

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY

CROSS COUNTRY RECRUITING MANUAL

1. PROGRAM VISION & IDENTITY

1.1 Why William Carey Cross Country Recruits

William Carey Cross Country exists to do more than collect fast times.

Our goal is to build a whole program of people—athletes and staff—who:

- Compete with courage and discipline
- Grow as students and leaders
- Represent William Carey University with integrity
- Leave the program better than they found it

Recruiting is the strategic invitation into that process. Every interaction—messages, calls, visits, offers—is part of shaping complete student-athletes, not just collecting fast runners.

1.2 Core Recruiting Values

Our recruiting must be:

- **Intentional** – We recruit toward a clear picture of the program we’re building, not just whoever is available.
- **Relational** – We recruit people, not performances. Times matter, but people matter more.
- **Honest** – We do not overpromise scholarships, roles, or experiences. No hype, no spin.
- **Consistent** – The process is predictable and fair from year to year and across classes.

1.3 Who We Are Looking For

We target athletes who show strength in three areas:

- **Performance**
 - Can help us win at the conference level and compete at the regional and national level.
 - Show upward trajectory and competitive habits that translate to NAIA competition.
- **Character & Fit**
 - Coachable, resilient, team-first.
 - Honest, respectful, and willing to work hard on good days and bad.
 - Align with the mission and values of William Carey University.
- **Academics**
 - Able to earn admission and stay on track for graduation.
 - Willing to use academic support and manage time well.

Character is non-negotiable.

Performance can develop; integrity cannot.

1.4 The Big Picture

Every recruiting decision affects:

- Our **daily training environment**
- Our **competitive ceiling** at conference, regional, and national meets
- Our **team culture and reputation** on campus and in the community
- Our **long-term stability** as a program

We recruit for the future of William Carey Cross Country, not just the next race.

2. RECRUITING PHILOSOPHY & TIER SYSTEM

2.1 Core Recruiting Principles

1. **Truth over hype**
 - We never promise what we cannot deliver.
 - We are honest about scholarships, roster spots, travel, and expectations.
2. **Clarity over confusion**
 - Athletes deserve to know where they stand.
 - We are clear about interest level, Tier, and next steps.
3. **Process over panic**
 - We make decisions based on our standards and timeline, not fear of losing an athlete.
4. **Relationships over transactions**
 - We aim to earn the trust of athletes and families whether they choose WCU or not.
5. **Stewardship over shortcuts**
 - Scholarship money, roster spots, and staff time are resources we manage carefully.

2.2 The Tier System

The **Tier system** keeps decisions consistent, fair, and strategic. Tiers are internal tools, **not labels on people**.

Tier 1 – Immediate Impact

- Project to score quickly at the conference and regional level
- Typically meet or exceed Tier 1 standards on our performance charts
- Strong character, leadership potential, and academic readiness
- Top priority for communication, visits, and scholarship allocation

Tier 2 – Developmental Impact

- Show clear potential to become major contributors within 1–2 years of college training
- Typically meet Tier 2 standards or are trending toward them
- Add depth to training groups
- Solid academics and strong coach recommendations

Tier 3 – Depth & High-Character Adds

- Slightly below current performance standards but:
 - Show clear commitment to growth
 - Strengthen team culture and training groups
 - Help fulfill roster and institutional goals

Tiers guide:

- How often we communicate
- How we prioritize visits
- How we allocate scholarships and roster spots

They do **not** determine a person's value or limit their long-term potential.

2.3 Non-Time Evaluation Factors

Times and performances matter, but they are never the whole story. We also evaluate:

- **Training age & background** – How long they've trained seriously, what mileage and workouts they've handled.
- **Injury history** – Any patterns that may need extra attention or support.
- **Competition habits** – How they race in championships and tough conditions.
- **Coach recommendations** – Work ethic, presence at practice, leadership, and attitude.
- **Academics** – GPA, course load, and study habits.
- **Family support** – Who is in their corner and how they handle accountability.

3. ANNUAL RECRUITING CALENDAR

3.1 Seasonal Plan

Summer (June–August)

- Build and clean the **Master Prospect List**.
- Identify returning priorities from last year's recruiting cycle.
- Communicate with coaches about our needs and updated standards.
- Begin first-contact communication with Tier 1 and Tier 2 juniors and seniors.

Fall (September–November)

- Heaviest evaluation period for cross country.
- Track performances weekly; update Tiers and Status.
- Host unofficial and official visits on key weekends.
- Make early scholarship and roster offers to top priorities.
- Add emerging underclassmen to an early watch list.

Winter (December–February)

- Confirm and secure verbal commitments.
- Monitor indoor track performances for late-developing athletes.
- Clarify scholarship allocations and remaining roster needs.
- Maintain consistent contact with committed athletes and families.

Spring (March–May)

- Evaluate outdoor track performances and final improvements.
- Decide on final offers and close the current class.
- Begin onboarding for committed athletes (academics, housing, compliance).
- Conduct a **post-mortem** on the class: what worked, what needs to change.

3.2 Weekly Rhythm (In-Season)

To prevent recruiting from getting buried under daily coaching tasks, we commit to:

- **Two dedicated recruiting blocks per week**
 - Example: Tuesday and Thursday mornings
 - Used to call recruits, respond to messages, and update the board
- **One 15–20 minute weekly staff check-in**
 - Example: Friday morning
 - Agenda: top targets, visit planning, offers, and problem spots
- **Weekly updates to:**
 - Master Prospect List
 - Contact Log
 - Tier status and scholarship board

4. WORKFLOW OVERVIEW

4.1 The Four-Stage Workflow

Our process flows through four connected stages:

Stage 1: Orientation

- **Tools:** Recruiting Manual, Branding Sheet, Website Orientation panel
- **Goal:** Staff are unified on mission, standards, language, and tools

Stage 2: Build Board

- **Tools:** Recruiting Tracker (Master Prospect List, Contact Log, Tier standards, Scholarship Budget), intake form, standards graphics
- **Goal:** Maintain an accurate, up-to-date list of all recruits with Tiers, Status, and notes

Stage 3: Evaluate & Offer

- **Tools:** Performance standards cards, scholarship budget tab, scholarship letterhead
- **Goal:** Decide clearly: who to offer, how much, by when

Stage 4: Sign & Announce

- **Tools:** Commitment Graphics Pack, Social Media Kit, Signing Day checklist
- **Goal:** Move athletes from verbal commitment to signed paperwork and celebrate them well

4.2 The Role of the Website

The website:

- Walks staff through the workflow visually
- Centralizes files: manual, tracker, graphics, forms
- Accepts **new recruit submissions** via form → Google Sheet
- Shows a “**Recently Added Recruits**” widget for quick awareness

5. BUILDING & MAINTAINING THE BOARD

5.1 The Master Prospect List

Every serious prospect should have a row in the **Master Prospect List**, including:

- Name
- Grad Year
- PRs (5K, 3200, 1600 or relevant events)
- GPA
- Coach Name
- Contact Info (email, phone, social)
- Tier (1, 2, or 3)
- Status

- Notes (character, fit, family, visit impressions)
- Photo URL (for recognition and graphics)

Two ways athletes appear on the board:

1. **Staff-added**

- From meet results, recommendations, or camps.

2. **Form-submitted**

- Recruits or coaches fill out the intake form
- Data flows into the **Form Responses** tab and automatically into **Master Prospect List**.

5.2 Status Definitions

We use **Status** to track where each recruit is:

- **New** – Recently added; no contact yet
- **Contacted** – We have messaged/called them
- **Interested** – They’ve responded positively and want to continue the conversation
- **Visit Scheduled** – An unofficial or official visit is on the calendar
- **Offer Extended** – An offer has been clearly communicated
- **Committed** – Verbal commitment to WCU
- **Signed** – Official paperwork completed
- **Not a Fit** – We are intentionally closing the file
- **Chose Another School** – Recruit committed elsewhere

Statuses should be updated within **24–48 hours** of any major development.

5.3 Board Hygiene

A strong board is a clean board. We commit to:

- Eliminating duplicates

- Closing out athletes who are no longer active
- Keeping contact details current
- Writing clear, short notes after key conversations and visits

6. COMMUNICATION PLAYBOOK

6.1 First Contact

Principles:

- Be **personal** – Reference specific performances or traits.
- Be **clear** – Who you are, why you're reaching out, what you're inviting.
- Be **concise** – Especially via text or DM.

Example Text

Hi [Name], this is Coach [Last Name] from William Carey University Cross Country. I saw your [time] at [meet] and loved how you [e.g., closed the last mile / stayed engaged when the race broke up].

I think you could be a great fit here at Carey. I'd love to learn more about your goals and what you're looking for in a college team.

What's the best way to connect—text, call, or a quick Zoom?

Example Email

Subject: William Carey XC – Great Race at [Meet]

Hi [Name],

My name is [Coach Name], and I coach Cross Country at William Carey University. I watched your performance at [Meet], where you ran [time] in the [event], and I was impressed with how you [specific racing detail—e.g., competed in the middle miles, closed late, or stayed engaged when it got hard].

We're looking for student-athletes in your grad year who want to compete at a high level in the NAIA and grow inside a strong team culture. Based on what I've seen so far, I believe you could be a potential fit for our program.

I'd love to learn more about your goals and what you're looking for in a college team, and to share more about what we're building at Carey.

If you're open to it, what's a good time in the next week for a short call or Zoom?

Thanks,
[Coach Name]
William Carey University Cross Country
[Phone] | [Email]

6.2 Follow-Up Rhythm

To respect recruits and our time, we use a simple rhythm:

- **Week 1** – Initial message
- **Week 2** – Follow-up if no response
- **Weeks 3–4** – Light touches (race congrats, team updates, invite to visit)
- **Ongoing** – For active Tier 1 & 2 recruits, contact every 3–4 weeks, adjusting based on their interest

After each meaningful interaction, log in the **Contact Log**:

- Date
- Platform (text, DM, email, call)
- Short summary
- Next action / follow-up timing

6.3 Offer Conversations

A scholarship or roster offer should be:

- **Clear** – No ambiguity whether an offer was made
- **Specific** – Scholarship amount or range; renewal conditions
- **Documented** – Followed by a summary email

Example Post-Offer Email

Hi [Name],

Great talking with you today. I'm excited about the possibility of you joining us at William Carey.

As we discussed, we're prepared to offer you:

- A roster spot on the Cross Country (and [Track, if applicable]) team
- An athletic scholarship of approximately \$[amount] per year, renewable annually based on academic standing and team standards

Next steps:

1. Complete your application to William Carey (if you haven't already).
2. Schedule an official visit if you and your family would like to see campus and meet the team.
3. Let us know your decision by [date or general timeline].

Please reply with any questions, or if you'd like to set up another call with your family.

Thanks again,
[Coach Name]

7. VISIT & COMMITMENT PLAYBOOK

7.1 Goals of a Visit

A strong visit helps a recruit answer:

- Can I see myself here **academically and socially**?
- Do I believe in the **direction and culture** of this team?
- Do I trust these **coaches and teammates** to help me grow?

7.2 Visit Checklist

Before the Visit

- Confirm date, time, and who is coming
- Send a written schedule (arrival, tour, practice, meetings, meals)
- Share parking / campus map info
- Alert current athletes and key staff

During the Visit

- Greet them personally and on time
- Give a purposeful tour of facilities and campus
- Introduce them to current athletes and encourage honest conversation
- Let them watch or participate in practice when appropriate
- Sit down to talk goals, expectations, and next steps

After the Visit

- Send a thank-you message within 24 hours
- Update Status (**Visit Scheduled**, **Offer Extended**, etc.)
- Debrief with staff: impressions, questions, and whether to move toward an offer

7.3 Commitment & Signing

Once an athlete **commits** verbally:

- Update Status to **Committed**
- Coordinate with admissions and financial aid
- Prepare scholarship letter using the official letterhead
- Begin onboarding communication (housing, academics, summer training)
- Create a commitment graphic using the graphics pack (after clearing with compliance)
- Announce publicly with the Social Media Kit

Once the athlete is **signed**:

- Update Status to **Signed**
- Add them to internal rosters, group chats, and mailing lists
- Involve them in early team communications (culture, expectations, summer check-ins)

END OF MANUAL

