

NCAA Division I Football - The Recruiting Process

As a high school athlete you will only go through the college recruiting process one time. So, it can be a confusing and intimidating process. The information on this page is designed to help you navigate the recruiting process and understand how it works.

Step One: Identification

The first step in the recruiting process is for college coaches to identify which players are potential scholarship athletes. This is a process that occurs during the course of your high school career. Some players, for a variety of reasons, are identified earlier than others -- in some cases as early as their freshman year. Some may be identified later. In each case, athletes will be identified at different levels of projected achievement.

Coaches get their initial information on players from several sources including:

1. **Sparq Player Database** - Your inclusion in the Sparq online player database provides coaches an easy and efficient way to review your standardized and verified athletic data. Other than on-field performance, it is the most important pro-active step you can take to attract the attention of college coaches.
2. **Coaches recommendations** - College coaches contact high school coaches to get their opinions about their players and players in their area.
3. **National/Regional recruiting lists** - Coaches collect list of All-Americans, All-conference, All-area players, etc. to get the names of top on-field performers.

Early identification should increase your motivational level to achieve the highest degree of performance both in the classroom and in your future in-season and off-season activities. **If you have been identified early as a future scholarship athlete, don't become complacent -- work harder and longer!**

The identification process is ongoing and there are many factors which will determine when and if you will be identified as a potential scholarship athlete.

If you have not been identified early, don't become discouraged -- recruiting is not an exact science and early identification will be impacted by a number of factors:

1. **A team's recruiting needs** -- these change from year to year.
 1. Which positions are they recruiting for that year?
 2. How many scholarships do they have available?

2. **Your height, weight , strength and speed from the previous season.**

1. A young man's size, speed, strength and quickness can change drastically over the course of one year -- keep working.

3. **Your status the previous season.**

1. Were you a starter?
2. You may have played behind a great player! Consequently, you may not have been able to showcase your talents -- be patient!

Step Two: Evaluation

1. **Athletic Ability:** Your ability to play the game at a championship level of achievement. Both your pure athletic ability and on-field performance will be evaluated.

1. **Athletic Ability:**

1. Sparq/Combine Test performance

1. Provides coaches with your standardized and verified athletic measurables they can use to evaluate your athletic ability compare you with other players nationwide.

2. Do you play on both offense and defense -- if not, why?

1. Some programs have the numbers to be platoon oriented.
2. You may be a marquis/valuable player.

3. Do you participate in other sports and related activities?

1. If so, what positions, weight class, events and times?
2. If not -- why not? Are you just focusing on football?
3. Do you participate in a strength program?

2. **Video Review:** Video review is a college coaches primary avenue for judging your game performance. Coaches look at several components when reviewing game film. **It is important that you play every snap of every game as though you are fighting for a scholarship.** You never know which game coaches will be watching.

1. General components (motor skills)

1. Demonstrate ability to run
2. The game is becoming more speed oriented -- you must do all you can to improve your speed.
3. Position specific -- can you run an opponent down? -- Do you get caught from behind?
4. Do you have a burst of speed?
5. Demonstrate an ability to change direction, quickness and balance -- never or rarely on the ground.

2. Subjective components

1. Demonstrate tenacity -- play hard every down of the game!
2. Do you allow the success or failure of your team to effect your tenacity?
3. Do you play the game with passion?
4. Do you demonstrate toughness?
5. Do you have a hate-to-lose yet sportsman's like attitude?

3. Football components

1. Position specific skills
2. Do you make plays at your position?
3. Do you dominate your position?
4. Do you dominate the game?

4. Football production factors

1. What kind of team do you play on?
2. Does the talent level of your teammates impact your success or failure?
3. What style offense do you play?
4. What is your age?
5. Were you injured during the game -- your opponent?

6. Are you playing injured -- your opponent?

2. **Academic Ability:** Your ability to function in the school's academic environment.

1. NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse

1. How many core courses completed.
2. GPA in completed core courses.
3. Have you taken the SAT, ACT or PSAT.

2. Ultimate question: Will you qualify?

3. Additional questions

1. Are you a diligent worker in the classroom?
2. Are you an under achiever -- high test score, low GPA?
3. Are you an over achiever -- low test score, high GPA?

3. **Character:** Your ability to fit in the school and football program. An attempt will be made to be as thorough as possible in this area. College coaches will rely heavily on the recommendation of your high school coach and his assistants, as well as other coaches who have direct contact with you in other sports. Understand that a scholarship offer represents a tremendous investment in an athlete. Consequently, college coaches will ask the principal, counselors, trainer, janitor and fellow classmates for an evaluation of your character.

1. Attitude toward your coaches, teammates, classmates and teachers.
2. Your work ethic -- in the weight room during the off-season and in-season, on the practice field each day.
3. Are you an unselfish type of player, does the team come first?

Step Three: Recruitment

1. **Questionnaire:** The questionnaire from a football program provides a snapshot of important information.

1. It is critical that you return all questionnaire requests promptly.
2. Write neatly or type your answers.

2. **Scholarship Offer:** An offer indicates the value the school places on your skills.

1. Indicators/Factors

1. When did you receive the offer?
2. How did you receive the offer? It should be in writing.
3. Who made the offer? It should be the head coach.

3. **Official Visit:** The official visit provides college coaches with the opportunity to observe and get acquainted with you and your family on a more personal level. In turn, it allows you and your family an opportunity to get to know and understand the coaching staff on a personal level as well. Each player is permitted 5 official visits.

1. A typical school presentation during an official visit includes:

1. A campus tour.
2. Academic presentation. (meet with advisors/professors in desired major)
3. One-on-One session with your projected position coach.
4. One-on-One with the head coach.
5. Meet returning players.

2. You should construct a list of at least 10 questions that you need answered. Your questions should address concerns in each major area: football, academic, campus life.

3. Top athletes receive visit offers early.

4. 99.9% of scholarship athletes make official visits at some point.

4. **Verbal Commitments and National Letter of Intent Signing:** Verbal commitments and a National Letter of Intent demonstrate your willingness to accept a school's scholarship offer. However they differ in when they can be made and their level of commitment.

1. **Verbal Commitment:**

1. You can give a verbal commitment to a school at any time.

2. A verbal commitment is not binding (the only commitment is a word of honor).
3. A broken verbal commitment does not generate any NCAA penalty.

2. National Letter of Intent:

1. The National Letter of Intent is administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association, not the NCAA.
2. There are restrictions on signing a National Letter of Intent that may affect your eligibility. These restrictions are contained in the letter of intent. Read it carefully.
3. You may not sign a National Letter of Intent before the official signing date, usually during the first week in February your senior year.
4. If you have specific questions regarding the National Letter of Intent, call the NLI office at (205) 458-3000 or check the [NLI website](#).