Request** I mentioned above.

Purpose: *I came across this quote from you on Evansvilleliving.com and I wanted to connect: "What impressed me about last year was how everyone changed their roles. Guys went from being second line players to the front line; they moved up on every opponent's scouting report.*

You are letting the coach know exactly why you are emailing him. In the example, you are saying you read his quote on the evansvilleliving.com website and were compelled to reach out to him. Now, is this a little far-fetched? Of course, but the main thing you are doing is subtlety showing the coach that you have a genuine interest in his program. This is already way ahead of the generic emails he is getting from other athletes.

Benefit: *My name is Steve O'Brien and I am very interested in becoming part of your program. Much like your current players did for you this year, I pride myself in being a team player, abiding by the team system and doing whatever it takes to win. I am a junior point guard and quality student at Braintree High School in Braintree,*

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MA. I also want to major in Business and have been researching USI's College of Business program.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.steveobrien.com

Here you are showing what benefit you could potentially bring to Coach Watson's program. Furthermore, you are describing benefits that are relevant to him that you found in your research (i.e. team player, abiding by the system, etc.) Finally, showing you have an interest in a specific academic program at the university demonstrates to the coach that you are taking a comprehensive view of the overall process which will be perceived as a sign of maturity, another great benefit to any coach.

Request: *I will be visiting the Southern Indiana campus in late May and was hoping you (or one of your assistants) would have some time to meet? I would also be open to scheduling a call prior at your convenience? Please let me know if this is possible.*

The request needs to be respectful, clear, straight to the point and shows you are serious about THIS coach's program and school. Don't say something like "I am thinking about visiting your campus" or "I'll be visiting some schools in May and was wondering if you had some time" or "I am only available to talk in the evening." If you are serious about this process you will:

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1. Visit the campus and will accommodate the coach's schedule to make the meeting/visit happen
2. Be open to speak with them anytime (within reason of your current school and athletic requirements, i.e. exams, practice, games, etc.)

Most importantly: This is your first impression to show them how serious you are taking their school and program and that you being a part of their program is something you WANT BADLY.

Of course, you are going to want to be a part of some schools more than others but you have to set the right precedent with every school you are pursuing. **Coaches HAVE to genuinely feel that you WANT to be a part of their program. You have to exude that passion with every school if you want to make the most of this process and get the best offer for YOU. You never know what school will ultimately be best for you. You may have a top choice but another school might actually be the better fit for you – you just don't know. So at this point, treat them all equally in order to get the most out of the process.**

“Coaches HAVE to genuinely feel that you WANT to be a part of their program.”

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Comments on the Request Part of the Email...

Remember the request does not always have to be a meeting or a call. You might be attending a camp a coach is at and you might use an email like this to let him or her know you are going to be there and that you could potentially meet up. If you are sending a relevant email like this and then mention it to the coach when you see them at the beginning of camp, they will remember you and will probably be taking a closer look at you during the camp. Remember, these emails are examples (templates) and there are many different ways to engage a coach. Relevant emails are vehicles to get you on the coach's radar.

Last Line: *I appreciate your time and I am very eager to learn more about your program and what type of student-athlete best fits your system.*

Here, I believe you are differentiating yourself because you are not just saying, “Hey if you are interested in me, give me a call back.” You are being more mature than that. You are telling them you would like to learn more to see if you and the program are a good match for each other. Also, you are showing you are genuinely interested in where the coach wants to take the program. This should give the coach a more positive impression of you (especially if the alternative is sending a generic email) and give him or her more incentive to respond to you: the primary goal of the email.

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**Comments on competing in sports where you can be measured in a tangible way
(timed or judged, i.e. swimming, skiing, track & field, gymnastics, etc.)...**

If you are competing in a timed, individual event you should still do your research on the school and program to add relevancy in your emails and show them you really want to be a part of their program but when it comes to the “Benefit” portion of the email you should get straight to the point. Give them your times and show them you have the grades to get into their school. Timed sports are black and white and we all know the clock doesn’t lie. Your list of schools should be more screened for schools that fit your times before the process starts. You can find out what the times are for different Divisions and schools online to see where you stack up and where you would fit. Then you can also see if you are in the ballpark academically. You have a better chance to differentiate yourself by personalizing your message about why you want to be a part of the program (i.e. coach is great, great liberal arts program, great conference, etc.) and your character (i.e. team leader, work ethic, positive) than how you can help (your times are going to give them a good indication what you will bring to the table). I would take this as a positive. Once you see where you stack up from an athletic performance and academic perspective you can create a list of schools that you will probably have a great chance of getting an offer from. If you can multiple offers, it will put you in the driver’s seat to negotiate the best offer for you.

This is one email example of how to grab a coach’s attention and hopefully prompt a response from them. I am not saying these examples are the BE ALL and END ALL or the ONLY way you should be sending emails. I want to bring these example emails to your attention to get you thinking “outside the box” in this process and about how you can differentiate yourself from other athletes sending coaches the same self-promoting generic emails that mostly get ignored. .

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Below are some more examples of other introductory emails I have put together to give you more ideas when you start to compose your own.

EXAMPLE EMAIL: REFERENCING THE PROGRAM'S LOSSES TO GRADUATION

Example Scenario: Your name is John Doe. You are currently a junior at ABC High School (in Springfield, IL.) and play men's soccer. You are a midfielder. You are researching the men's soccer program at XYZ University. You realize that the team has 8 juniors, 3 of them being midfielders that will graduate the same year you will be graduating from high school (2014) and entering college as a freshman. You could send the coaches (assistants and head coach) an email like this one (next page):

“I want to bring these example emails to your attention to get you thinking “outside the box” in this process and about how you can differentiate yourself from other athletes sending coaches the same self-promoting generic emails that mostly get ignored.”

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**EXAMPLE EMAIL: REFERENCING THE PROGRAM'S LOSSES TO GRADUATION**

Subject: Coach Smith: I noticed the team was graduating 8 players at the end of 2014

Body:

Hi Coach Smith,

Purpose: I was researching your program and noticed that at the end of next year (2014) you will be graduating 8 members of your team including 3 mid-fielders. I have been following your program for many years and feel I could fill the void that will be left when your 2014 class graduates.

Benefit: My name is John Doe. I am a junior midfielder at ABC High School in Springfield, IL. I have the ability to play at the Division 2 level and have the academics in place to be accepted by XYZ's admissions.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.johndoe.com (Add hyperlink to profile)

Request: Coach Smith, I am planning on visiting campus next month and was hoping you had some time to meet and discuss your program and what types of student-athletes fit your system? I would also be happy to speak by phone prior? I appreciate your time and please let me know.

Regards,

John

John Doe '14

Junior / Midfielder / ABC High School

GPA: 3.3 / SAT: 1510 / ACT: 22

John Doe Soccer Profile ([Add hyperlink to profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add hyperlink to Video/YouTube](#))

Phone: 888-555-1212.

Disclaimer: The Purpose, Benefit, Request words that I insert above are a guide for you the reader. Do NOT insert the text Purpose, Benefit, Request in your actual emails!!

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The previous email was **short**, **relevant** and **asked** for a next step. I feel that this subject line is very compelling for any coach and it will get them to open the email. Also, you are showing the coach that you are doing solid due diligence in knowing what their current roster looks like, who will be graduating and when. It shows you are doing the research and want to be a part of their program.

Most importantly: This is your first impression to show them how seriously you are taking their school and program and that you being a part of their program is something you WANT BADLY.

EXAMPLE EMAIL: YOU PLAYED WITH SOMEONE ON THE CURRENT TEAM

Example Scenario: You are a women's lacrosse player (Julia Pierce) trying to get recruited by a team where one of your former teammates or friends (let's say her name is Janet Kelly) is currently playing. Your position is attacker. First, hopefully your friend is trying to help you with the coach internally by telling the coach of your interest and putting in a good word for you. Also, you should have had a good conversation with Janet about the school and program to get a solid understanding of what the coach wants to see in a student-athlete. In this example, let's say Janet told you the coach loves team leaders and athletes who consistently work hard at practice day in and day out. Next, if you have not engaged with the coaching staff and want to, you could send an email like this (**remember PBR**):

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EXAMPLE EMAIL: YOU PLAYED WITH SOMEONE ON THE CURRENT TEAM

Subject: Janet Kelly

Hi Coach Smith,

Purpose: My name is Julia Pierce. I was a high school teammate of Janet Kelly at XYZ High School in Weymouth, MA. Janet has told me a lot about the team and university and I would really like to be a part of a program like yours.

Benefit: I am junior attacker at XYZ High School. I am an assistant captain as a junior and an accomplished high school scorer. I am one of those “last players to leave” who constantly works on their game, always bringing my teammates with me.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.juliapierce.com (Add hyperlink to profile)

Request: I will be on campus November 10th to watch your game (and see Janet play) and was hoping you would have some time to meet before or after the game? I would also be happy to schedule a call prior? I appreciate your time and please let me know.

Regards,

Julia

Julia Pearce '14

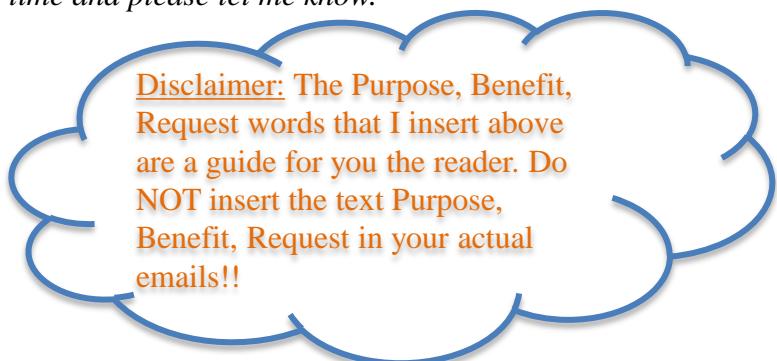
Junior / Attacker / XYZ High School

GPA: 3.3 / SAT: 1510 / ACT: 22

Julia Pearce Lacrosse Profile ([Add hyperlink to Online Athletic Profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add hyperlink to Video/YouTube Channel](#))

Phone: 888-555-1212



“If a coach sees one of their players names in the subject line they are probably going to open up the email out of general curiosity.”

In this example, I like the subject line just being Janet Kelly. If a coach sees one of their players names in the subject line they are probably going to open up the email out of general curiosity. In the benefit piece using the information your friend gave you should prove relevant to the coach and hit a cord because you are letting them know you are already doing things they care about and value in a student-athlete. In the request, stating you are coming to see Janet play makes it more personal which is always better.

EXAMPLE EMAIL: THE TEAM JUST WON A GAME/EVENT

You should keep tabs of the teams on your target list of schools to see how they are doing during the current season. If you are trying to engage with a coach you could send them an email after a big win.

Example Scenario: You are a senior third baseman playing baseball for ABC High School in Tacoma, WA. You notice that one of the schools on your target list just beat their rivals (let's call them College University) in a big game. (**Remember PBR:**)

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EXAMPLE EMAIL: THE TEAM JUST WON A GAME/EVENT

Subject: Coach Smith - Congratulations on your big win yesterday against College University!

Hi Coach Smith,

Purpose: I was reading online about your big win against College University. Congratulations! I wanted to connect because I would love to be a part of this type of competitive atmosphere when I play college ball.

Benefit: My name is Steve O'Brien and I am a senior 3rd baseman at ABC High School in Tacoma, WA. I am currently in the Top 5 in league batting average and carry a 3.0 GPA. I have been admiring your program and I think my skills and character would be a great addition to your club.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.steveobrien.com (hyperlink to profile)

Request: Coach Smith, I will be coming to campus at the end of this month and was hoping you would have some time to meet with me to discuss your program and what you are looking for in a potential recruit? Also, I will be playing in the Washington High School All-Star weekend on June 13th-15th. I am not sure if you will be attending?

I appreciate your time and please let me know if you have some time when I come to campus.

Regards,

Steve

Steve O'Brien '13

Senior / Third Baseman / Tacoma High School

GPA: 3.3 / SAT: 1510 / ACT: 22

Steve O'Brien Baseball Profile ([Add hyperlink to Online Athletic Profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add hyperlink to Video/YouTube Channel](#))

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In this example, I think the coach will definitely open the email because of the subject line: who is not going to open up a positive subject line like that? Not too many people. The email shows that you are paying attention and keeping tabs on the program, demonstrating that you are doing a lot more than the average high school athlete trying to get recruited. Also, you mention how you want to be a part of a big game and that type of atmosphere. It signals to the coach you get what competition is all about and there is more to it than just showing up to the field and worrying about your batting average (i.e. personal stats).

EXAMPLE EMAIL: ASSISTANT COACHES**Comments on Emailing Assistant Coaches...**

You should be sending assistant coaches emails, in addition to the head coach. Most programs have one assistant coach dedicated as “recruiting coordinator.” The head coach might have the final say in whether or not they will make you an offer but the assistant coaches can be just as important (sometimes more so) when it comes to getting on their radar. Again, you want to be as personalized and relevant as possible with the assistant coaches but you can still use the same information you used for the head coach in your emails to the assistants. In the example above, you could change the subject line to: “Coach Watson’s Quote in Evansvilleliving.com” and then in the body have the same message but tailored toward the assistant coach. Here is an example (next page):

I have put the tweaks in bold for assistant coaches in the next example.

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EXAMPLE EMAIL: ASSISTANT COACHES

Hi Coach Smith,

I came across **Coach's Watson's** quote on Evansvilleliving.com and I wanted to connect: "What impressed me about last year was how everyone changed their roles. Guys went from being second line players to the front line; they moved up on every opponent's scouting report."

My name is Steve O'Brien and I am very interested in becoming part of the **Southern Indiana basketball program**. Much like your current players did for **the program** this year, I pride myself in being a team player, abiding by the team system and doing whatever it takes to win. I am a junior point guard and in the top 15% of my class academically at Braintree High School in Braintree, MA. I want to major in Business and have been researching USI's College of Business program.

Please see my full profile (stats, grades, video, referrals): www.steveobrien.com (Add hyperlink to profile)

Coach **Smith**, I will be visiting the Southern Indiana campus in late October and was hoping you would have some time to meet? I would also be open to scheduling a call prior at your convenience? Please let me know if this is possible.

I appreciate your time and I am very eager to meet and learn more about what you are looking for in a student-athlete and the overall goals **of the program**.

Regards,

Steve

Steve O'Brien '14

Junior | Point Guard | Braintree High School

GPA: 3.3 | SAT: 1510 | ACT: 22

Steve O'Brien Basketball Profile ([Add hyperlink to Online Athletic Profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add hyperlink to Video/YouTube Channel](#))

Phone: 888-555-1212



You should be sending
assistant coaches emails, in
addition to the head coach.

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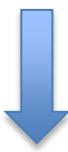
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REMEMBER: IT'S A NUMBERS GAME

We have gone over some strategic, attention-grabbing emails to send to coaches. I want to re-iterate (which I have and will continue to do several times in this guide) the mindset you have to have early in this process. The mindset revolves around two words that are the core of this process: “NUMBERS GAME”. What I mean by “NUMBERS GAME” is you have to try to connect with many schools and coaches and you have to try and connect with individual coaches multiple times:

More activity (pro-active emails and phone calls)



More engagement with more coaches



More potential offers

A **Numbers Game mentality** means taking your emotions out of the process when it comes to not receiving a response back, and sticking to the strategy and plan. You could write the best, most relevant email the coach has ever seen and they still

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might not respond. The ONE thing you CAN'T do if you want to be successful in this process and get the best offer possible is SLOW DOWN or STOP being proactive and contacting all of the coaches on your list. I know, not hearing back from a coach, especially if you send them a great email that you put time into can be discouraging. It is a rejection, it is a NO and it can be tough to take. But remember, when you don't hear back from a coach keep thinking: "NUMBERS GAME" and continue to be pro-active and pleasantly persistent. If you are realistic with the schools you are targeting (i.e. you did the proper self-evaluation in Section 1) the "NUMBERS GAME" mindset combined with relevant, attention grabbing messaging will give you a much better chance of scheduling meetings/visits with these coaches and put you in a better position to get the offer you want.

"I know, not hearing back from a coach, especially if you send them a great email that you put time into can be discouraging. The ONE thing you CAN'T do if you want to be successful in this process and get the best offer possible is SLOW DOWN or STOP being pro-active."

“ It doesn’t matter if you are a recruit negotiating a full scholarship or just trying to get your books paid for, you want to have as many schools interested to give you more control (and confidence) when negotiating offers. ”

On the flipside, if you get some responses and interest from coaches DO NOT stop being pro-active either. Make sure you continue the process through every school on the list. It is easy to get interest, i.e. “feel the love”, from a couple of schools and think “Okay, I’ll just choose one of these schools.” If you do that, you are doing yourself a disservice. Getting as many schools into the mix will not only allow you to get a better understanding of more schools, but it will also help you find the coaches and programs that will be the best fit for you. Plus it will also give you more chips at the negotiating table. **It doesn’t matter if you are a recruit negotiating a full scholarship or just trying to get your books paid for, you want to have as many schools interested to give you more control (and confidence) when negotiating offers.** If you only have one or two schools presenting an offer you have a lot less leverage than if you have five or six. Remember: “NUMBERS GAME” and keep being pro-active and relevant.

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**WHEN YOU SHOULD SEND EMAILS TO COACHES**

You are putting all of this effort into creating relevant, attention-grabbing emails to send to coaches. You should also be strategic in when you send these emails. This is important. Think about it. I have asked coaches when they most frequently get emails from athletes trying to be recruited. Overall, they say mostly nights and weekends are when they receive most of their emails from potential recruits. Don't be like most of these athletes trying to get attention: They are emailing the coach when they (the athlete) are free, i.e. when it is best for them, not the coach. I go back to it's about THEM, not about YOU. Think about the Coach's schedule. During the week, most coaches practice (or have a game or event) in the afternoon. In the evening, they do look at email but they also spend a lot of time speaking with potential recruits, parents and high school coaches among other things. On the weekends is when most sports have games/events and this is usually an all day affair for a coach and team (especially if they are the away team and are travelling). Also, coaches have lives outside of their sport. They are human beings just like the rest of us and spend time with their families, friends, husbands, wives, girlfriends and boyfriends, usually on the weekends. After taking this into consideration, the

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majority of coaches (not all) are sitting at their desk between 9:30AM and lunchtime going through their emails, recruiting, putting practice plans together, watching video, etc. This is probably the best time to send your email. **Why?**:

- They are most likely sitting at their desk in front of their laptop/computer.
- They are not “on the go” so they are settled and have a bit more time.
- The majority of other potential recruits/young athletes are not sending their emails at this time.

You might be saying “I am at school, I don’t have the time to send emails on weekday mornings”? There is a couple of ways around this. After you draft your emails you can have them scheduled to be sent out at a time that you choose, preferably for coaches between 9:30am-10:30am. There are services like Boomerang for Gmail, which is a plugin/extension you can download for free to make this very simple. Second, if you have a study hall or gym class in the morning maybe you could explain to your teacher what you are trying to accomplish and that you would like to spend the class time sending out emails to universities you would possibly like to attend. This is a reasonable request, I would think most teachers would understand. I would have the emails drafted completely so you are just sending emails and not editing and writing during this limited time.

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I have another piece of advice when it comes to sending emails to coaches. Make sure to check their game/event schedules (you can find them on the school's athletic website). I would recommend **not** sending a coach an email on a game day. Coaches are pre-occupied focusing on the game that day and getting their team as prepared as possible. Also, they might be playing an away game and have a road trip giving them even less time. Overall, most coaches are not focused on recruiting the day of a game/event, they are focused on their current team and I don't suggest emailing or calling them on these days. You should also be checking when their season is over. For the most part, the few weeks after the season the coaches are probably going to try to take their mind off of the sport and if they do any recruiting, it will probably be with recruits they have already been in contact with and have pre-scheduled calls and meetings. This is my opinion and will be different from coach to coach, I just want you to spend your time and energy at the right time to give you the best possible chance of a response.

“ I would recommend **not** sending a coach an email on a game day. ”

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PRO-ACTIVE FOLLOW UP

Now, you have sent out relevant, attention-grabbing emails to the head and assistant coaches at one of your target schools. What do you do next? First, give the coaches 48 to 72 hours to get back to you. If you do not hear from them within that time frame you should send them another email (again at a strategic time). Go to your “Sent” box within your email. You should forward the last email you sent to them so the subject line is the same with the “FW:” just before. Why should you forward your previous email? If you created a compelling and relevant subject line and email, the chances of the coach reading that email, even if they did not respond the first time, are very high. In contrast, a generic “all about me” email that most young athletes are sending has a much less chance of even getting read. In short, you want to remind the coach of the great email you sent a few days ago. You might be asking: “If I sent such a great email why didn’t the coach respond?” Young athletes honestly believe the only reason the coach did not get back to them after the first email is because they are not interested or they do not think they are good enough. Could this be the reason? Yes. Is it the only reason a coach doesn’t respond to a young athlete’s email or voicemail? Absolutely not! **I go back to it again: Think about THEM (the coaches) not YOU. Put yourself in their shoes.** College

You may have grabbed their attention for a moment but they were in the middle of something and didn't immediately respond... don't take it personally and be realistic about it and follow-up again.

Coaches are extremely busy people. Think about all the stuff they are doing: practices, games, video, travel, recruiting, speaking engagements, community events, camps, university administration, current players (on and off field issues), etc. Coaches are always on the move and just like anyone else (maybe even yourself) they skim through email, often on their mobile phones, and don't respond to every one of them. You may have grabbed their attention for a moment but they were in the middle of something and didn't immediately respond. If they didn't setup a reminder for themselves, your email may have gotten buried, never to be returned. This happens all the time, so don't take it personally. Be realistic about it and follow-up again.

You have to be pleasantly persistent (throughout this process) and "remind" the coach of your great email. As I mentioned, go to your "Sent" box and forward your previous email. Now, in the body (above the first email), you want to be short and concise. If Coach Watson (*Example Email, P. 64*) , in my example above did not get back to me, my follow up email would look like the following:

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Subject: FW: Coach Watson: Your Quote in Evansvilleliving.com

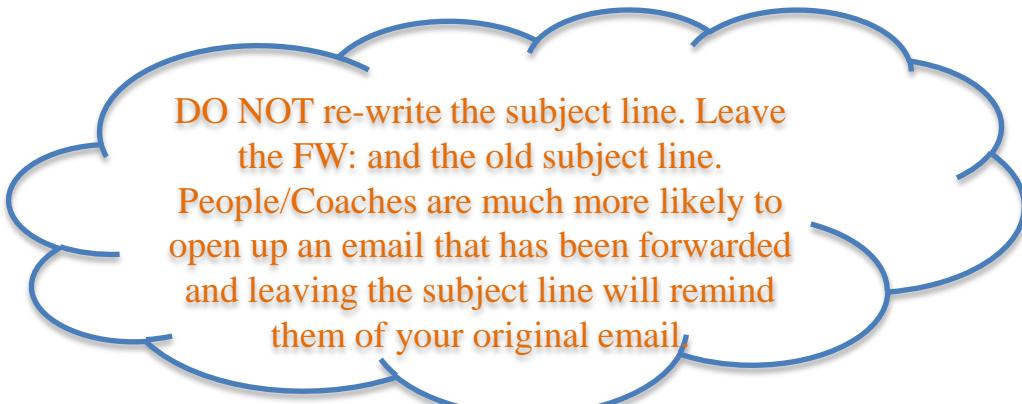
Hi Coach Watson,

I wanted to follow up on the email I sent below. Please let me know if you would have some time to meet me in late October when I am visiting the Southern Indiana campus or if you would like to schedule a call to speak?

I appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Steve



DO NOT re-write the subject line. Leave the FW: and the old subject line. People/Coaches are much more likely to open up an email that has been forwarded and leaving the subject line will remind them of your original email.

Steve O'Brien '14

Junior / Point Guard / Braintree High School

GPA: 3.2 / SAT: 1510 / ACT: 22

Steve O'Brien Basketball Profile ([Add Hyperlink to Your Online Athletic Profile](#))

Video: Highlights and References ([Add Hyperlink to YouTube Channel or Videos](#))

Phone: 888-555-1212

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Now, if you do get a positive response after the first or second email, i.e. the coach would like to speak with you or invites you to meet on campus, make sure to respond properly. You don't have to respond instantly, you may have take some time to check your schedule or with your parent's before committing to a call or meeting. You should respond within 24 hours (12 would be best depending on the time of day they emailed you) and make sure to show respect for their time, i.e. "Thanks for the response", "I appreciate your time", "I look forward to coming to campus to meet you and the coaching staff." I am not going to tell you exactly what to write because you have to be yourself but I just want to emphasize to respond promptly with respect and appreciation.

You may get a negative response like "Thanks for your email but we are all set in our recruiting for next year". I know it's not easy to hear but try not to take it personal and remember "NUMBERS GAME", stick to the strategy and process you have laid out. Also, in no way does it mean you are done in your efforts in trying to

**"You should respond within 24 hours
(12 would be best depending on the
time of day they emailed you) and make
sure to show respect for their time."**

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be recruited by this school. Many things change and develop over time: one of their slated recruits changes their mind, one if their current player's leaves school or decides to transfer, another is deemed academically ineligible, the school awards the team additional scholarship money, etc. If you really want to be a part of a particular program and they say "No" at first, give it 6 weeks and then you can follow up with a "check-in" email letting them know you are still interested and wanted to see if anything has changed. You will never know unless you continue to follow up.

CALLING COACHES AND SCRIPTS ON WHAT TO SAY

If you have sent two emails and have not heard back after 72 hours of the 2nd email it is time to place a call. Prior to calling you should put together 2 short scripts to guide you. One script if the coach picks up the phone, the other if you have to leave a voicemail. This will help you be clear with your message, help the coach identify you (and your email) and set yourself up to make a request. In the script you should leverage your original email and still abide by the Purpose, Benefit, Request model I illustrated in the email example. For example, if I were going to give Coach Watson (*Example Email, P. 64*) a call, my script would read something like this (the portion highlighted in blue is the student-athlete's part):

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Student-Athlete Guide to be Recruitedwww.goalcollegeathlete.com**CALL SCRIPT: COACH PICKS UP PHONE**

“Hi Coach Watson,

My name is Steve O’Brien and I am a point guard at Braintree High School. Did I catch you at a bad time?” (Show respect for their time, you are calling them unplanned).

If they say it is a bad time or they are busy. Immediately say: “I completely understand, would there be a good time today or tomorrow to give you a call back?” (**then stop talking and do not say a word until the coach responds**). The coach might say what is this regarding? If the coach says this continue on with the script below. If the coach gives you a time, write it down, tell the coach thank you and that you will call him or her back at that time (**make sure you call back at that time!**). When you call back, use the script below.

Purpose: “I am following up on an email I sent earlier in the week (or last week) regarding your article in evansvilleliving.com on how your players changed their roles and raised their level of play throughout the past season. I wanted to see if you got a chance to look at my email and profile I sent you on Tuesday?” (**say the exact day**)

If Yes: **Benefit is known because the coach has looked at email and profile**

Request: “Great, I have been a big fan of your program and would love to be a part (or anything relevant: maybe you know one of his or her players, went to one of their camps, etc). I will be visiting the Southern Indiana campus the week of October 21st (for example) and wanted to know if you had some time to meet and discuss your program and the recruiting process?” (**Stop talking and do not say a word until the coach speaks**).

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- **Gives you a date and time:** Schedule the meeting and thank him or her for the time. I would also send them a calendar invite (you can do this via Google calendar) and inside the body of the invite thank them for the time and let them know you are looking forward to it.
- **Says it is not a good week:** Ask them when would be a good week (date and time) and you would be happy to adjust your schedule accordingly to meet.
- **Says they are not interested or are all set from a recruiting perspective:** If this is a program you want to be a part of badly ask the coach what alternative routes you could potentially take to be a part of the program? (i.e. Club/Junior team? Post-graduate year? Junior College?) The coach might give you an inside view of how they have recruited some athletes not directly from high school. You could possibly pursue this route if you wanted to be a part of this program.

Regardless, thank the coach for their time and if anything changes in the future to have them contact you. You can still “check-in” with the coach in 6-8 weeks to see if anything has changed. The pursuit is not over. Also, if he or she did give you some advice on alternative routes and you looked into them you could always send a thank you e-mail to him with your progress and questions you may have. This will

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show you are serious, that you really want to be part of their program and keep you connected to the coach.

If the Coach has NOT seen your email or profile: Ask them if they are in front of a computer (hopefully they are at their desk). If they are, tell them you are re-sending the email now, have them take a look and point out the highlights in the profile and then walk them through the script above (i.e. requesting a meeting, school visit or whatever the best way for you to engage). Continue the script to try and schedule a time. If they are not in front of a computer and have not seen the email, tell them you will re-send the email for them to have a look when they get a chance. Continue on with the script to see if you can get a meeting. When you send the original email to them again make sure you reference the call, i.e. “Thanks for taking the time today. My original email and profile are below.”

Call Script: Voicemail

Remember: (**PBR**) Purpose, Benefit, Request

Hi Coach Watson,

Purpose: I am following up on an email I sent earlier in the week (or last week) regarding your article in evansvilleliving.com on how your players changed their roles and raised their level of play throughout the past season. I wanted to call and find out if you had a chance to look at the email and the link to my profile page.

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Benefit: *My name is Steve O'Brien. I am a junior point guard at Braintree High School. I carry those characteristics you are looking for in a player and would love to be part of your program in the future.*

Request: *I will be visiting the Southern Indiana campus the week of May 21st (for example) and wanted to know if you had some time to meet and discuss your program and the recruiting process? I would also welcome the opportunity to speak with you or one of your assistant prior? Please let me know.*

Coach Watson, I can be reached at 555-555-1212. Again, its Steve O'Brien at 555-555-1212. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks Coach.

A couple of points I want to highlight on this voicemail script:

Length: This script is short and concise. I just timed myself practicing this script. I spoke at a regular pace (not rushed) and it took me a little under 45 seconds. You do not want this to be long. People do not even like checking their voicemail anymore, let alone listening to a long message, so keep it short.

Introduction: Notice how I started the script. I referenced the details of the email first. I did not say start with “Hi Coach, This is Steve O’Brien. I am a point guard from ABC High School....” This is another way to differentiate yourself from the norm by being more relevant to the coach and putting the focus on HIS program and not on solely on YOU.

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Comments on Preparing Before Calling a Coach...

Before you call the coach make sure you are in front of your computer and have open the original email you sent to the coach in front of you. Have it already forwarded with the coach's email already in the To: box ready to send. If the coach is in front of their computer you can tell them "I will resend it now" instead of having them search through their inbox. Also, make sure you have all your notes, spreadsheets and research on that particular school in front of you for reference. Finally, make sure you have an open notebook or word document to take down information and notes from the coach.

By this point in the Guide you should have accomplished these 4 keys tasks in the process:

- Picked the proper list of target schools based on your self-evaluation (athletically and academically)
- Cleaned up your personal brand (i.e. Facebook, Social Networks)
- Created your Online Athletic Profile, Videos and Email Account
- Sent the proper messaging (doing your research and guided by my examples) to all head and assistant coaches at your target schools (2 emails and a Call). If no response, wait a month and do the process again (possibly with new messaging)

I feel that if you have worked hard at these 4 tasks then you have pro-actively

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planned and executed your strategy in order to get the attention of coaches to be recruited. Through this process you have likely given yourself a far greater chance to catch the coaches attention and get yourself a meeting (or some kind of next step), which is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome in being recruited by any program. In other words, by this point you have done most of the heavy lifting. Once you get that “foot in the door” coaches can get to know you (and you can get to know them) to see if their program might be the best fit for you.

After the planning and execution, you are ready to move on to the final section:

Making the Best Impression and Negotiating Offers

SECTION 4

Making the Best Impression and Negotiating Offers

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SECTION 4: MAKING THE BEST IMPRESSION AND NEGOTIATING OFFERS

The previous sections have helped you get the attention and engage with multiple coaches. Hopefully, you are now on several recruiting lists enabling you to engage further in the recruiting process and ultimately getting offers from schools and teams that would be a great fit for you.

The first step of getting a coaches attention can be difficult but if you are successful there is still a lot of work to do – which is good news. Now, I can't tell you exactly how to act or what to do as the recruiting process continues because you ultimately need to be yourself, but I did want to add some helpful tips and best practices, based on my experiences, to help you make a good impression on coaches:

- **Be Respectful to the Coaches and School**
- **Be in Shape When you Meet Coaches**
- **Dress Accordingly to Be Recruited**
- **Negotiating Offers and Taking Control of the Process**
- **Don't Be Rushed**
- **Honest Communication and Creating a Bidding War**
- **Go with Your Gut**

“You want all feedback to come back positive from any visit or meeting you have...show respect to every individual you meet.”

BE RESPECTFUL TO THE COACHES AND SCHOOL

This might sound like a no-brainer but make sure you are respectful to everyone you meet at a particular school: all coaches, all players, equipment guys, student-intern who helps the team, school officials, everyone. The reason is not just because you should be, but also because anything can get back to the coaching staff or the person who will be making the decision on whether you get an offer or not. You want all feedback to come back positive from any visit or meeting you have, and the one way you can do that is to be polite and show respect to every individual you meet.

Being respectful also means responding to coaches promptly during the recruiting process. 24 hours is the absolute longest amount of time you should ever take to respond to a coach's email or voicemail. Anything longer shows the coaching staff at that school you are not ALL IN and being recruited by them doesn't mean that much to you. Also, if you make a decision on a school, you should call back all the other schools/coaches that were trying to recruit you and invested time with you and let them know of your decision. You owe them that and if you don't and the school

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you chose is local or in the same conference of the school you picked, rest-assured that information will get back to your future head coach. Coaches within conferences not only talk, most are good friends. Finally, you should be the one making the call, not your parent's or a recruiting agency. You owe it to those schools and coaches who put effort and time into trying to recruit you.

Honesty goes hand and hand with being respectful. Being honest and upfront is the best way to go throughout the process. Be honest about your grades, test scores, eligibility, statistics, awards, other schools you are speaking with, etc. You owe it to the coaches recruiting you (and they owe it to you as well). Also, if a coaching staff comes to find out you have been dishonest (even if it is only something small) you will lose all your credibility and your character will be questioned. If you want an offer, you don't want either of these things to happen. Being honest DOES NOT mean letting coaches and programs control the recruiting process and in my upcoming Negotiation section I will show you how being honest can help you get a better offer.

**“Being honest and upfront is
the best way to go throughout
the process.”**

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My final piece of being respectful is a bit old school but I believe is a great thing to do in showing your respect. Make sure to mail (yes, hard copy mail) hand written cards/letters to EVERY PERSON at a school who sits down and spends time with you to give you more information about the team, school or recruiting process. This is a very thoughtful and respectful thing to do that shows these individuals that their time meant something to you and was appreciated. Also, showing a sign of appreciation like this can also get these individuals talking about you in a positive way which can only help you when coaches are trying to make a decision about which potential recruits to make an offer to. (When I was interviewing for my first real job it was between me and another person. After I got the job, a couple members of the team told me the boss let the team decide who to hire. A couple team members told me I got the job because they really appreciated the hand written thank you cards I had sent them.)

BE IN SHAPE WHEN YOU MEET COACHES

When you meet with coaches it is very important that you are in great shape. If you are an athlete looking to get an offer to play a sport at the college level there is no excuse for you not to be in shape. If you appear overweight or unfit you are giving the coaches the perception that you do not take your sport seriously. The coaches, then, may not take you seriously. On the other hand, you will leave a great first

“If you want to play college sports, get in the best shape of your life. No excuses”

impression on the coaches if you appear to be in great physical condition. If I was a coach and met a potential recruit who was overweight I would think why should I recruit you when you obviously don't take care of yourself and aren't doing the things within your control to make yourself a better athlete? Other athletes are doing these things. If you want to play college sports, get in the best shape of your life. No excuses.

DRESS ACCORDINGLY TO BE RECRUITED

Any opportunity to meet a member of the coaching staff or school official is an opportunity to make a positive impression. Don't ruin it by not dressing accordingly. Different situations call for different attire but there are some things that you should not be wearing at this point in the recruiting process including hats, tank tops, flip flops, worn sneakers or ripped clothing to name a few.

This is your chance to play your sport at the college level. Why make a bad impression and look immature or unprofessional when you don't have to? You might say, “It only matters how good I am as an athlete, not what I wear.” My

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answer would be “Why risk it?” I would recommend dressing conservatively and just a notch above what the situation calls for. Remember, it’s the little things that might be the difference between you or a similar recruit getting an offer. **Also, the goal is to get multiple offers so take every part of the process with every team/school seriously and with professionalism.**

NEGOTIATING OFFERS AND TAKING CONTROL OF THE PROCESS

The focus of this guide is to get the attention of college coaches and engage in a recruiting process with multiple schools on your target list. I do want to take a moment to take it a step further and offer some thoughts and best practices as you get deeper into this process. Your sole mission, and the reason you put in so much time and effort into the strategies I mention in this guide, is to get the best offer at the best school for YOU. The best way to do this is to put yourself in a position where you have interest from multiple schools and this is why you were and continue to be persistent and relentlessly pro-active with your target list. This will give you more leverage and control in this process to receive the best offer possible. If you only have one school interested it really limits your power to negotiate and get a better offer from a program.

As I mentioned earlier, it does not matter what type of offer you are negotiating: some athletes might have been offered a 3-year scholarship and are trying to

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negotiate to try and get a Full-ride while others might be trying to negotiate getting their books paid for. **Every situation is different but YOUR situation is the most important and you want to get the best offer for YOU.** If you want the best offer you have to take on a BUSINESS MENTALITY (*See Comments on “Business Mentality”, P. 104*) and not make it personal. Having a business mentality means being honest and transparent with the coaches and at the same time not letting your emotions get in the way. It means being thoughtful about the right actions to take and making the best decisions for you and not worrying about the coach’s feelings or what they might think of you.

DON’T BE RUSHED

There is a couple of different ways that an athlete can feel rushed in this process. First, a coach and/or program could have great interest in you and do everything right in the recruiting process to show you how much they want you to be a part of their school and program. You could start to “feel the love”. When I say “feel the love”, I mean you start to build a relationship with that particular school and program, you really like the fact that they really want you and you feel like this might be a place you would really like to go. When most coaches “show you the love” they are genuine and want you to be a part of the program. They then may make you an offer to be a part of the program. Many athletes, because they are

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“feeling the love” jump at the first offer made to them without counter-offering or talking to other schools and programs. This is not the worst thing in the world, but I think if you are going to put in all this time and effort to get coaches attention, you owe it to yourself to be patient and learn about all the opportunities that might be available to you.

A potential recruit can also feel rushed if the coach or program making an offer puts a timetable or expiration date on what they offering you. For example, a coach might make you an offer but say “We have to make a decision by a week from today or it is off the table.” Now, if you are not talking to any other schools you may feel rushed to make a decision. I would say, in most cases, if the coaches really want you, the timetable will not matter. It is a strategy to try to get you to commit to their offer. The coaches have every right to do this. They have to do certain things to get the right student-athletes, within their allotted budget and resources, to build the best team possible for their program. They are taking a BUSINESS MENTALITY to this process and because they are taking a business mentality you should act and negotiate accordingly to get the best offer possible for you. This may mean counter-offering, asking for more time or just letting them know you are going to think about it and talk to other schools at the same time.

Comments on Taking Your Emotions Out of the Process...

I talk about treating the negotiation process with a BUSINESS MENTALITY and taking your emotions out of it. This is not the easiest thing to do, this decision is a big one and you and your family have so much invested and at stake, but it is essential for you to take a business mentality and be professional in order to get the best offer for YOU (especially at this part of the process). When you start meeting and talking to coaches, players and people from a particular school and program you can start to build an attachment. If you are made an offer from a program that you feel attached to because the recruiting process has been positive you may have mixed emotions and feel like you will:

- 1. Miss out on the offer if you don't accept right away or at their deadline**
- 2. Disappoint the coaches because they have been so great through the process**
- 3. Be disloyal if you start or continue talking to other schools**
- 4. Accept an offer that is not good enough but at the same time love the coaches and the school and they have told you that was the best they could do**

Although not easy, all 4 of these feelings and others like them have to be suppressed so that they do not affect your strategy and decision making process.

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More Comments on Taking Your Emotions Out of the Process...

You can overcome some of this by having supreme honesty and integrity within the process. For example:

- If you feel you are being rushed into an offer: tell them openly you don't feel comfortable to make your decision by that date and you need more time. Trust me, if they want you they will give you more time. If they don't, this particular program might not be a good fit for you.
- You will disappoint the coaches because they have been so great through the process: In anything in life, you can't make the best decisions for YOURSELF if you are worried more about how it will affect others. You can be upfront with all coaches from the start stating that in the end you will be making the best decision for yourself and your career. You should also continuously tell those coaches who have treated you well how much you appreciate their time and effort and that you think highly of their program...because you do.
- You may feel some disloyalty if you start or continue talking to other schools: the coaches are 100%, most definitely, talking to other players during your recruiting process so you should be doing the same by talking to others schools throughout the process. Also, be upfront with all coaches about who you are talking to and offers that have been made (see next section).
- You may feel the offer is not good enough but at that the same time love the coaches and the school and they have told you that was the best they could do: Be honest, tell the coaches you appreciate the offer and understand their situation but you feel that the offer is not enough for you to make a commitment on this particular offer. Have a counter offer for them (one that you would accept if they came back and offered it...you have to keep your word on offers you make). Also, don't give in after you have countered an offer. For example, if a school is offering you a one year scholarship and you counter offer with 2.5 years, don't tell them 5 minutes later or the next day, "But actually I would take 1.5 years". You are shooting yourself in the foot at the negotiating table. Hold firm and see what they come back with.

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Hopefully, the previous comments above will help you take some of your emotional feelings out of the recruiting process and keep you focused with a “Business Mentality” to finish the process properly and help you make the best decision. This is not easy, the whole recruiting process will most likely be an emotional roller coaster for you and your family but you have put too much time and effort into this process, and throughout your life with your sport, to make a rash, quick decision. You owe it to yourself to make the best decision for YOU.

HONEST COMMUNICATION AND CREATING THE BIDDING WAR

As I have remarked throughout the entire guide, your goal when implementing this strategy is to get the attention of multiple college coaches, on your target list, to engage in a recruiting process in the hopes of receiving multiple offers. These offers will give you more leverage in the process in order to make the best choice for YOU. In other words: After you have executed the strategy, the ideal situation would be for you to have created a bidding war among multiple coaches and schools for you to receive the best offer for YOU. The question now is: What do I do when I get there?

As I mentioned in the comments above: take your emotion out of it (as best you can) and be upfront and honest throughout. Do not be afraid to tell all coaches about all the offers you have on the table and ask them if they can do better (always being

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professional and respectful). Don't be afraid to ask for more time. Don't be afraid to counter offer. You have earned this control and have to use it to get the offer you want.

Be honest with the coaches. Don't lie about other offers (you will probably get caught and may ruin your chances with many coaches). If you gave them your word that you would make a decision by a certain date/time (whether that is a yes or no), stick to your word. If you counter-offer and say that if they can make that offer good you will accept, stick to your word. If you commit to a school, stick to it. If you say you are going to do something, stick to it. You are only as good as your word. All coaches will have more respect for you (whether you join their team or not) if you show respect and are upfront and honest with them throughout the recruiting process.

“

Take your emotion out of it (as best you can) and be upfront and honest throughout. **”**

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“ Make the decision that feels best
for you and no one else.”

GO WITH YOUR GUT

When it is all said and done in your recruiting process the best advice I can give you when trying to accept an offer is “Go with your gut.” Make the decision that feels best for you and no one else. Don’t let your parents, coaches, teammates, friends influence your decision in a major way. This is your life, this is a big decision, go with the one that feels best for YOU.

CONCLUSION

Playing College Sports: An Unbelievable Experience Worth All of the Hard Work

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CONCLUSION

Thanks for taking the time to read the “Student-Athlete Guide to Be Recruited.” Whether you read a couple of sections or the entire Guide we hope you have taken away some items that will help you in your recruiting process.

In closing, the most important thing I want you to realize is how important the recruiting process is and how it can affect your life. Playing collegiate sports (no matter what level or what sport) is an unbelievable experience that few get and it can't ever be taken away from you. You get to play on a team for 4 years with extremely like minded people (you all chose the same sport and school) and not only do you play and practice with them, you also go to school and live with them. The situation can create experiences, relationships and bonds that are special and unforgettable. A unique experience an athlete who loves their sport does not want to miss.

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. You have worked your whole life to get to this point. Take control of YOUR recruiting process and get the offer YOU deserve. I wish you the best of luck!

Steve O'Brien