

MAKE the TEAM

the CaptainU Recruiting Method

*How to make the sports team at a college that's right for you
and have fun in the process*

by Avi Stopper
founder, CaptainU



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TO THE READER

Playing sports in college is a wonderful experience. It will enrich your time in college and leave you with life-long friends and memories.

This book is intended to **clarify the recruiting process and help you maximize your chances of winning a spot on the college team that's right for you.** Getting your hands on *Make the Team* is a big step towards a successful college sports career.

As a college coach, I developed the CaptainU Recruiting Method during a particularly frustrating series of recruiting experiences. I saw that many high school athletes don't know how to effectively communicate with college coaches. Instead of marketing themselves, they wait and hope to be contacted.

I reflected on my own experience as a recruit, which was similarly hamstrung by inexperience with the process. I didn't know how to communicate with coaches. Nor did I know how to get seen by the right coaches and convince them that I was right for their teams.

What it came down to was luck. I was fortunate enough to stumble backwards into a wonderful college sports experience. Many of the other athletes I knew weren't so lucky.

As a college coach, I saw firsthand that there are countless qualified athletes out there who never get out of the recruiting starting blocks. Of those who do make progress, many wander off in the wrong direction. *Make the Team* is a response to these problems.

Successful recruiting requires your active involvement. If you're committed to having a successful college sports career, you must take the initiative to make it happen. By dedicating yourself to the CaptainU Recruiting Method, you will dramatically improve your chances of making a team. So get to it!



CONTENTS

PART I: GETTING STARTED

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. SELF-RECRUITING: MARKETING YOURSELF | 10 |
| 2. THE GOAL OF SELF-RECRUITING | 15 |
| 3. THE RECRUITING SPOTLIGHT | 19 |
| 4. TIMING | 21 |

PART II: PREPARATION

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 5. THE RIGHT FIT | 26 |
| 6. IDENTIFYING CANDIDATE SCHOOLS | 33 |
| 7. GET ORGANIZED! | 37 |

PART III: OFF-FIELD CAPTAINU RECRUITING - INITIATING CONTACT

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 8. COVER LETTER | 40 |
| 9. SOCCER RESUME | 47 |
| 10. FOLLOW-UP | 51 |

PART IV: OFF-FIELD CAPTAINU RECRUITING - MAINTAINING CONTACT

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| 11. PHONE CALLS | 58 |
| 12. THE POWER OF E-MAIL | 63 |
| 13. SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES | 67 |
| 14. REFERENCES | 71 |
| 15. VIDEO | 73 |



PART V: ON-FIELD CAPTAINU RECRUITING

16. ON-FIELD APPEARANCES	80
17. ON-FIELD APPEARANCES FOLLOW-UP	85

PART VI: DELIBERATION, NEGOTIATION & MAKING A DECISION

18. DECISIVE CONVERSATIONS	88
19. SCHOLARSHIPS	95
20. CAMPUS VISIT	101
21. APPLICATIONS & ADMISSIONS	109
22. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY	113
23. HOW TO DECIDE	117
24. FINALIZING THE DEAL	121
25. WALK-ON TRYOUTS	125

PART VII: THE FINAL PUSH

26. SUMMER PREPARATIONS	128
-------------------------	-----



INTRODUCTION

When you're out on the field, you can stand around and wait, hoping that the ball will eventually come to you. Or, you can be active, mentally involved, and constantly working to make things happen.

The same is true with college recruiting. You can sit around waiting for college coaches to discover you. Maybe they will, maybe they won't. If they do discover you, their schools might end up being completely wrong for you.

By contrast, **you can take control of college recruiting**. You can be active and involved. You can market yourself to the schools that *you* like, to ensure that you end up in a college environment that's right for you.

Being assertive and taking control of the process is the best way to ensure a successful outcome. That's what this book is all about.

CaptainU Recruiting is a process where *you* determine the colleges that interest you, *you* choose the coaches you want to play for, and *you* demonstrate that you are qualified for their teams.

Tip for CaptainU Users

This book is designed to be used alongside CaptainU recruiting software.

Use the software tools on CaptainU to make the strategy in this book happen.

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CAPTAINU

RECRUITING an overview of the process...

PREPARATION

- Determine the type of academic, social, and athletic college **environment** that's right for you.
- Identify **candidate schools** where such an environment exists—pick colleges that feel right for you.
- Assess the colleges and sports programs—if any—that have **contacted you**.
- **Organize** yourself. Keep all e-mails, letters, notes on phone conversations, etc. in a central location.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Write a **cover letter and create an online resume**, introducing yourself and your accomplishments.
- **Follow-up** on your cover letter and resume.
- Send a **schedule** of your games and tournaments.
- Provide **regular updates** and progress reports—maintain monthly contact with each coach.
- Create a highlights **video**.



APPEARANCES

- Register for college camps **and get feedback**.
- Arrange for coaches to see you at **tournaments**.
- **Visit** the colleges that interest you most.

Tip for CaptainU Users

When you communicate with college coaches through CaptainU, all of your info gets organized automatically so it's easy to make decisions down the line.

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DECISION-MAKING

- Decide which schools you're going to apply to. **Apply**.
- **Inform** coaches that you've applied to their schools.
- **Notify** coaches when you've been accepted.
- Weigh your **options**. Compare and contrast the qualities of each school and sports program—including any **scholarship** offers.
- Make a **commitment**—in certain cases, make a *verbal commitment* or sign a *letter of intent*.

SUMMER PREPARATIONS

- **Update** the coach regularly throughout the summer before your freshman season.
- Get **in shape**.
- Maximize your chances to **walk-on** if the coach has not offered you a recruited spot on the team.



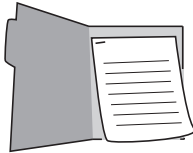
ICON KEY



PHONE CALLS - Calls that you should make to coaches, and pointers on what to say.



PARENTS - Ways in which parents can be especially helpful during the self-recruiting process.



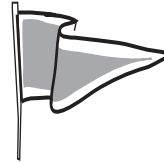
FILE - Letters, brochures, notes, etc. that should be stored in your organized file system.



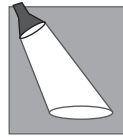
E-MAIL - Notes, updates, schedules, and reminders you should send coaches via e-mail.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION - Important questions about which high school players and their parents are often misinformed.



IMPORTANT ASIDE - Points that will enhance your understanding and overall effectiveness with self-recruiting.



OUT OF THE RECRUITING SPOTLIGHT - Pointers for recruits who college coaches haven't yet discovered.



NEAR THE RECRUITING SPOTLIGHT - Pointers for recruits who have received some attention from college coaches.



IN THE RECRUITING SPOTLIGHT - Pointers for recruits who are getting a lot of personal attention from college coaches.



WARNING! - Pitfalls that can derail or side track your self-recruiting efforts. Heed all warning signs!



PART I

GETTING STARTED

If you've picked up this book, you probably have more than a fleeting interest in playing sports in college.

Or maybe you're a parent, counselor, or high school coach who simply wants to help a student athlete realize his or her dreams of playing in college. This book is for you too.

What you hold in your hands (or on your computer) is a guide that will lead you through the murky waters of college recruiting.

By following the strategy laid out in the following chapters, you will increase your chances of playing for a college team!

1

CAPTAINU RECRUITING: MARKETING YOURSELF

Tip for CaptainU Users

Think of your CaptainU recruiting profile as a giant highway billboard.

Get college coaches to look by adding photos, video, and academic and athletic info.

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The theme of this book is self-promotion - not as in bragging or being egotistical - but in terms of marketing yourself to college coaches. In other words, if you are committed to playing sports in college, **you have to make it happen**. Don't just hope that some coach will see you and decide that you're his or her next superstar.



PARENTS

Selecting a college is a daunting task for most high school students. The sheer number of colleges is enough to make even the most self-possessed 17 year-old quake at least a little. Ultimately, the student must be motivated to drive the college selection and self-recruiting process forward; but there are numerous times when a parent's guidance and assistance are immeasurable.

As parents, concentrate on what is right for your child. If he's not Harvard material, don't push him in that direction. Don't be overbearing and run the show yourself. College coaches are recruiting players, not players' parents. In sum, help your child work through this book and the CaptainU process. You can provide invaluable support and direction.

GUIDE, DON'T DOMINATE

- Help your child identify ten or so legitimate candidate schools.
- Encourage your child to sit down and write a cover letter and create an online resume using CaptainU's software. Help edit - but don't censor.
- Assist with keeping your child on track with CaptainU's materials.
- Ensure your child is diligent about maintaining regular contact with the coaches at his candidate schools.
- Address the financial issues—a complicated and touchy component of the college selection process that will stump most young people.
- When your child reaches an impasse, help him work through it.
- When the situation demands that you speak with a college coach, do so.



GET ORGANIZED

One of the keys to recruiting success is organizing the process in one place. Your list of colleges, all your email with college coaches, and the notes you've taken about visits and phone calls should all be sorted, easily accessible, and within reach at a moment's notice.

When we built the CaptainU Colleges organizer, we centralized all of this information in one place, but I've heard about people using shoe boxes, milk crates, and whatnot. Whatever you use, the important thing is to use something. Being disorganized is the downfall of too many people in the recruiting process.

TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

To be successful with recruiting, you have to take personal responsibility for the process. Our software keeps people on track, but **getting recognized is always up to you.**

Though the task of recruiting ultimately falls to you, the player, college selection can be a lot to chew on. **It helps to work through this process with your parents,** counselors, and coaches - they can offer the support and guidance you need to make the team!

CAPTAINU RECRUITING ON & OFF THE FIELD

A dynamic, multidimensional marketing pitch will make you a strong candidate. To that end, CaptainU Recruiting involves *on-field* and *off-field* components. **On-field CaptainU recruiting** refers to real-life appearances in which a coach can evaluate your play.

Off-field CaptainU Recruiting, though perhaps less obvious, **is no less critical.** It is the all-important exchange of information, the dialogue in which you engage a coach. Demonstrate to coaches that you are enthusiastic, responsible, and dedicated.

Tip for CaptainU Users

There's so much more to recruiting than just "being seen."

CaptainU is designed to make it easy to excel in the off-field part of the recruiting process.

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WHO IT'S FOR

The reality is that only a tiny fraction of high school players are actively recruited by coaches. Most players have to go out and do the recruiting themselves, or else risk not playing in college.

FAQ

Do I have to be the best player on my club and/or high school team to play on a college team?

No. As long as you're a relatively good player there's probably a college team out there that needs you.

You don't have to be an All-State selection. However, you should have a few years as a starter for your high school team and a strong club sport background. College coaches are generally not looking for recreational players.

There are good college sports opportunities for just about every reasonably good high school player. You don't have to be the best player on your team to play sports in college. Drive, motivation, and the desire to succeed count for a lot. More than anything, **you should not be ashamed about wanting to play sports in college.** It's an admirable goal.

There are, of course, plenty of college opportunities for kids who are tremendous players as well as great students. Yet there are also great teams for excellent students who aren't the best players, and for strong players who aren't in the top tier academically.

The first key component of CaptainU Recruiting is to accurately **identify the colleges that meet**

your academic and social needs. Then, investigate the sports programs of those candidate schools.

To identify the schools that seem right for you academically, socially, and athletically, consult your high school counselor or coach and involve your parents in the decision because they know you best. Also search on the web for schools. Our CaptainU search tool, for example, lets you find out everything you need to know about each college and recommends other colleges to you.

HUNDREDS OF COLLEGE TEAMS

Most people are aware of only a few high-profile college teams.

There are actually more than 2,000 teams out there, even for a sport like soccer.

	# of Women's Teams	# of Men's Teams
NCAA Division I	280	200
NCAA Division II	200	170
NCAA Division III	390	370
NAIA	220	230



2

THE GOAL OF CAPTAINU RECRUITING



Though the goal of college recruiting may seem obvious, many athletes have only a basic understanding of the process, and aren't really clear about what they're actually trying to accomplish.

Generally speaking, it's straightforward: you contact a college coach because you want to be on his (or her) team. But beyond that, let's be more specific about what exactly you're trying to achieve with CaptainU Recruiting.

RECRUIT vs. WALK-ON

The terms “recruit” and “walk-on” constitute an important distinction in recruiting and college athletics. It’s the difference between being assured a spot on a college team, and being uncertain about whether you’ll make the team when you show up on campus. To be clear, **CaptainU Recruiting is all about being a recruit, and not having to walk-on.**



RECRUIT

A player who is guaranteed a spot on the team when he arrives on campus
Recruits do not have to try out as freshmen.

WALK-ON

A player who must try out when he arrives on campus.

College coaches place a premium on the few precious weeks of pre-season they have to prepare their teams. Most coaches want to spend these practices working closely with the players that they know will be on the team. **Freshman recruits are invited to pre-season practices.** You get to campus and are immediately part of the team. There is no tryout.

For players who aren’t recruits, most college coaches conduct tryouts during the first week of pre-season. Walk-on tryouts are held during odd times when coaches aren’t working with their core group of players. Recruits do not participate in tryouts. For walk-ons however, tryouts are a make-it-or-break-it situation.

The Ideal Outcome

All this means that the best outcome of recruiting is to be a recruit -- to be promised a position on the team well before you arrive on campus. This is a key component of CaptainU Recruiting: convincing a coach that you should get one of those roster spots without having to try out.

A Contingency Plan

Say you’ve decided to attend a particular school and desperately want to be on the team. Though you’ve done a lot of work promoting yourself, the coach hasn’t offered you a recruited position. Instead he wants you come to walk-on tryouts.

Such a situation is not ideal, but also not hopeless. You have to continue to communicate with the coach **so he knows you well by the time you arrive on campus.** The coach’s familiarity with you will help distinguish you from the rest of the players during tryouts.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Asking college coaches where you stand isn’t the easiest thing to do.

The Outline tool provides email templates that show you how to tactfully ask the tough questions.

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A sign posted once at Princeton varsity athletic tryouts read, *“If we don’t know you, don’t come out.”*

The message is loud and clear:
MAKE YOURSELF WELL-KNOWN TO COLLEGE COACHES BEFORE YOU ARRIVE ON CAMPUS.



WHERE TO BEGIN

- **Don't expect coaches to come banging down your door.** If they do, great. Yet there are numerous factors that limit the scope of college coaches' recruiting—money, time, geography, and a dizzying number of potential players.
Faced with college coaches' recruiting limitations, it's up to you to get your name out there.
- **Have some conversations with your current coaches** about what they think is the right college *level* for you.
- Talk to players you know who have gone on to play college sports in college. What do they think is right for you?
- Start thinking about **what you really want out of your overall college experience.**
- **Get your parents to help you work** through the CaptainU Recruiting process.

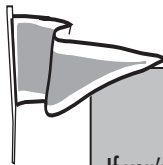
Make Yourself A Stronger Candidate

In the end, your athletic ability will have to do a lot of the talking.

CaptainU Recruiting will not make you a better player. It will, however, help you become a stronger candidate for the schools and sports programs that you want to be part of.

Even as you use the CaptainU Recruiting method, you should be working to improve yourself as a player.

In tandem, CaptainU Recruiting and a lot of practice are a potent combination.



PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP

If you're serious about playing sports in college, you have to take the lead role in making it happen. Commit yourself to it; don't expect others to do it for you.

Though the interest and determination has to start with you, **THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY WHO CAN HELP**, including:

- PARENTS
- RELATIVES
- TEACHERS
- COUNSELORS
- CLUB COACHES
- HIGH SCHOOL COACHES
- CAPTAINU EXPERTS
- COLLEGE PLAYERS



BE DIGNIFIED

You should always keep in mind that recruiting isn't about throwing yourself at a coach's feet and begging for a spot on the team. Instead, in a calm, collected, and confident fashion, demonstrate to the coach that you are qualified for his team.

A qualified recruit who initiates and maintains contact is a coach's dream come true. If you present yourself in an organized, compelling fashion, you will have saved a coach time and money. Your efforts will be rewarded. So get on with it!

Tip for CaptainU Users

Professionalism goes a long way with college coaches.

That's what your Profile is designed to do -- it makes you look organized, reliable, and highly motivated.

[Sign in](#)



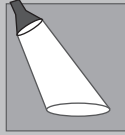
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THE RECRUITING SPOTLIGHT



By the time you start thinking seriously about making a college team—not just in an abstract, “Yeah, I think I’d like to play in college” sense—you might have already been contacted by a coach or two. For that matter, you may have received a mountain of mail from one coach who is intent on getting you on his team. By contrast, you might still be anonymous, someone who college coaches haven’t identified...yet.

When you start the CaptainU Recruiting method, you'll find yourself in one of these categories:



OUT OF THE SPOTLIGHT

Unidentified Recruits—A coach doesn't know you. You're not in the spotlight—yet! Committed CaptainU Recruiting will put you exactly where you want to be.



NEAR THE SPOTLIGHT

Recruits of Interest—A coach has seen you play, and is generally interested. He wants to find out more about you. The spotlight is moving in your direction.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Priority Recruits—A coach is heavily invested in recruiting you. He's written you a few personal letters and made repeated overtures. The recruiting spotlight is shining directly on you.

Relax if you're not yet in the spotlight. What you have to do over time, is establish yourself on the coach's radar. CaptainU Recruiting will launch **you into a prominent position.**

CaptainU Recruiting is no less important for athletes who are already getting some attention from college coaches. Don't squander this attention by being noncommunicative. If you are interested in a school that recruits you heavily, work to develop a strong relationship with the coach. Being responsive and enthusiastic will secure your place with that team.

The bottom line is that athletes in every category have to take an active role in the recruiting process. Though every person's circumstances are slightly different, promoting yourself to college coaches is universal. It's something you have to do if you want to play in college.

Tip for CaptainU Users

It's actually pretty easy to get noticed by the right college coaches.

Add photos and a video to your Profile and then use the Message tool to send it directly to their inbox.

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FAQ

My teammates have received recruiting letters from coaches but I have not. If I'm not "in the spotlight" does it mean that college coaches have determined that I'm not good enough?

No. Don't be deterred by the initial lack of attention. To understand this, you have to think about the vast pool of high school athletes a college coach has to sift through.

There are tens of thousands of other athletes out there. The odds of randomly being seen are pretty slim.
CaptainU Recruiting is about promoting yourself so you're the one a college coach hones in on.



4

TIMING



The recruiting timeline is a subject of great confusion. Rumors spread like wildfire, people make uninformed decisions, and it often results in frustration and disappointment.

The rumor mill spawns myths like, *“If it’s the spring of your junior year and you haven’t been contacted by any coaches, you have no chance of playing soccer in college.”* That’s just wrong.

If you are a second-semester junior, you should definitely get moving. And even if you’re a first-semester senior, there’s still time to make an effective CaptainU Recruiting pitch. Some doors will have closed by now, but there are still opportunities out there.

Many coaches don't finalize their recruiting classes until the winter or spring of the recruits' senior year in high school. A coach has to wait for a recruit to apply. Then the coach must wait to see if the recruit is accepted. Once acceptance letters are mailed, the coach has to convince the recruit to enroll. **But that doesn't mean you should wait to being the process.**

From the coach's end, recruiting is a long, tiring process. With CaptainU Recruiting, you will make it easier for him! This really works in your favor because, generally speaking, people like you when you make their lives easier.



YOU CAN BEGIN CAPTAINU RECRUITING AT ANY POINT IN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CAREER. Even if it's late in the spring of your senior year, and you know where you're going in the fall but haven't finalized your standing with the college team, this method will improve your chances of getting on the team.

This is not, however, an endorsement of procrastination. Start the process early. Your chances of being successful are high if you don't have to rush.

THE BEST TIME TO START

For most players, **the best time to start CaptainU Recruiting is during sophomore or junior year.**

If you start when you're a sophomore, you simplify the process by giving yourself more time to learn about college teams, communicate with the coaches, and visit campuses. If you start when you're a junior, you have to be focused and make sure to get in the spotlight quickly.

Once you start communicating with college coaches, you need to have *regular contact* with them until you decide which college you will attend. This actually isn't that difficult. It just requires a little work each month.

A great time to start recruiting in earnest is when you're not in the middle of a season. **You can devote some of the time you normally spend at practice to CaptainU Recruiting.**

Tip for CaptainU Users

Starting the process early is very important, but can feel a little daunting.

Your Strategy page breaks the 2-3 process down into bite-sized pieces, so you have a few small things to do each month.

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EARLY STARTS

We see lots of athletes who start writing coaches while they're still freshmen. If this is your style, go for it.

To win the recruiting game, though, **you have to keep up the pace over the course of the next few years.** If as a freshman you write a coach and then proceed to fall off the face of the earth until your senior year, you haven't done yourself any good.

If you do start CaptainU Recruiting as a freshman, in addition to maintaining regular contact with your candidate coaches, you should send an updated Profile every year.

The bottom line for freshmen: **start CaptainU Recruiting only when you're ready to spend a little time each month on recruiting.** To get in the spotlight, you have to communicate with college coaches regularly—not just when the spirit moves you.

REGULAR CONTACT

You must correspond on a regular basis with college coaches. This means communicating with each coach at least **ONCE A MONTH.**



Early Starts For Premier Players

The recruiting timeline is accelerated for the top prospects in the country—those who have regional and national team experience, or are the key players on high profile club teams.

Top players usually get a lot of attention from college coaches. If this is the case for you, **don't make the coach do all the work.** Active CaptainU Recruiting thrills college coaches. **Show the coach—who's clearly enthusiastic about you—that you're just as excited about playing for him.**

ELITE GIRLS: START SPRING OF SOPHOMORE YEAR

In recent years, the top handful of Division I women's programs in the country have accelerated recruiting by a year. Recruiting is sometimes finished as early as the fall of a recruiting class's junior year in high school—which is to say that by the spring, coaches of some elite women's teams **are looking almost exclusively at sophomores.**

Admissions departments do an "early read" of a recruit's credentials and report to the coach whether the player will likely be accepted. If everyone agrees that it's a good fit, the coach will ask for a *verbal commitment* from the athlete. (See Chapter 24.)



ELITE BOYS: START SUMMER BEFORE JUNIOR YEAR

The timeline is also accelerated for elite college men's teams—though not to the extent of women's recruiting. One possible explanation is that boys physically develop later in high school. A sophomore boy who's the biggest, baddest player on his team will not necessarily be the big dog in two years.

No less, the top few Division I men's programs solidify their recruiting classes relatively early—**often when athletes are still juniors**.



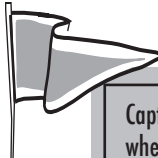
LATE STARTS

All is not lost for those—including yours truly—who decide to pursue college sports during their senior year of high school. Some opportunities may have already passed, but there still is hope. The most important thing is to move quickly yet carefully to find colleges you like and then correspond with the coaches at those schools.

TIMELINE VARIABLES

The CaptainU Recruiting timeline varies from person to person and depends on a number of factors including:

TIMEFRAME	The point in your high school career when you begin self-recruiting.
QUALIFICATIONS	The quality of your Profile. If you have national team experience, a coach will probably make a swift effort to see you play.
ACCESSIBILITY	How close you live or play to a given school. The closer you are, the easier it is for a coach to see you play.
MARKETING	How effectively you market yourself will determine your success how successful you are.

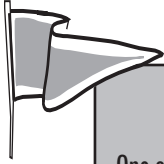


CaptainU Recruiting is applicable whether you start late, early, or right on time. Be persistent if the initial response isn't dazzling.

Your efforts should always be aimed at reaching an agreement with a coach that you will enter the team as a recruit.

If it comes to walk-on tryouts, don't lose heart, and don't stop promoting yourself. Follow the steps outlined in Chapter 25 to maximize your chances.





SUGGESTED TIMELINES

One of the questions that's asked most frequently is: **"WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING RIGHT NOW TO GET MYSELF ON A COLLEGE TEAM?"**

In an effort to answer that type of question, Appendix A (at the back of the book) provides a wide range of suggested self-recruiting timelines. These timelines list the self-recruiting steps that you should be taking at a given time in your high school career, based on when you begin the process.

If, for example, you start CaptainU Recruiting during the fall of your junior year and you're trying to figure out what to do that winter and spring, consult the timeline that's titled **"IF YOU START DURING YOUR...JUNIOR YEAR-LATE FALL."** The timeline looks like this:

J U N I O R	W I N T E R	Send your spring schedule. Determine which summer camps the coach will attend. Register for camp.
	S P R I N G	Keep the coach posted on your season. Arrange for the coach to see you play in a tournament. Follow up on-field appearances with correspondence.

During the winter of your junior year you should focus on sending coaches your spring schedule, determining which summer camps the coaches will attend, and registering for one of those camps.

That spring, you want to keep the coach updated on your season, try to arrange for him to see you play in person, and then follow up those on-field appearances with a phone call or e-mail.

Tip for CaptainU Users

When you signed up for CaptainU, we created a customized recruiting Strategy for you that guides you step-by-step through the process.

This strategy adapts to your situation as you go.

[Sign in](#)



PART II

PREPARATION

As you embark on your CaptainU Recruiting adventure you have to **be honest with yourself about your ability.**

Choose colleges that are within your academic and athletic range and you'll be successful.

Think about what it is that you really want out of your college experience in terms of academics, social life, and athletics.

5

THE RIGHT FIT



Tip for CaptainU Users

The CaptainU Search tool makes it easy to find colleges that are right for you.

We also have a recommendation tool, that suggests other colleges based on those you've said you like.

[Sign in](#)



The first task of CaptainU Recruiting is a candid self-evaluation. On your own and with your parents, you must determine the academic and athletic environment that is right for you. How good of a student are you? How good of a player are you? These are the questions you have to ask yourself to figure out what kind of school will be the right fit.

ACADEMICS AS THE PRIORITY

In determining the right type of school, you have to take academics into account first and foremost. Don't compromise your academic ability just to play college sports.

The odds of playing professionally after college are remote. It's far more likely that **after college you'll have to take your non-sports resume out into the world and get a job.**

That said, you might be someone who values sports so much that you are only willing to go to a school where you'll be able to play. It may mean compromising your Ivy League academic qualifications to play sports at the University of Jupiter's Twelfth Moon. This is a choice you have to make.

The good news is that **colleges are so numerous and diverse that if you look hard enough you can find the right mix of athletics and academics.**

For example, if you're qualified for schools within a certain academic tier, but aren't the greatest player, you might have to consider the weaker teams within that tier. If this is the case, you should research conferences comprised of schools with strong academics but less-strong athletics.

BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR ABILITY

Be practical. **Don't just go for the most glamorous teams.** If you're really stretching—i.e. you're clearly unqualified for a team—**even if you make the team, you may find yourself on the bench for four very frustrating years.**

Challenge yourself athletically, but be realistic and find a place where you know you'll play. If you're not qualified to play at Indiana, North Carolina, Notre Dame, or UCLA, don't waste your time—or theirs. If, however, you are truly a player of that caliber, by all means go for it.

Take advantage of the resources at your disposal. **Speak frankly with your high school and club coaches about what they think is an appropriate college sports environment for you.** Talk to other people who are connected to college sports and have seen you play. Guidance counselors can offer insight as can recent graduates from your school who play in college.

DIVISION I? II? III? NAIA?

The issue of college divisions is a source of great confusion. People often talk about Division I like it's the be-all, end-all. There is much well-deserved prestige associated

Tip for CaptainU Users

CaptainU College Profiles have all the information you need to determine whether a particular team is in the right academic range.

[Sign in](#)



with playing for a top-tier Division I school. Yet there are actually a number of DII and DIII teams out there that can compete with some DI teams. (Listen to our podcast detailing the real differences between the divisions.)

It's great if your self-assessment and college search lead to Division I schools. But it's no less of a success if you determine that the overall environment in DII, DIII, or the NAIA is better for you. This process is about **finding the right place** for you, which is **not always going to be the most glitzy**.



COLLEGIATE DIVISIONS

NCAA DIVISION I

Generally larger schools; athletic scholarships are allowed; year-round commitment; national travel; elite competition among the top teams; concentration on top teams of the best players in the country.

NCAA DIVISION II

Athletic scholarships are allowed, though fewer than DI; year-round commitment; limited national travel—generally more regional; very strong players, many international.

NCAA DIVISION III

No athletic scholarships; many academically elite small colleges; intense regional competition; limited non-traditional seasons; many excellent players.

NAIA

Generally small schools; recruiting guidelines that are less restrictive than those of the NCAA; athletic scholarships are allowed; compete mostly with other NAIA schools; regional competition; can transfer without sitting out a season.

ATHLETICS & YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

Anyone who has played a college sport will tell you that **it's a major commitment**. In addition to games, daily practices, and tape viewings, you'll have team meals, meetings, and travel. It's no small investment of time and energy.

Some teams take extended trips across the country that force players to miss classes. Some schools find ways to accommodate athletes who miss scheduled tests, etc. Others tolerate absence grudgingly and make you jump through hoops to reschedule tests and assignments.

Many college teams also have time-consuming "non-traditional" seasons, which further complicate an athlete's pursuit of other interests.

By comparison, other teams practice informally during the off-season, allowing students to sample some of the abundant opportunities in college, such as music, student government, and student organizations like fraternities and sororities.



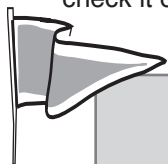
In college there are endless opportunities to pursue beyond sports. **Committing to a college team means sacrificing some of those opportunities.** Ask yourself how much of a sacrifice you're willing to make.

DETERMINING THE RIGHT FIT

Think long and hard about the overall experience you want out of college. Tap into any resources you can find. Talk with your parents, teachers, coaches, and college counselors. **Accurately identifying a pool of candidate schools will put you well on your way to success.**

Though it may be intimidating initially, the diversity among colleges actually works in your favor. **It's highly likely that there is some place out there that will be a great fit for you.**

First, determine what kind of school is right for you. After that, a good way to proceed is to investigate specific conferences or schools you've heard about. If you know of a college through hearsay or because your neighbor's cousin goes there and loves it, check it out.



QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT FIT

- What kind of school are you **QUALIFIED FOR ACADEMICALLY**?
- What level college team are you **QUALIFIED FOR AS A PLAYER**? Get input from your club and high school coaches and other knowledgeable friends and family.
- What **BALANCE OF ACADEMICS, SOCIAL LIFE, ATHLETICS, AND OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** do you want?
- Are you willing to **COMMIT A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF YOUR TIME** in college to varsity sports?
- What **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS** will you need for schools within various tuition brackets? Can you afford tuition, or will you need financial aid?
- What **GEOGRAPHICAL REGION** of the country do you prefer? Do you want to be near your parents so they can come see your games?
- What **SIZE** school is right for you? Do you prefer the size of a large campus environment, or the intimacy of a small campus?

Tip for CaptainU Users

First answer these questions on a sheet of paper.

Then use the CaptainU Search tool to find college teams that fit these criteria.

[Sign in](#)



Outline What You're Looking For

Take a pencil and a piece of paper and answer the preceding questions. This will help you organize your thoughts as to what you want your college experience to be like.



MOOKIE'S COLLEGE CONSIDERATIONS

Willingness to Commit to College Sports:

I want to play sports in college and try a lot of other things too.

Academic Credentials:

Strong, but not the best. 1980 SAT/3.1 GPA.

Athletic Ability:

I'm one of the better players on a relatively strong team.

Extracurricular Activities:

I want to have time to pursue other things outside of sports, especially student government.

Financial Considerations:

I will not qualify for need-based aid I need low tuition or a scholarship of some sort.

Location:

California coast.

School Size:

Small to medium.

MOOKIE WOULD THEN REVIEW HIS NOTES AND SAY:

"Okay, so what I'm looking for is a medium-sized school in California where I can play at a moderately competitive level and also explore other opportunities. I'm solid academically and athletically, but probably not tops in either category. I'm not going to qualify for need-based financial aid, so I need a situation in which tuition is not too expensive or where I can get an athletic or academic scholarship."

Now MOOKIE CAN USE THE CAPTAINU SEARCH TOOL TO IDENTIFY COLLEGES THAT SATISFY THESE REQUIREMENTS.



PARENTS

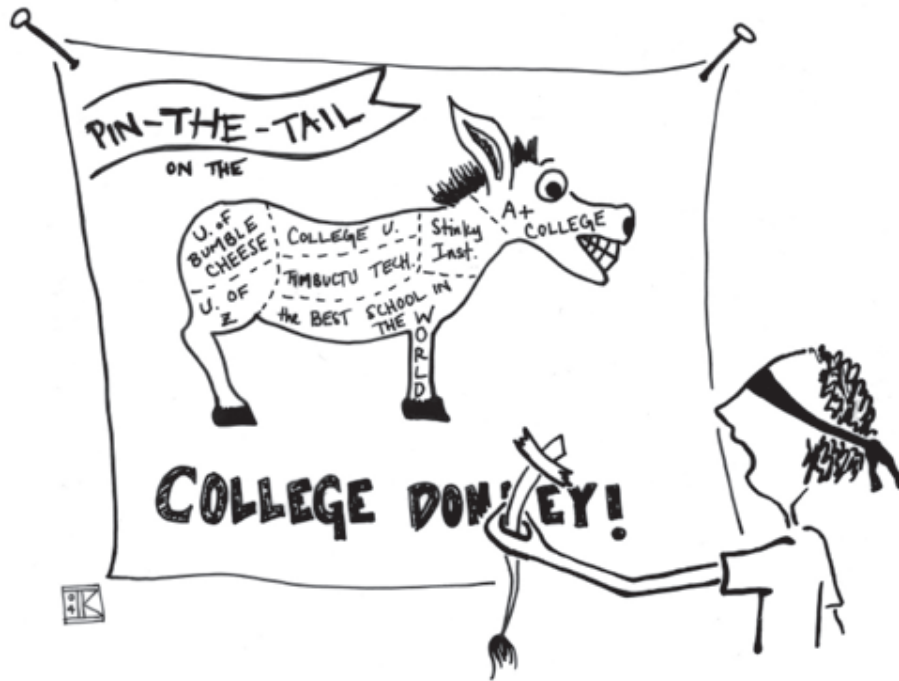
Putting together a list of colleges can be difficult for even the most motivated high school students, so help your child develop a clearer understanding of what it is that he wants out of his college experience.

Sit down and discuss these issues with him to help determine what type of college he should be looking for. Then work together to assemble an appropriate list of colleges.



6

IDENTIFYING CANDIDATE SCHOOLS



Tip for CaptainU Users

The CaptainU Colleges tool is constantly refreshed with the latest college info, including academics, key websites, and coach contact info.

Start with a basic Search and explore from there.

[Sign in](#)



Having completed the exercise in the previous chapter, you should have a better idea of the academic, social, and athletic environment that's right for you. Now you need to generate a pool of ten or so colleges that are right for you.

To be successful with recruiting, **you have to carefully hand-select colleges that are right for you.**

FIND THE RIGHT SCHOOLS

Accurately identifying colleges is a huge step forward. If you market yourself to schools that aren't right for you, the outcome might not be so favorable. To turn the odds in your favor you should spend a good amount of time researching colleges.

As you evaluate candidate schools ask yourself this essential question: **“Would I still want to go here if I couldn't play sports?”** If the answer is no, you should drop that college from your list.

TAKE CONTROL OF THE PROCESS

Don't just get sucked into following the one or two random leads that find their way to your mailbox. If you have only been contacted by the coaches at Desolate Atoll University and Middle of Nowhere College, **you do not have to limit your college search to those schools.**



If a coach has contacted you, review his college thoroughly—as you would with any candidate school.



If upon further review, you determine that the school is incompatible with your requirements, take it off your list. Remember, you aren't limited to the schools that contact you.

If, however, you decide that you like the school, add it to your list.

Why should a couple of coaches who happened to notice you dictate your future? You have the right to decide which schools are best for you. Of course a school that contacts you may turn out to be the perfect fit, so you shouldn't rule it out automatically.



— PARENTS —

Identifying the right colleges is a critical stage in CaptainU Recruiting. It's also one in which **YOUR ASSISTANCE CAN MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE.** Here's how you can help. Odds are that you know a lot about your kid, and more about specific colleges than he or she knows.

Based on the conversations you had in Chapter 5 to determine the right fit, **HELP YOUR CHILD FIND CANDIDATE SCHOOLS THAT FIT THE BILL.**

A great way to accomplish this is to do some research on your own and present your child with a list of thirty or so schools—pared down from the 3000 that are out there—that you think he should investigate.



WAYS TO RESEARCH COLLEGES

Researching colleges is a time-consuming, but worthwhile process. Talk to counselors, flip through college profile books, search the internet, and so on.

The more you learn about an assortment of colleges, the more discerning your selection of colleges, and the more likely you will be to succeed.

College Counselors

A handful of high schools employ full-time college counselors. Other schools rely on general guidance counselors to provide this service.

Find out what sort of college guidance is available at your school. Schedule a time to meet with the counselor. **Be prepared for your meeting with an idea of what you're looking for in a college.**

If the guidance counselor provides useful advice, continue to consult with him as you develop your list of colleges. If your meeting with the college counselor doesn't work out so well, don't throw up your arms in despair.

Even if the college guidance at your school is excellent, it is unlikely that an accurate list of candidate schools will simply fall into your lap. Fortunately, there are vast print and internet resources out there for you to utilize.

College Profile Books

There are a number of major companies who make it their business to accurately portray colleges for college-bound high school students.

Books abound that profile the "Best 350 Colleges," "100 Great Schools at Great Prices," and so on. In these books, one or two pages are devoted to each college. The profiles, though brief, are enough to give you the gist of a school. Disregard those that sound terrible and dog-ear those that catch your eye.

College profile books are a fantastic place to start your search. If you spend a few hours flipping through one of these books you'll undoubtedly find a number of schools that interest you. And there, just like that, you'll have made progress.

There are a few profile books out there that are based on college athletics alone.

These books miss the fundamental point: college is most importantly an academic and social experience.

You should select a college for its overall merits, not just because a book says that the school has a good sports team.



The Web

Type “college search” into any internet search engine, and you will find endless resources to help you identify candidate schools.

There are, of course, thousands of individual college websites. You should surf schools’ websites once you’ve really begun to narrow down the field—otherwise you’ll be at it forever.

There are also sites that briefly profile a number of colleges—the electronic version of the aforementioned profile books.

A number of excellent websites ask you a bunch of questions and then produce a list of schools that meet your criteria. Utilize any tool like this that helps you narrow the field.

At times, the volume of information on the internet is overwhelming, which is a strong argument for starting with a profile book or a tool like CaptainU Search, where the information is packaged in small, easy-to-access parcels.

COLLECT CONTACT INFO

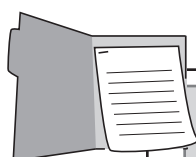
Once you’ve found ten colleges that are right for you, use the web to collect the contact information for each school and its team. For each college, staple a single sheet of paper with the following information to a file folder.

Tip for CaptainU Users

When you add a school to your College list, CaptainU creates a file for that team with all the key info below.

All your recruiting activity with each team then gets sorted and stored automatically.

[Sign in](#)



SCHOOL _____

Location:

Size:

Web Address:

Conference:

COACH’S INFO:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-Mail:

Team Web Address:



7

GET ORGANIZED!



Tip for CaptainU Users

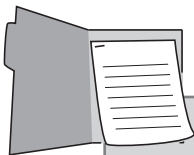
CaptainU organizes all your recruiting information.

When you Search for a college you like, add it to your Colleges list. Every email you send and receive will be automatically filed under that college.

[Sign in](#)



Being well-organized simplifies the college recruiting process and makes you more effective. Take the time now to organize yourself so that you can be systematic with the work ahead. Over the coming months, stay organized. As you take notes and receive literature, file everything carefully so it can be retrieved at a moment's notice.



SET UP A FILE SYSTEM

1. Get **10 FILE FOLDERS**, the kind with index tabs at the top.
2. **WRITE THE NAME** of one of your colleges on the tab of each file folder.
3. On the front of each folder, **COPY THE CONTACT INFORMATION** you collected for your candidate schools, teams, and coaches (names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, etc.)
4. **CREATE A LOG SHEET** (*see next page*) to help you record your progress. Staple one log sheet onto the inside cover of each folder. Add additional sheets later if necessary.
5. Go to each team's website and **PRINT THE ROSTER, SCHEDULE, AND GAME RESULTS TO HAVE AS REFERENCES**. Put the print-outs in your file folders.

Tip for CaptainU Users

All of this is done automatically when you add a college to your Colleges page.

[Sign in](#)



FILE FOLDER UPKEEP

Throughout the process, **file all correspondence and literature in your folders**. Print e-mails you receive, and if you like, those you send. If you're really into it, photocopy letters and other correspondence that you mail hard-copy.

CaptainU Recruiting is a lot like applying for a job in that when you communicate with a coach, **you should be knowledgeable about his team**. With the help of your folders, you will be able to discuss a team's schedule, roster, game results, and so forth.

By being well-organized, you'll equip yourself with the tools to talk with the coach about the upcoming game against the team's nemesis. You'll be able to ask about the recent nail-biter. And most importantly, you'll be able to knowledgeably discuss recruiting matters, like which roster positions will open up for your freshman season.

The coach will more than likely be impressed with your knowledge. **It will demonstrate your genuine interest in his team**.

Once you're organized, it's time to initiate contact with the college coaches you've identified. So take a deep breath and get ready to write a cover letter and create a recruiting profile.

Make sure the notes on your log sheets are dated correctly so at any point you can look through your file folders and see exactly what you've accomplished with each candidate school over a given period of time.



SAMPLE LOG SHEET



Date	Description
4/3/02	<i>Sent cover letter and resume to Coach Sangiovese.</i>
4/12/02	<i>Received information packet and player profile.</i>
4/13/02	<i>Completed player profile and returned to coach with short note.</i>
4/26/02	<i>Called Coach Sangiovese. It went well—he said he wants to see me play. He’s going to send me the registration forms for the U. of Troy Summer Camp, which he’ll be at.</i>
5/1/02	<i>E-mailed Coach Sangiovese May Monthly Update, describing my hat-trick in a league game against our arch-rival.</i>
6/1/02	<i>E-mailed Coach Sangiovese June Monthly Update, describing my play during the first two weeks of state cup.</i>
6/30/02	<i>Attended University of Troy Summer Camp—played for Sangiovese’s group. Had a few conversations about playing for him—he thinks I can be a significant contributor with the first two years.</i>
7/1/02	<i>E-mailed July Monthly Update, describing our state cup loss—the game in which I scored the first goal. I included a personal note to Coach Sangiovese about camp.</i>
7/12/02	<i>Sangiovese saw me play at Shellackers Tournament at X.Z.F.C. I scored the first goal in our 2-1 win.</i>
7/19/02	<i>I called Coach Sangiovese who said he really likes what I’ve seen and wants me to apply.</i>
8/1/02	<i>E-mailed Coach Sangiovese August Monthly Update, detailing my summer preparations for the high school season.</i>

Tip for CaptainU Users

CaptainU automatically creates a log for you.

As you email college coaches and hear back from them, everything gets organized chronologically -- your log builds itself.

[Sign in](#)



PART III

OFF-FIELD CAPTAINU RECRUITING: INITIATING CONTACT

Communicating with a coach at least once a month will strengthen your cause and help you develop your relationship with that coach.

You demonstrate through phone calls and e-mails that you are committed to becoming a member of his team.

Give the coach a reason to seek you out specifically at a camp, tournament, or regular season game. Regular communication will put you in a position where he is eager to evaluate your ability.

8

COVER LETTER

Tip for CaptainU Users

When writing your cover letter, use the Outline tool on the Messages page.

We've seen that players who use the Outline tool are 4-5 times more likely to get a response from coaches.

[Sign in](#)



The best way to introduce yourself to a coach is with a personalized letter. When they're not out on the field, college coaches basically live in front of their computers, working on recruiting, answering emails, surfing the web for sports news, and so on.

SET A FOUNDATION

The first order of business is to send a letter and recruiting profile to the head coach at each of the colleges on your list. **You want the coach to receive your email, print it out, and create a folder in his filing cabinet with your name on it.**

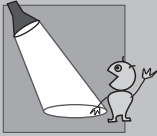
This letter serves as the foundation of your CaptainU Recruiting campaign.

Without overstating the importance of your letter, recognize that it **makes your first impression on the coach**. It should be organized, well-written, and exciting. Avoid grammatical and spelling mistakes. Impress the coach with your attention to detail and professionalism.


Don't Start With A Phone Call

Do not begin your communication with a coach with a phone call. Unlike a letter, a call leaves no physical record. Remember, **CaptainU Recruiting is about doing the coach's work for him**. Present him with a written outline of your qualifications.

Don't make him write out the transcript of an introductory phone conversation—he probably won't anyway. In fact, he's likely to ask you to send him a cover letter and recruiting profile.



If you were contacted initially by a coach, you should still send him a cover letter and resume—along with responses to any general information requests he made.



THE EFFECT IS VERY PROFESSIONAL. It says: *"I appreciate your interest in me. Here's what I bring to the table."*

WRITE YOUR OWN LETTER

The structures, content, and sample cover letters that follow are suggestions. Don't merely reword the examples. **The cover letter is an opportunity to express yourself.** It's a chance to showcase who you are.



Be concise. Remember that this is just an introduction, so don't ramble on for 8 pages. Your letter should be succinct—no more than 5-6 paragraphs—and informative.

Establish a tone within your letter to distinguish it from the mass of communication the coach has to sift through. Find the middle ground between over-the-top absurd and sleep-inducing. Don't be afraid to include personal details that distinguish you from the pack—i.e. *"I do my training runs at altitude, on Mount Olympus."*

If you're so inclined be playful, sincere, thoughtful, anecdotal, whatever. Just don't beg. You are an asset; a coach will be fortunate to have you on his team.



ORGANIZATION OF THE LETTER

SALUTATION

Address each letter personally—i.e. *"Dear Coach Nascimento."* Form letters addressed *"To Whom it May Concern"* actually create a negative impression.

INTRODUCTION

State the intention of the letter, that you are interested in playing for his team. Explain why you're interested in his college. Be specific. Coaches will love that you've done some research and aren't just spamming the world.

SELF-DESCRIPTION

Describe yourself as a player. Discuss what your tendencies are, and the responsibilities you have on team. If you're a team captain, say so.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Briefly describe your qualifications and most recent awards. You don't have to list all of your accomplishments in your cover letter—that's what your recruiting profile is for.

THE NEXT STEP

Promise to follow up on this initial letter with a schedule of your team's games and tournaments. In the meantime, request any standard recruiting materials. Most coaches have general information forms they like recruits to fill out. This helps streamline the deluge of information they receive from prospective players.

CLOSING PHRASE

"Sincerely," "All the best," etc.

YOUR NAME

Type your name beneath your signature.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Since CaptainU has the contact information for more than 15,000 college coaches, it's easy to figure out exactly who the coach is and how to reach him.

[Sign in](#)



COVER LETTER PITFALLS

As much as your cover letter is an opportunity to be creative and to express yourself, you should keep it crisp, clean, and professional. Don't be self-indulgent and wander off on fifty different tangents. Say what you want to say in a succinct, articulate fashion. The most common cover letter pitfalls are listed below.



THINGS TO AVOID

BRAGGING

"I will be the best player on your team. Give me a full scholarship and I'll win every game for you."

PUTTING COACHES TO SLEEP

"I am very interested in being on your team which is a really, really good team at a college which is right for me because I am a pretty good student with a 3.3 GPA." Zzzzzzzzzz. Nap time.

BEGGING

"I know you're very, very busy, but if you can find the time, I would love for you to send me some information about your team."

ASKING FOR TOO MUCH

"I look forward to being flown out on an official recruiting visit." Or, "Please send one of your scouts to watch my game in Timbuktu."

CLICHÉS

"In college, academics will be my first priority." Coaches have heard that line a million times.

STATING YOUR NAME

"Dear Coach Firooz, My name is Chadwick Bugg and I am a senior at Tiberius Claudius High School in San Francisco, California." Use your first sentence to state your purpose and attract the coach's attention. Your letterhead already says who you are.

Too MANY "I's"

"I am interested in your school. I would like to learn more about your team. I would like to come out and visit." Don't begin every sentence or paragraph with the word "I."





SAMPLE COVER LETTER EMAILS

Dear Coach Olubisamoko,

I am writing to express my interest in playing softball for Northeast Southwest University. I think it's a great program for me both academically and as a player. I visited campus last summer with my parents and felt at home immediately. I'd love to be part of your program and have the opportunity to be part of the NSU community.

This season I was the starting shortstop for the Nova High School girl's varsity, where I am a junior with a 3.4 GPA. Our drive to the state title fell short, as we lost in a semifinal barnburner to our rival high school. We were, however, district champions. I was excited to be named to the district first team and state honorable mention.

During the club season I play for the Southside Slushpuppies, a team which regularly competes for the Michigan state title. Two years ago we won state and reached the quarterfinals at regionals.

I love playing in the field, but batting is my first love. I'm not a power hitter, but I did bat .325 this past season. I pride myself as a hard worker. I am not the most vocal person, but through my work ethic I maintain a position of respect on my team.

You will find my softball resume attached to this letter. I am eager to learn more about your program and coaching philosophy. As soon as decisions are made regarding our spring tournament plans, I will send you a schedule. In the meantime please send me any pertinent information regarding your team.

Sincerely,

Panky Solari

Tip for CaptainU Users

Additional sample Cover Letters can be found on the Strategy page.

For MVP users, our staff of recruiting experts is available to help you refine your cover letter to make a great first impression on college coaches.

[Sign in](#)





Dear Coach Antonio,

I've been researching colleges for the last few weeks and have identified the University of the United States as a school that could be a very good fit for me because it has a great liberal arts program and a beautiful campus in Washington, DC, which is a city I have always dreamed of living in.

I carry a 3.1 GPA and am a member of the speech and debate team. Eventually I hope to go to law school. I am versatile on the lacrosse field, having played every position at some point over the past two years for Dry Lake High School.

If I have been a bit of a journeyman, it is partly the result of injuries that have plagued our team. Ideally I am a middie. My coaches regularly compliment my vision and passing, though they agree that my greatest strength is defense.

My club team, Marauders, plays in the competitive Range League, which is comprised of top teams in the region. We've really turned a corner this year and established ourselves as the team to beat in the league.

Fitness is a matter I take very seriously. I often run in the foothills of the Grand Tetons. Recently, I ran an 11:15 two miler. I love the game dearly and organize regular pick-up games during the off-season.

I have attached a resume of my academic and athletic achievements to this letter. I am excited about the possibility of playing for you and am looking forward to moving along with the application process. Please let me know if there's anything in particular that you need from me at the moment.

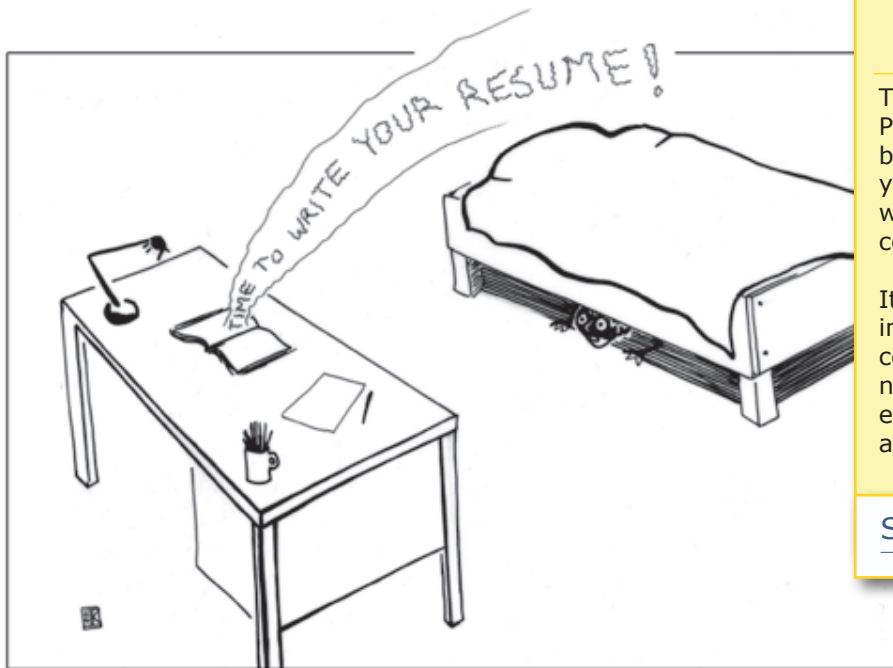
All the best,

Clifton Buendia



9

RECRUITING PROFILE



Tip for CaptainU Users

The CaptainU Profile tool is the best way to share your information with college coaches.

It includes all the information that college coaches need. And you can easily update it on an ongoing basis.

[Sign in](#)



Like your cover letter, a creative, well-organized recruiting profile will help distinguish you from the pack. Your profile provides a quick reference and synopsis of your career. A coach can look over your resume and see that you've been playing position X for team Y for Z years. As soon as he looks at your resume, he begins to get an idea of what you're about.

You may actually find it easier to do your resume first and use it as a reference while writing your cover letter. Whatever order you prefer, attack the resume-building process with gusto!



RESUME COMPONENTS

PHOTOGRAPHS	School photos and especially COLOR ACTION SHOTS energize your recruiting profile.
PHYSICAL STATS	List your height and weight.
ACADEMICS	To receive a coach's serious consideration YOU HAVE TO BE UP FRONT ABOUT YOUR GRADES . Let him know from the outset that your grades are good enough. Include GPA, SATs, ACTs, etc. Also include your graduation year.
UNIFORM INFO	Include your club and high school uniform numbers, as well as home and away jersey colors.
SPORTS EXPERIENCE	STARTING WITH THE MOST RECENT , list your experience with high school and club teams. Describe your accomplishments, awards, positions, etc. Don't bother mentioning your U10 exploits. Concentrate on your recent history.
OTHER INTERESTS	Talk about other interests that you have. In what other organizations, clubs, and activities have you participated? These can include student government, music, etc.
REFERENCES	Ask at least two of your coaches to serve as references. On your recruiting profile, provide their names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Tip for CaptainU Users

The CaptainU Profile tool makes it easy to get references from your club and high school coaches and share them with college coaches. Just go to "Recommendations."

[Sign in](#)



SEND IT OFF

Once you have polished your cover letter and created a great recruiting profile with photos, grades, and athletic info, **it's time to contact college coaches directly, which you can do with the CaptainU Mail tool.**





SAMPLE RESUMES

Panky Q. Solari

14 South Beagle Street
Kalamazoo, MI 34676

psolari@slushies.org
(768) 534-3958

GENERAL INFO

Height: 5' 6" Weight: 130 Left-footed

ACADEMICS

GPA: 3.7/4.0 SAT: 1240 ACT: 26
Graduate Spring 2005
Academic interests: Sports physiology, biology

SOCCER EXPERIENCE

Nova High School Varsity 2002-2003

Two-year letterman; 5 goals, 11 assists as a junior;
Started every game at left wing; 2003 All-State
honorable mention, District first team; 3 goals, 5
assists as sophomore. #9—White: home; Green: away.

Southside Slushpuppies 1998-2003

3-time State Cup winners: 2001, 1999, 1998;
Midwest Regionals quarterfinalist 2001; Starting
forward; 11 goals, 14 assists during 2003 season.
#14—Indigo: home; Red: away.

Michigan State Select 2001-2002

Two year selection to the state team;
Team finished third at Midwest Region
ODP camp, 2002; Played wing and forward.

REFERENCES

Amanda Mondraga; Head Coach, Nova High School
amon@nova.edu; (768) 876-9654

Salamadra Salchica; Head Coach, Slushpuppies
salasal@slushies.org; (768) 531-3546

INTERESTS

Hunting and gathering; Primitive tool collection;
Baroque choral singing.

Picture

Picture

Picture

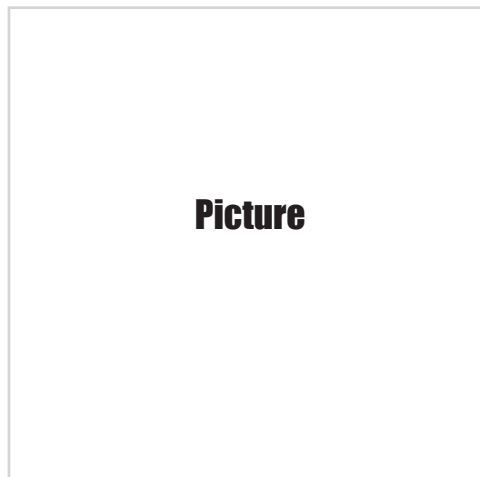


L. Clifton Buendia

234 Domain Street
Range, WY 24375

cliff@milkyway.com
345/375-2678

Class of 2003 3.1 GPA
1140 SAT 23 ACT
6'0" 165 lbs.
11:15 2-mile



SOCCER EXPERIENCE:

Dry Lake High School: 2003 Wyoming AAA state runner-up; two-time varsity captain, 2002-2003; 2003 first team all-district; three-year letter winner; three-year starter; played sweeper and stopper; 2003 stats: 3 goals, 10 assists; uniform number 6.

'86 Marauders Soccer Club: Played for team since 1998; starting center-back since 2000; State Cup champions, 2001; winners: 2000 Vegas Invitational, 2001 CIA-KGB Cup, 2002 Surf's Up Cup; uniform number 10.

ACADEMIC INTERESTS:

Political Science, Pre-Law, Alchemy, Transmogrification.

EXTRACURRICULAR PURSUITS:

Senior Class President, Speech & Debate, Chess Club.

REFERENCES:

Chip Sedgwick, Head Coach, Dry Lake High School,
325/789-7568; chips@dlh.edu

Hugh G. Mongus, Head Coach, Marauders Soccer Club
325/345-6574; mongus@marsclub.com

10

FOLLOW-UP



Within a few weeks of sending out your cover letter and recruiting profile you will probably receive an information packet from the coach. The packet is likely to include info about the team—newsletters, brochures, etc.—and a player profile sheet for you to complete and return.

Don't be upset if the response you receive is impersonal. It doesn't mean the coach isn't interested. It's just his standard first response when he hears from a new player. He doesn't know yet how serious you are about his team. So he's not going to spend that much time on it. Don't worry. This will change over time.

FILL OUT THE PROFILE AND SEND IT BACK

College coaches receive tons of email from prospective players and cannot reply personally to everyone the first time around. But if you're **persistent, you'll start getting a lot of personal attention**. Persistence, it turns out, is half the battle.

Most coaches develop their own player profile form so they can have a consistent reference for all of their recruits. **Think of this profile as the title page for your folder in the coach's filing cabinet.**

This profile also measures your interest. Serious recruits are a self-selecting group. Those who are half-interested or half-committed usually fall by the wayside; they often don't fill out the profile and stop communicating with the coach.

When you receive the profile, **fill it out immediately, find an envelope and a stamp, and get it in the mail.** Don't say you'll do it in a couple of days and then let it get lost on your desk under a stack of other stuff. A quick response will show that you are genuinely interested in making the team at that school.

Accompanying Note

Instead of sending the player profile sheet back by itself, attach a brief note—or e-mail if you've done it online.

Your note should show that you actually read through the materials. Let the coach know what you liked most—i.e. *"I got really excited reading the account of your run to the conference championship last year. Sounds like it was a thrill."*

End your note by saying that you look forward to being in touch on a regular basis throughout the recruiting process.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Keeping all this information organized can be tricky.

Use the Log tool on the Colleges page to keep track. Every time you receive something like this, make a quick note on your Log. That way you'll have a full history of your recruiting with each team.

[Sign in](#)



SAMPLE PLAYER PROFILE FROM A COLLEGE

Hattie's Farm College prospective student-athlete profile

GENERAL INFORMATION

name _____ date of birth _____

address _____

home phone _____ e-mail _____

parents' names _____

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

high school _____ graduation year _____

location _____ GPA _____ class rank ____/____

SAT I (math) _____ SAT I (verbal) _____ ACT _____ SAT II _____

academic awards, honors, leadership roles _____

areas of academic interest _____

other schools you are considering _____

ATHLETIC BACKGROUND

height _____ weight _____ other sports played _____

club team _____ uniform color/number ____/____

position _____ awards _____

coach _____ phone number _____

high school team _____ uniform color/number ____/____

position _____ awards _____

coach _____ phone number _____

years of odp _____ highest level reached (state, regional, national) _____

return this form to: coach ann toine-meyer
country rd. 35-agraria, pa 62135 – 347/345-7456 – toine@thefarm.edu





SAMPLE ACCOMPANYING NOTE

FABIANA ABRAXIS

14 NORTH STREET
ATHENS, GA 21954

FABIANA@DOLOMITE.ORG
(412) 634-3478

9/1/03

Dear Coach Toine-Meyer,

Thank you very much for the information regarding women's field hockey at Hattie's Farm College. It sounds like you've got a great group of girls.

I was particularly impressed with what the newsletter said about the victory against your rival, University of the Atlantic Ocean, after having lost three games in a row.

Having read through your information packet a few times, I am really excited about playing for Hattie's Farm. From what I know of the school, I think it will be a great fit for me.

For now, I have completed the player profile form, which you will find attached to this letter. I will be in touch with you soon.

Sincerely,

Fabiana Abraxis

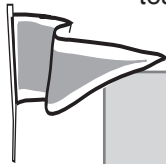
Tip for CaptainU Users

If and when you need to send physical mail, be sure to include the link to your CaptainU Profile.

[Sign in](#)



Instead of saying vaguely that *"I will be in touch with you soon,"* feel free to be more specific by indicating that you'll call the coach next week, or that a schedule of your team's tournament appearances is on your CaptainU profile.



NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Clippings from local newspapers are a nice additional touch. It's a bonus for the college coach. If a newspaper has written about you, send the coach a copy of the article.



PACKET BUT NO PROFILE

Some coaches' information packets do not include player profile sheets. If the packet you receive doesn't include a player profile, you should **still respond promptly**.

Immediately e-mail the coach to let him know that you got the info he sent. Your e-mail should be similar to the accompanying note described previously.

Show him that you read through the things he sent you. Mention your favorite details—i.e. *"It sounds like you had a great pre-season trip to Sri Lanka."*

Tell him that you are excited to move forward with recruiting, and that you'll be in touch soon.

IF THERE'S NO RESPONSE TO YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME

If a month passes and you don't hear from the coach, **don't frrreak out and convince yourself that he's not interested**.

Write him a brief e-mail explaining who you are and what you sent him. Ask if he received your letter, and if there is a general information sheet you should fill out.

Tip for CaptainU Users

The CaptainU Profile tool is the best way to share your information with college coaches.

It includes all the information that college coaches need. And you can easily update it on an ongoing basis.

[Sign in](#)



To: baltazar@stc.edu
From: Sally Maltus <sallymander@theswamp.org>
Date: April 7, 2008 10:05:00 EST
Subj: Sally Maltus Cover Letter & Resume

Dear Coach Baltazar,

I recently mailed you a cover letter and resume indicating my interest in playing lacrosse for Sands of Time College. Please let me know if you received and have had a chance to review my letter.

I am very excited about the prospect of playing for you and want to take all the necessary steps to show you that I am right for your team. If you have general prospective player forms and standard literature regarding the lacrosse program please send it my way.

I'm very eager to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Sally Maltus



Still No Response

If you send your e-mail and a week passes with no response, it's time to give the coach a call. Pick up the phone and dial. Be forthright with the coach: ask him to clarify why you haven't gotten a response.



CALL TO CLARIFY

You may be totally smitten with a particular school even though you haven't gotten much of a response from the coach. If this is the case, and you decide to be very persistent, you should **CALL THE COACH TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON**.

Here are some things you might want to say during that phone call:

- *"Hi Coach Del Piero. This is Tati Francesca from Naples High in Florida. I recently sent you a cover letter and resume. I haven't heard back from you, so I decided to give you a call to make sure that you received my stuff."*
- *"I'm very interested in your school and I'd love to play for your football team. At this point I just want to get a sense of whether I should continue pursuing a spot on the team."*
- *"I'd really like to arrange an occasion on which you can see me play in person. How should we go about doing that? What else can I do at this point to show you that I'm right for your team?"*

He may say that he's been very busy and has had little time to work on recruiting—in which case **you've probably done yourself a great service** by calling him. You've advanced your cause and done his work for him.

On the other hand, the coach may say that frankly he really doesn't think that you are right for his team. If this is the case, you have two options:

- It's quite possible that he's made up his mind. Still, if you are really interested in this school you can be persistent and urge him to see you play before he writes you off. Be careful about expending too much energy on it. This could be a dead end.
- Alternatively, you can let this school fall by the wayside and say to yourself, *"Alright, this is probably not going to work out. I'm going to concentrate instead on the five schools that have responded positively."*



SET A HIGH STANDARD

The quality of your early contact with a coach sets the standard for your recruitment. To be effective, the tone of your cover letter and follow-up information need to show *enthusiasm and determination*.

Without being in his ear 24/7, show the coach that you are committed to making this happen. If you slack off, it will be perceived as disinterest. So stay with it.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Follow the step-by-step guidance on the Strategy page, to know exactly when you should email college coaches and what you should say to them.

[Sign in](#)



PART IV

OFF-FIELD SELF-MARKETING: MAINTAINING CONTACT

Once you've gotten through to your candidate coaches **you have to maintain regular contact with them.** Until you've made the team you can't stop corresponding with the coach.

If you have the right academic and athletic credentials **there is nothing more important to recruiting than regular communication.** It sends a clear signal that you're serious about this. It also gives a coach the opportunity to really get to know you.

The best ways to develop your relationships with college coaches are e-mails and phone calls.

PHONE CALLS



Once you've sent a coach your cover letter and profile, and have replied to all requests for supplemental information, it's time to buckle down and get on the phone.

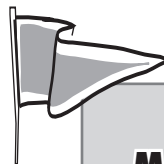
Phone calls from college coaches have an exaggerated reputation, as if once you've been called you're assured a spot on the team. Many high school players also mistakenly believe that if they don't receive a phone call the situation is hopeless.

There are countless reasons why a coach may not call you—**many of which do not reflect your ability to play for his team.** This is what makes CaptainU Recruiting so important. **Doing things like making phone calls will strengthen your cause.** Don't just wait for calls to come to you. If you do sit and wait, the calls may never come.

LIMITING FACTORS

Each coach has his own phone calling strategy. Some call top recruits weekly, others monthly. Still others never call, opting for e-mail or for the player to call them. If this is the case, what a pity it would be if you never picked up the phone!

You'll quickly get a sense of what mode of communication works best with a particular coach. As these trends emerge, **make notes in your CaptainU Log outlining the best ways to be in touch with each coach.**



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- Recruiting phone calls are only for coaches to make.
- One call from a coach means that you're guaranteed a spot on the team.
- No calls from any coaches means nobody wants you.
- Calling a coach is something to be really nervous about.

NCAA regulations are also a factor. If you're a junior making a mad dash for the phone every time it rings, stop sweating. The NCAA prohibits coaches from calling recruits before July 1st of their senior year of high school. **But that doesn't mean that as a sophomore or junior you can't call them.**

Sophomores and especially juniors should speak with coaches on the phone. The call, however, has to be on your dime. A coach is **not even allowed to return a message** from a recruit before July 1st of the recruit's senior year. So if you leave a message and receive no response, keep calling until you eventually connect with the coach.

WHEN TO CALL

Be conscientious about when you call coaches. Don't call on Friday at 5:00 PM or two hours before the team has a game. Look at the team's schedule, which you can access through the CaptainU Team Profile. **Mornings are often the best time to call coaches**, because they're not in a rush to get to practice.

Since you're probably in school at this time, you need to develop a calling strategy. Find a time during the day, during study hall, or immediately after school to call coaches. Find a quiet place like a teacher's office or empty classroom where you can focus and make the call without any interruptions.

Give A Heads-Up

It's a good idea to **let a coach that you are going to call him**. E-mail him a day in advance so he can review your materials before you talk. That said, you shouldn't expect him to know your resume by heart.

Tip for CaptainU Users

You CaptainU Strategy tells you when you should call coaches and gives you a list of key talking points and discussion questions.

[Sign in](#)





To: msoc@southie.edu
From: Inukshuk Johnson <nunavut@cairn.com>
Date: November 11, 1998
Subj: Phone call tomorrow

Dear Coach,

I hope you received my recruiting profile. I'm really excited about playing for Southside State and would really like to talk to you on the phone about how to progress with the recruiting process. Tomorrow I have a free period from 9:30-10:15 EST. Is it okay if I call you then?

Thanks!

Inukshuk Johnson

1 DAY LATER...

Take a deep breath and dial with confidence. Remember, **you're making the coach's life easier!** Be assertive when you call; make it a conversation, not a Q&A where you expect the coach to keep it flowing.

Nothing is worse than an awkward silence that deteriorates into a cross-examination by the coach. This is a conversation, not an interrogation.

Before you call, **look at your CaptainU Log to refresh your memory about the team**—what conference they play in, how many seniors are on the team, what their record is this season, who they play next, the roster positions they need to fill, etc.

Make a list of talking points and questions to ask the coach, so the conversation doesn't stall. Cross them off as you go.

Be frank with the coach. Ask general questions about the team and what you need to do at this point to distinguish yourself from the rest of his list of prospective players.



PHONE PREPARATION

Sample questions progressing from lighter to more serious:

- *How is the current season going?*
- *What kind of strategy does your team use?*
- *I see you're graduating 6 seniors. What positions do you need to fill?*
- *Have you had time to look over my profile? Do I seem to have the right background for someone on your team?*
- *What tournaments and camps are you going to in the near future?*
- *At this point, what can I do to convince you that I'm really serious about making your team?*



When you hang up, breath deeply again. Phew, it wasn't so bad, right? Take a moment to **jot down your impressions of the call**—personal tidbits about the coach, the program, where you think you stand, and what steps you need to take next. File your notes and record the call on your log sheet. Now repeat the process for the other colleges on your list.

MORE CALLS

Beyond this ice-breaker phone call, you should **call each of your candidate coaches from time to time**.

How often you should call depends on a number of variables, including how far out you are from graduating, your application plans, whether you're trying to coordinate a visit or a tournament appearance, etc.

Generally speaking, **you should call a coach every couple months**. As application deadlines near, or as you plan a visit, you may need to call more often.

WHEN A COACH CALLS YOU

If a coach calls you, **be an active participant on the phone**. Don't just sit there and receive a lecture. Think on your feet—ask questions, make observations. At the end of the call, thank the coach for taking the time to call you. Let him know that you will be in touch in the near future.

If you do a good job promoting yourself to coaches, as a senior you will start receiving phone calls from your candidate coaches. Your work will have begun to put you in the recruiting spotlight. **This does not mean, however, that you should stop calling the coaches.**

You should definitely reciprocate from time to time. It's a great way to raise your standing. In other words, if a coach has been calling you, a call *from you* will leave him feeling very positive about your recruitment.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Make sure to take notes on your recruiting Log after each phone call with a college coach.

Having a chronological record of what was discussed is really helpful as you progress in the recruiting process.

[Sign in](#)



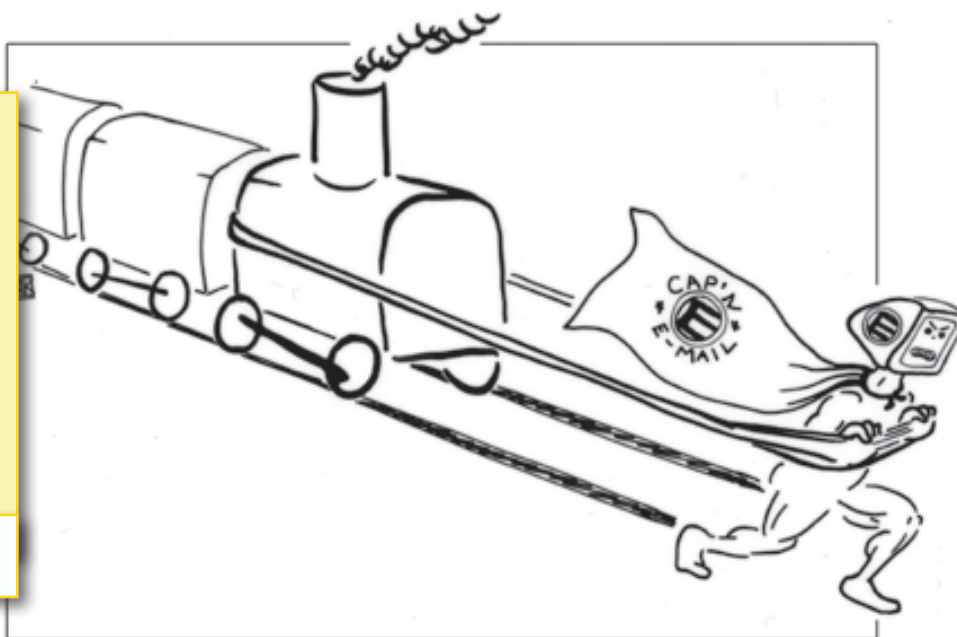
THE POWER OF E-MAIL

Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the CaptainU Mail feature to e-mail college coaches.

First add the colleges you like. Then Mail for all your correspondence.

[Sign in](#)



E-mail is a recruiting tool with unlimited potential. It is great way to get yourself in front of college coaches. Surprisingly, coaches spend most of their time working at their computers, so emails get read almost immediately.

Some coaches are incredibly e-mail savvy. If a coach is sitting at his desk when you send an e-mail, you might receive an immediate response.

INFORMAL E-MAIL EXCHANGES

If e-mail proves to be an effective tool with a particular coach, maximize its potential throughout the recruiting process. **Update coaches regularly on your successes on the field and the status of your application.**

Respond promptly to e-mails that they send you. When you receive an e-mail from a coach, hit reply and write a few paragraphs. Don't let it sit unanswered for days on end.

Have rapid-fire e-mail conversations with coaches; **encourage them to have casual back-and-forths with you.** Don't agonize over the wording of your e-mails. Just be yourself. Information emails don't have to be as polished as your cover letter.

Coaches want to hear from you, because then they don't have to do the chasing. So keep them posted on your accomplishments and application progress. This will show that you're reliable and committed.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Your CaptainU Strategy page tells you how often you should e-mail college coaches.

When you go to send an e-mail, use the Outlines tool to know what to say.

[Sign in](#)



SAMPLE INFORMAL E-MAIL



To: tpaine@cmnsns.edu
From: Marquis Cumberbatch <granmarquis@jade.calm>
Date: September 25, 2011 9:00pm
Subj: Thanksgiving, etc.

Dear Coach Paine,

Thanks for your e-mail the other day. It sounds like your season is going well.

I thought I'd let you know that I scored in a game this weekend against our cross-town rival, Shackleton High School. They've got some great players, including a few of my club teammates. It was fun going up against them in front of the whole school. In the end we lost 3-2, but there was frantic action until the final whistle.

Also, I want to let you know that it looks like my club team will be going to the Thanksgiving Tournament in Phoenix. Is there any chance that you'll be there? My team will only have a few weeks to prepare since the high school state tournament doesn't end until early November, so our Thanksgiving showing will be interesting...

Thanks again for your e-mail. I'll be in touch soon.

Marquis



REGULAR E-MAIL UPDATES

In addition to your informal e-mails with a coach, you should develop a **monthly e-mail update** so each coach knows that he's going to hear from you every four weeks. Use a playful, memorable, and descriptive title like "**Socorro LaFortune's First Monday Report**" for your update. Coaches know that they will hear from Socorro on the first Monday of every month.

Coaches love it when athletes show this kind of creativity and effort. Regular contact like this demonstrates genuine interest, determination, as well as dependability—traits that coaches value immensely.

SAMPLE MONTHLY E-MAIL UPDATE



To: fthompson@trampolineu.edu
From: Mark Santorini <pyroclastic@juneau.ak>
Date: June 1, 2010 11:11pm
Subj: **MARK'S SIDEKICK: Monthly Lax Dispatch for the Month of June, 2010**

Dear Coach Thompson,

I hope all is well with you. The weather here in Juneau has finally cleared, and we have more than eight hours of daylight.

My team Yeti Lax spent the last month practicing and competing indoors 20 minutes from my house. We were aching to play outside when the fair weather finally arrived.

The last few sunny weeks have brought good fortunes to the team, as we have advanced to the State Cup final four. Last Saturday we won the State quarterfinal 12-7. We went down 6-7, and I scored the tying goal and two others. Hopefully things will go well this coming weekend. If we win the title, we'll be at the Regional Showdown in Albuquerque, NM. I hope to see you there!

As for my recruiting status, please let me know if there is anything further I can do at this point. You have a copy of our tournament schedule—I will let you know as soon as the exact details are available. Our next tournament near you is the San Diego Pipeline Cup in August.

Also, my teammate's father has been videotaping our games. Depending on the quality of the filming, I'll try to have a video to you within the next month.

That's it for now.

All the best,

Mark Santorini



One E-mail Update Will Work For Every Coach

An e-mail update like the one on the previous page is personalized enough to get a coach's attention. Meanwhile, **it's generic enough to work for the coach at each of your candidate schools.** You don't have to spend eons writing ten different e-mails. A single update—which you can write in an hour—can be e-mailed to every candidate coach.



WARNING!

It's fine to add details to your update that are specific to a particular candidate school. Just make sure you don't accidentally send to College B what you intended for the coach at College A!

Personal Emails Should Be Personalized

College coaches really dislike generic e-mails. From a mile away, they can tell what e-mails have been sent to tons of coaches. An e-mail update like the one described above only works if you don't try to pass it off as a personalized e-mail. A title like "Monthly Lax Dispatch" shows that this is a newsletter, not a personal e-mail.

By contrast, when you send personal e-mails they should be tailored to each college. Each e-mail should have at least one paragraph that includes specific details about the college or the team. For example, "I saw that your physics department is hosting a panel discussion on the future of NASA." Or, "I read about the recent Toots and the Maytals concert." Or, "It looks like you have a really big week of conference games coming up. I'll be really interested to see what happens in those games. It sounds like you have a pretty intense rivalry with Lakeland College."

Coaches will love it when you show that you've done your homework on their schools, that you have genuine interest, and that you're not just spamming them to see who responds.



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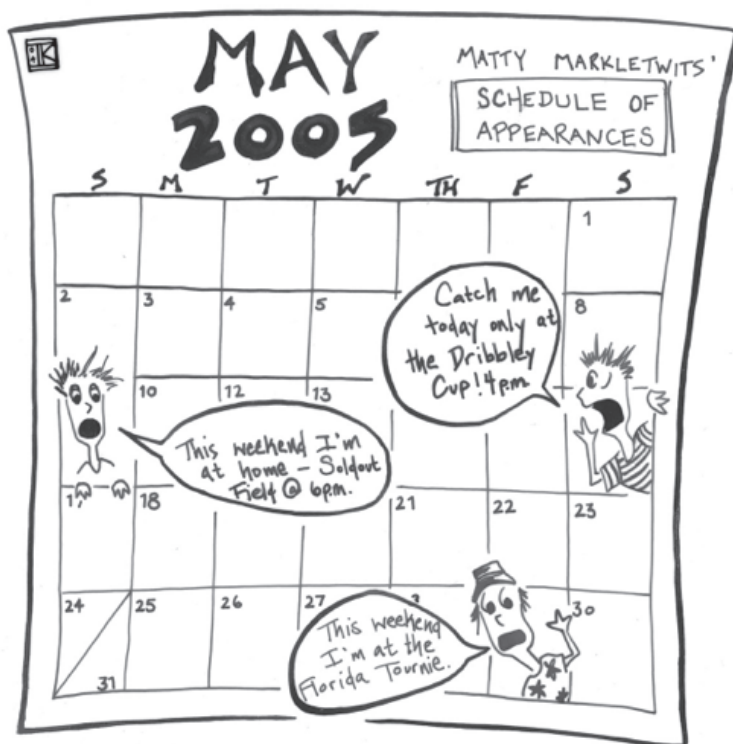
SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES

Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the CaptainU Events and Schedule features to let coaches know where you're going to be.

These get posted on your Profile for coaches to see.

[Sign in](#)



As soon as you know your schedule, send each coach an email with a list of your games, tournaments, meets, and showcases. **If you begin CaptainU Recruiting late in your junior year or during your senior year, send your schedule along with your cover letter and resume.** You need to get things moving quickly.

GAME & TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE


College recruiting budgets are generally stretched thin, so you can't expect a coach to go to extremes to see you in action. Coaches try to make the recruiting buck go as far as possible.

Translation: **the odds of a coach journeying cross-country to watch an isolated game are slim.** Coaches who attend individual club and high school games probably represent local colleges—which may be fine with you if you're interested in them.


For colleges beyond your immediate vicinity, **you're far more likely to gain exposure at a college showcase event**—preferred by coaches because they can evaluate numerous prospects at once. In fact if you give a coach advance notice about a particular event, you might spark his interest in attending.

Share Your Schedule

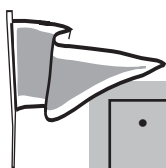
Gather all the information you have regarding your team's schedule and then create a document that you can send to coaches. **Don't fret if you don't yet know the exact game schedule at a particular tournament. For now, just let coaches know that you're going to be at the tournament.** You can pass on further details when they're available. It actually gives you a good excuse to contact the coaches again.



If a coach saw you play and then contacted you, determine the importance of being evaluated again. Does he want to reassess your play? Ask him over the phone or via e-mail.



Provide him with your appearance schedule regardless of his answer. Even if he doesn't need to see you play again, a schedule will give him a sense of the games and tournaments you're playing.



- **IF YOU USE CAPTAINU**, your a link to your Profile (and Schedule) is included in every e-mail you send coaches.
- **IF YOU SEND THE SCHEDULE AS AN ATTACHMENT.** This improves the chances that the coach will see the schedule the way you want it to appear.
- **IF YOU OPT FOR SNAIL MAIL**, accompany your schedule with a note that also includes your letterhead.





SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Zorbas Shove
34667 W. Swamp Dr.
E. Rutherford, NJ 19837
zorkaj@scovfam.org
201-447-8563

MEADOWLANDS PEARL DIVERS FIELD HOCKEY
UNIFORM COLORS: BEIGE AND MAGENTA; NUMBER: 7

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE, FALL 2011

PLUTO CUP, DOLGEVILLE, VA - AUGUST 12-14

9/12	VS. GAWKERS	9:00 AM	FIELD 3
9/12	VS. BLOCKERS U	4:30 PM	FIELD 6
9/13	VS. SHOCKERS '86	10:00 AM	FIELD 14
9/14	SEMIFINAL	9:00 AM	FIELD 2
9/14	FINAL	4:00 PM	FIELD 1

SEDNA CUP, SOUTH SHORE, NJ - OCTOBER 20-21

SCHEDULE TBA

BEEBLEJUICE CLASSIC, MIAMI, FL - DECEMBER 4-7

SCHEDULE TBA

REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE, FALL 2011

ALL GAMES AT MEADOWLANDS FIELD HOCKEY COMPLEX

9/6	VS. MOHO	11:00 AM
9/13	SEE ABOVE	
9/20	VS. SUPERDOME	9:00 AM
9/27	VS. ONION BREATH	10:30 AM
10/3	VS. MINOTAUR '94	2:30 PM
10/10	VS. FUCHSIA FOOTERS	9:00 AM
10/17	VS. CABBAGE PATCH '94	12:00 PM
10/24	VS. TURNPIKE	4:00 PM

Tip for CaptainU Users

Update your
Schedule and
Events every 2-3
months.

When you e-mail
coaches, let them
know that you
updated your
profile so they
have a reason to
check it out.

[Sign in](#)





SAMPLE ACCOMPANYING NOTE

11/5/2010

Dear Coach Jajonji,

Attached you will find a copy of my winter hockey schedule. Since you're on the other side of the country, I recognize that it's unlikely that you'll be able to attend a regular season game. I've listed our league schedule anyway, just to give you a sense of the competition I get on a regular basis.

As far as tournaments go, we're going to play in the Pluto Tournament of Champions, Sedna Performance Cup, and the Beetlejuice Classic. Are you planning to attend any of those events?

I'm really looking forward to the Pluto Tournament of Champions next month. We finished second last year. This go around, we're playing our nemesis, the Shockers—who we lost to in last year's final—in the first round.

As soon as I have details on the other two tournaments, I will send them your way. I'll also call you soon to see if you're planning to be at any of these tournaments.

All the best,

Zorbas

FAQ

What if I identify an additional college of interest when I have already made a lot of progress with my original candidate schools?

Say you've been diligently promoting yourself for five months. Your mother's friend comes over for dinner and talks up her alma mater. If you're convinced, all you have to do is a little catch-up work for that school.

Fortunately, you already have your cover letter. Just personalize a copy for the coach at that new school and send it off.



REFERENCES



Tip for CaptainU Users

You can add Recommendations from your club and high school coaches to your CaptainU Profile.

Just go to the recommendations section of your Profile and send requests to the coaches you'd like recs from.

[Sign in](#)

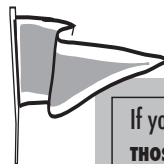


Enlist your high school and club coaches—the same people you provided as references on your resume—to write letters of recommendation for you. A positive evaluation from a credible high school or club coach will bolster your standing with college coaches.

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD USE AS REFERENCES

The coaches most qualified to provide credible evaluations of your ability are those who have known you for a while..

Additionally, **try to get your recommendations from experienced coaches.** An experienced coach can say things in your recommendation like, *“In my 15 years of coaching high school girls, I haven’t seen anyone who passes better than Sheila.”*



If you go to a college summer camp, **THOSE COLLEGE COACHES ARE OFTEN WILLING TO SERVE AS REFERENCES.** Recommendations from other college coaches can really strengthen your campaign.

ASK YOUR COACH FROM SUMMER CAMP TO WRITE AN EVALUATION that you can send to your candidate coaches.

A parent or teacher who stands in as the coach of a team often can’t provide the insight that college coaches seek in a reference.

If you have no alternative, it’s not the end of the world. Any coach can at least provide general observations on your role within the team and personality traits like leadership and reliability.

PREPARATIONS

Make your recommenders’ lives easy by providing them with addressed and stamped envelopes to encourage them to get their letters off in a timely manner. Ask them to send their letters directly to the college coaches.

In your next e-mail update, **inform the college coaches that they should be expecting your recommendations.** Briefly describe who the recommenders are and how long you have played for them. **Mention anything else that strengthens their credibility**— i.e., whether they played professionally; are particularly well-known, etc.

FOLLOW-UP

Check with your recommenders after a week or so to make sure that they have written and sent the letters. If they haven’t done it yet, gently urge them to do so. Keep checking back until they’ve done their job.

Tip for CaptainU Users

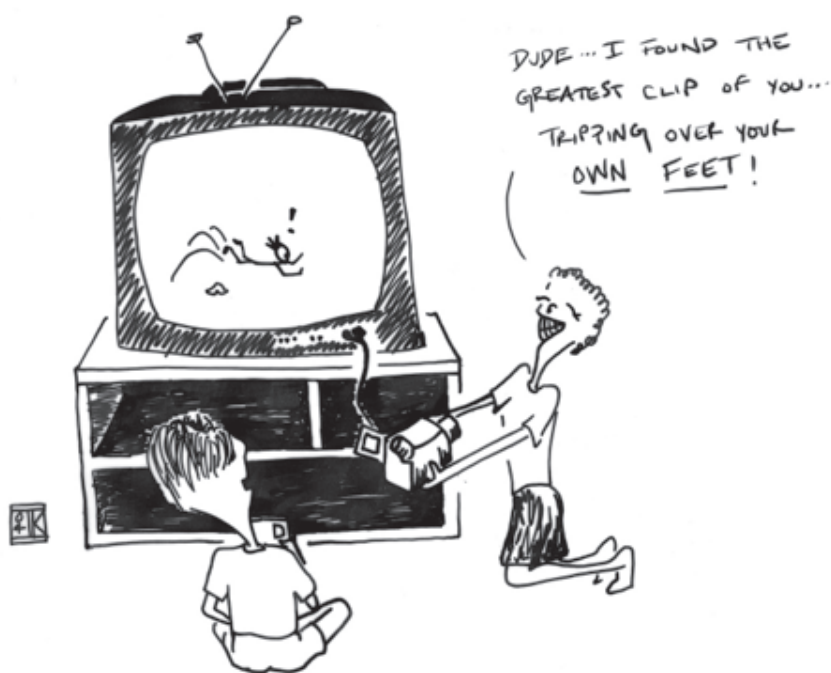
After your coaches have filled out their Recommendations, e-mail college coaches and tell them that they can easily access the Recommendations by going to your Profile.

[Sign in](#)



15

VIDEO



Tip for CaptainU Users

You can embed your Video on your Profile.

That way, when you send coaches your Profile, they not only have immediate access to all your stats and academic info, but also the ability to see you play then and there.

[Sign in](#)



Before you're offered a spot on a college team, the coach will usually want to see you play in person.

While a highlights video isn't a substitute for seeing you play in person, it is a good way to **convince the coach to come see you play**. In sending a coach a video, you're just trying to whet his appetite—to distinguish yourself as someone he should seek out.

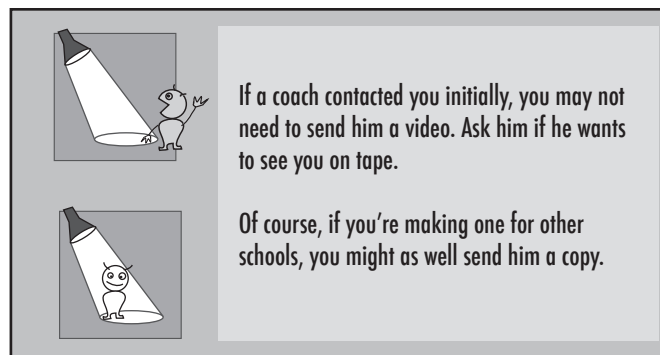
In having your play evaluated, **highlight videos are useful, but overrated.** Whether or not you make a video usually won't make or break your campaign. **It's just another tool that you provide a coach to help him make an informed decision.**

Many of the videos coaches receive are garbage anyway. Some videos look like they've been filmed during a 8.3 earthquake. If it's not that, often the quality of the video is so grainy that players are little more than blurs on the screen. Some are sleep inducing. Others are downright painful.

A bad video won't help you make any headway, so unless you can make something decent, don't waste your time or your money. If a coach requests a video and you can't provide something decent, let him know -- or, better yet, find a way to get him something basic.

If he insists on a video, send him what you've got, maybe with a little disclaimer. Let him know if you feel that what you're sending is inadequate and doesn't do your play justice. At least he knows what he's getting into.

When you share a video with a coach, make sure that it's easy for him to figure out who you are on the screen. Include your uniform number, provide some play-by-play commentary, or find a way to highlight yourself on the video itself.



HOMEMADE vs. HOLLYWOOD

I'm not a big fan of professionally produced videos. I prefer it when athletes show the initiative, creativity, and wherewithal to make a video on their own. Anyhow, the 500 bucks you drop on a production company could just as well be put towards buying a digital video camera of your own.



Kudos if you choose to do your own video. Working side-by-side with a friend can make it fun. Personalize your video as you see fit. Soundtracks, for example, are a nice personal touch.

Digital Video Makes it Easy

Digital video makes it ridiculously easy to make a clean, quality video. If you have access to a digital camera and a tripod, have someone film a game or even a practice. Find a computer with movie software and edit your video.

Camera Angle

When filming, **the camera's distance from the field or court is very important.** Super close-ups don't show the context in which plays develop. Excessively wide-range shots come across as one big smudge on the TV. Find the average.

WHAT TO PUT ON YOUR VIDEO

Better, more enjoyable videos start with a brief, personal introduction and an explanation of how the college coach can identify the recruit in the video. After that, it's on to action footage.

Introduction

Take a minute at the beginning of the tape to **introduce yourself.** Speak clearly, confidently, *and enthusiastically* into the camera.

Don't be afraid to distinguish yourself from the pack with a few personal details like, "*My favorite animal is the green kangaroo,*" or "*I am an avid collector of beetles,*" or "*I like the sound of subway brakes.*"

Be enthusiastic and willing to smile. Athletes tend to be soooooo serious on their videos. You don't have to be giddy like the local weatherman, but coaches want real, vibrant, dynamic people.

Identification

Figure out how the coach will be able to identify you on the screen. **Your best bet is probably your uniform number if it's legible.** Use subtitles to make it clear where you are on the field. Beyond your uniform number, mention the position you play so the viewer knows where to look. **You might also have the filmer give some play-by-play commentary to help clarify where you are.**



A VIDEO INTRODUCTION

"Hello, my name is Blossom de Milos. I am a junior with a 3.2 GPA at Red Appleton High School. For my high school, I play power forward. I led the team this year with an average of 7 assists per game. I play shooting guard for my club team Manzana East Side.

"The following Manzana video footage is from a tournament we played in over Thanksgiving. I'm #9. You can also pick me out on the video by my bright red hair. For the high school state championships everyone on my team dyed their hair a temporary red. Mine seems to be permanent!!

"I've sent you this video because I am very interested in playing for you, starting in the fall of 2011. You already have a copy of my profile. I hope this video gives you a better sense of what I'm like as a player and shows you that I can make a difference for your team in the years to come.

"The video lasts about ten minutes. Thank you for watching!!"

Action Footage

There are two schools of thought when it comes to the actual content of a recruiting video. Most coaches prefer edited clips. Yet there are a few who like to watch recruits' games in full.

If most of your candidate coaches are asking for a short highlight video, you'll know which format to use. You can also be diplomatic and incorporate elements of each.

HIGHLIGHTS

If you choose to do a highlight reel, **make sure the video clips are shown in context**. In other words, don't just show yourself making a good pass. Show the build-up to the pass.

Employ the 5-second rule: **show 5 seconds of play before and after the highlight**. The coach wants to see how the play developed and how you were involved throughout.



NOT EVERY CLIP HAS TO BE A HIGHLIGHT

Many athletes mistakenly believe that they should only put highlights on their videos.

Actually, **YOU SHOULD INCORPORATE ALL SORTS OF CLIPS IN YOUR VIDEO**. Even if the outcome is not heroic, clips of you defending, dribbling, passing, and just plain old running can be useful for a coach.

If, for example, you're a soccer player and you made a really nice run in which you won a tackle and then beat a defender, only to have your shot blocked, don't disregard the clip.

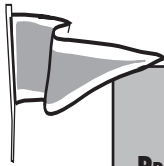
College coaches are well aware that not every play ends with a goal.



Run-of-Play

If you have access to high-quality video in which you are easily distinguished and featured regularly, you might prefer to utilize a more free-running, extended play format. Run-of-play videos can incorporate anything from five-minute unedited clips to an entire game.

Don't show run-of-play action if you are only recognizable in the frame once every ten minutes. Watching such a video is a waste of the coach's time; he'll lose interest very quickly.



SMALL-SIDED GAMES

PRACTICE OR PICK-UP GAMES CAN PROVIDE EXCELLENT ACTION FOOTAGE. In the setting of a small-sided game, you get a lot of touches and the camera isn't flying all over the place. Unlike a full-field game, the action and off-the-ball movement of a small-sided game can be captured simultaneously on tape.

Put your fears to rest if you're concerned that a coach will think a pick-up or practice game is "rigged." Just get out with a group of your friends and play.

A COLLEGE COACH IS CONCERNED WITH HOW YOU MOVE AND PLAY. A video with high-quality footage of a small-sided game can show a coach what he needs to see.

LENGTH

A highlight reel shouldn't last longer than ten minutes. Run-of-play videos can feature 10-20 minute uninterrupted spans, or last an entire game. Whether a coach will watch it all is another matter. But at least extended play is available if he's inclined to watch.

If you use extended footage, **provide a key** that identifies you and your role at specific times on the video. Do at least a little editing, by cutting out footage when you're not on the field. **Keep the total running time under an hour.**



SAMPLE VIDEO KEY

SOSHY KAY SMITH

5 Manatee Way
Boca Raton, FL 25478

336-457-1435
soshy@thesmithy.com

VIDEO KEY

Video length: 38 minutes

Jersey Number: 19–The one with the red ponytail!

Position: Left-Wing

- 00:00:00 *Introduction.*
- 00:01:24 *Highlights.*
- 00:05:35 *Game starts.*
- 00:13:43 *My shot goes off the cross-bar.*
- 00:15:22 *1-on-1 sequence.*
- 00:23:42 *Left-footed cross.*
- 00:25:12 *I play a long ball which results in a goal.*
- 00:30:17 *A big tackle!*
- 00:32:23 *Little give-&-go.*
- 00:34:14 *Right-footed shot from 25-yards.*
- 00:37:45 *I clear the ball off our line.*



VIDEO FORMATS

DVD

DVDs are the best digital format for your video. Most DVD players will happily play your video. An added perk of a DVD is the size. After watching your video, a coach can put it in the file he has for you, so all your information is stored together.

WEB VIDEO

Sites like YouTube and Vimeo make it easy to upload and share videos quickly. There are privacy issues that you might want to consider, but more and more recruiting videos can be found on the web.

Tip for CaptainU Users

You can easily embed a video from YouTube, Vimeo, or any other video sharing site.

Just copy the embed code for your video and paste it into the CaptainU Video field.

[Sign in](#)



PART V

ON-FIELD SELF-MARKETING: APPEARANCES

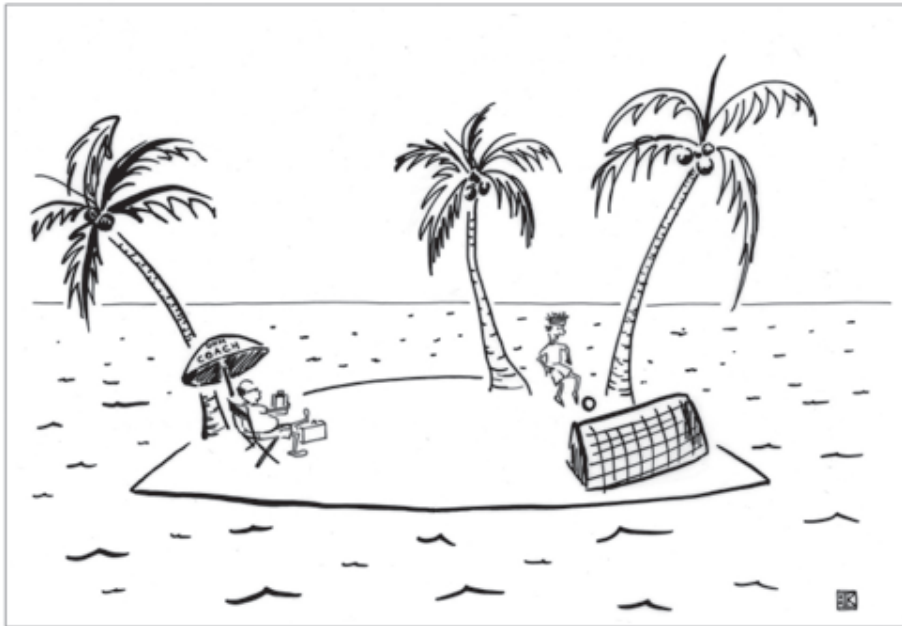
Your **performance on the field**, as much as your dedicated correspondence, will convince a coach that you deserve a spot on his team.

Your regular contact thus far will have sparked his interest in personally evaluating your ability. The key now is to **arrange a time and place for him to see you in action.**

Though on-field Recruiting is all about actual appearances, even now **you must maintain the dialogue** that you've established with a coach.

You've worked so hard to get his attention. Don't disappear now. **Don't lose his attention by abandoning your telephone and e-mail campaign.**

ON-FIELD APPEARANCES



Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the Events tool to get step-by-step advice on how to get seen at the recruiting events you're attending.

Add each event to the Events page. Then follow the advice on the Strategy page to make sure you get seen by coaches.

[Sign in](#)



You can't judge a prospective player by his profile alone. Coaches know that on the field, players aren't necessarily what they appear to be on paper. Seldom is anyone offered a spot on a college team just because his or her resume looks good. Your letters, e-mails, and phone calls cannot tell the whole tale.

Finding a way for a coach to evaluate your ability in person is critical. You may be attractive on paper and a brilliant phone conversationalist. In the end, however, most coaches will want to see you in action before they include you in their long-term plans.

Effective communication, therefore, lays the foundation—off-field CaptainU Recruiting motivates coaches to see you in action, on the field.

Imagine a college coach at a tournament with 30 teams and 500 anonymous athletes. The odds don't favor the players. But if you've gotten on a coach's radar, that **coach knows that he needs to single you out of the crowd**. In fact, he's made a note to see you play in your 2:30 game.

Off-field self-marketing will put you in the spotlight and tilt the odds of being seen at an event heavily in your favor.

SUMMER CAMPS

Many college teams run summer camps, which are an ideal setting for coaches to evaluate recruits. You may attend as many camps as you like, all of which must be at your own expense. The NCAA prohibits college teams from paying recruits' camp fees.

Summer camps are often run at a host school and feature coaches from a number of different colleges. **Camps provide an unrivaled opportunity for coaches to thoroughly evaluate recruits**—and likewise, for athletes to assess the coaches.

Players are usually divided into teams that are headed by one college coach. Over the course of the week, though, the players will have the opportunity to work with every other coach. In this environment, players can be examined at length, so that a few plays in an isolated game don't define your ability in the eyes of a coach.

Beyond your extensive exposure to a coach on the field, **camps allow players to develop personal relationships with coaches**. In passing, in the cafeteria, and at scheduled extracurricular activities, you will be able to have casual conversations with them.

You can also arrange to eat lunch together or meet in the dorm lounge if you'd like to speak with a coach more formally about your college prospects. Just don't be overbearing by constantly requesting to meet with a coach.

Making Arrangements & What To Do Once You're At Camp

During the winter of your sophomore or junior year, **ask your candidate coaches which camps they intend to work that summer**. Once you know the camps a coach will attend, make the appropriate notes on your log sheets. Request the camps' promotional materials and registration forms.

After having a few such conversations with various coaches, you might determine that the coaches from, say, your seven schools of greatest interest will not be attending any camps in common. **Fortunately, college coaches are highly networked and are often willing to share information with each other about recruits.**

Tip for CaptainU Users

The Outline tool includes e-mail templates that will show you how to ask the right questions about coaches' summer camp plans.

[Sign in](#)



At some camps, the staff writes evaluations for all of the campers. At other camps, you may have to ask. Some coaches will even make calls on your behalf to other coaches who were not in attendance at the camp.

When you're at a college summer camp, use it as an opportunity to talk to coaches. **Schedule a time to speak with them 1-on-1**—maybe in the dorms or cafeteria. Ask each coach his impressions of your ability, and whether he envisions a role for you on his team. Ask for constructive criticism on what you should work on to contribute to his program.

The camp staff will often feature current college athletes, many of whom spend the summer on campus working or taking classes. **Utilize these athletes as resources.** Talk to them. What is their college sports experience really like? What kind of commitment does it entail? What do they think about the coaches?



Say you decide to attend the X University Softball Camp—a school that interests you. You're also enthusiastic about A College and B University, whose coaches will not be at the camp.

In this case, ask the coaches at A College and B University if they know any of the coaches at the X University camp who can evaluate you on behalf of A College and B University.

Camp Tuition

Unfortunately, college camps are expensive, often costing more than \$500 for one week. Soften the financial blow by thinking of camp as a sound investment, one that offers the most thorough exposure to college coaches.



WARNING!

Camps tend to fill up very quickly. Some of the most popular camps are fully booked as early as February. So early on, consult a calendar to plot out the camps you need to attend. Call the camps to request registration forms and then send them off right away.

RECRUITING SHOWCASES

Recruiting tournaments and meets provide an excellent opportunity for coaches to get a glimpse of you in a competitive environment. Though coaches' exposure to you may not be as thorough as at a camp, perceptive coaches can get a sense of your ability pretty quickly.

To successfully arrange for a coach to see you at a tournament, **provide him with a schedule**, as described in Chapter 13. **As soon as you know your team's general tournament plans, let coaches know**—i.e. "We're going to Wanderer's Cup in January and The Explorer Invitational in March." E-mail the coach the exact game schedule when the details are finalized.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Make sure to keep all this information on your Profile updated.

When you make a change, it provides you with a good excuse to e-mail your coaches and tell them that you've updated your schedule.

[Sign in](#)



If a coach you've contacted is in attendance at a tournament, don't freak out thinking that you have to do something amazing. Relax and play as you normally would.

In fact, you probably won't know when exactly the coach is watching. Focus on playing the game, not on scanning the crowd for a guy wearing Bananaville University yellow.



GET COACHES TO COME TO YOUR TOURNAMENTS

Don't be afraid to lobby a coach to come see you play at a specific tournament. Convince him that this is a tournament he should really come watch. E-mail him little teasers like:

"We have a very competitive schedule at the Prometheus Invitational. Based on past experiences, I think this will be a fantastic tournament to watch. It would be great if you could come."



PARENTS

Before you go to a tournament, make a bunch of copies of your child's team roster. The roster should include each player's name, jersey number, address, phone number, e-mail, grades, SAT & ACT scores, and year of graduation.

While the team is playing, walk around and distribute the roster to the college coaches that are watching—they won't be hard to identify. The whole team will benefit from this. If you run into one of your child's candidate coaches, feel free to chat briefly with him.

INDIVIDUAL GAMES

It's unlikely that college coaches will attend isolated high school or league games unless signing you is an absolute priority or you play close to the college. That said, you should still provide coaches with a schedule of your regular season games—if for no other reason than to show them that you are competing regularly.

KNOW WHEN YOU'RE BEING EVALUATED

Ask each coach which tournaments or individual games he's going to attend. Though he may not have his schedule figured out exactly, he might be able to give you a general idea. This isn't so that you can honor him with an extra-special effort on that extra-special day. It's so you know what games he's seen and when to **have follow-up conversations regarding your play**. Take notes on your follow-up conversations and how you think you played while he was watching you.

You should be aware that NCAA regulations stipulate that coaches cannot speak with recruits before, during, or between games. College coaches also may not speak with recruits until the club or high school coach has released the players at the end of a game.



ON-FIELD APPEARANCES FOLLOW-UP



Tip for CaptainU Users

When coaches see you play, use the Log tool to make a note of it.

Keep track of when coaches saw you, who you played against, and how you performed.

[Sign in](#)



A college coach may hang around after the game to speak with you. If you see him from afar and he hasn't found you, **walk over and introduce yourself**. Don't be intimidated or throw yourself at his feet. Just have a normal conversation. Offer your opinion of the game, ask for his, thank him for coming, and promise to be in touch.

SEND AN E-MAIL

Whether or not you manage to talk to the coach immediately after the game, **make sure to contact him the following week.** Send him a thank you e-mail for making the effort to come see you. Offer some analysis of your performance and indicate that you are eager to move forward with recruiting and your application. Also ask briefly for his impressions after seeing you in action.

Your follow-up e-mail should be short and informal. Yet it should move your dialogue with the coach towards the critical issue of where you stand.

You've been in regular contact now with the coach for months. He's reviewed your cover letter, profile, and video, and seen you play in person. **You need to start figuring out if he truly foresees a role for you on his team**—i.e. if he will offer you a spot on the pre-season roster.



To: shak@sonora.edu
From: Ariel Mitbar <ari@desert.com>
Date: Feb. 27, 2003
Subj: This past weekend, and the future...

Dear Coach Shakahaji,

Thank you very much for taking the time to watch me play this past weekend. I was pretty happy with how things went. I admit that I was a little rusty, having been restricted to playing indoors for the last few months. As a team, we feel that it was a good start to our spring season.

I really do appreciate you making the effort to see me play. It's been a pleasure corresponding with you over the last eight months and getting a sense of what your team is all about.

From our correspondence—letters, e-mail, and phone calls—I think you've probably gotten a sense of me personally. Now that you've seen me play as well, I'm looking forward to discussing the prospects of playing for your team. I'll be in touch soon.

All the best,

Ariel Mitbar





FEEDBACK

If you did a good job initially matching your academic and athletic credentials with colleges, **it's likely that after being evaluated on the field you will begin to hear some positive feedback.**

You may indeed have received enthusiastic responses from coaches well before they saw you play in person. If you have been committed to promoting yourself, your regular correspondence has probably turned the spotlight in your direction, setting you apart from the vast majority of other athletes.

If your coaches haven't shared their feelings about you as a recruit, you'll have to ask them. Through more e-mails and phone calls you'll get the feedback you need to determine which schools you should continue to pursue and which you should dismiss.



PART VI

DELIBERATION, NEGOTIATION & MAKING A DECISION

Decision time is fast approaching. You've been in regular contact with coaches. They've seen you play and have heard from your references.

You've provided them with everything they need to make an informed decision about you.

Now you have to find out what that decision is. **Which coaches want you on their teams?**

From the coaches who respond favorably, you have to then decide which colleges you will apply to, and ultimately which one will provide you with the best overall experience.

DECISIVE CONVERSATIONS



Tip for CaptainU Users

You can have this conversation by phone or e-mail, whichever is more comfortable.

If you choose to call coaches, go to the College Profiles for the direct phone numbers to each of your coaches.

[Sign in](#)



Once you have put yourself in the spotlight and have given a coach a strong sense of you personally and as an athlete, it's time to **request his honest opinion of your chances with his team.**

DON'T AVOID THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Recruiting boils down to a rather simple equation:

College coaches want qualified student-athletes.

- AND -

You want to be identified as such a person.

As you continue to correspond with college coaches, **don't lose sight of the ultimate goal—that you want to be identified as an athlete who's right for the team.** It's fine to have informal conversations with coaches, but don't dance around the central issue. Now is the time to be straightforward and determine where you stand.

Don't expect a coach to simply volunteer that you are one of his top recruits. If he does, great. If not, you shouldn't think that you are out of luck. **You must be assertive and find out how serious he is about you.**

When To Have These Conversations

You should have decisive conversations once you are well into the CaptainU Recruiting process. Before you go asking for an assessment, give the coach plenty of time to review your cover letter and profile, check your references, and see you compete. A thorough coach will want the full picture before he decides to bring you onto the team.

Once you are convinced that the coach has a thorough sense of you, call or e-mail him. Phrase your questions in a genuine, non-confrontational fashion. **The most important thing is that you actually bring up the subject of your standing.** You're asking perfectly reasonable questions; there's no reason to be shy about this.

CANDID DISCUSSIONS

As you approach the impending decision of where to apply, **you need to have a clear understanding of your prospects with each team.** A few targeted questions will shed light on where things stand.

These questions and associated topics should be discussed and elaborated upon over the course of a few e-mails and phone calls. You don't have to slam him with one epic barrage of questions. Get a general sense of where he thinks you fit in, and then iron out the details over the following weeks.



Call Or E-mail

To discuss your standing with a coach, choose between e-mail, with which you can articulate yourself more deliberately, and a phone call. **Take into consideration the mode of communication that has been most effective with each coach.**

If e-mail has worked better with a particular coach, go with it. If you've had greater success calling that coach, use the phone.

If you choose to write an e-mail, incorporate the following questions without writing a laundry list of thirty-seven million numbered questions.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *"Now that you've seen me play twice and have spoken with my high school coach, how do you think I can fit in with your team?"*
- If the coach responds with something vague like, *"I think that over time you can contribute,"* ask for more specifics.
- *"Will you offer me a spot on the pre-season roster, or will I have to walk on?"*
- *"Do you think I can contribute immediately—can I get playing time as a freshman? Or do you envision me seeing very limited playing time for the first few years? If so, what's your Red Shirt policy?"*
- *"Is there athletic scholarship money that will be available for me? How are scholarships spread among the team?"*
- *"What's your relationship like with the admissions department? If I apply, what kind of assistance can you offer in terms of moving my application favorably through admissions? Will you support my application?"*
- Mention to the coach if you've begun to narrow down your list of colleges. If his school is one of your top two or three, let him know.
- **BE FRANK WITH THE COACH OF YOUR TOP CHOICE**—*"Under the Sea College is without a doubt my top choice. If I am accepted and offered a spot on the soccer team I will definitely come."*

Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the Strategy tool to know when to have these conversations, who you should have them with, and what questions you should ask.

[Sign in](#)





To: olidubi@oohoooh.edu
From: Buckwheat Rios <buckie@wheat.grn>
Date: June 19, 2011
Subj: Recruiting Standing

Dear Coach Olisadibuo,

Thanks again for watching my game two weeks ago at the Sahara Invitational. Things could certainly have gone better for us, but I imagine you got a decent sense of my play.

I am very excited about the prospect of playing soccer for you at Ugasd University. Having seen me play, I'm interested to hear what role you envision for me on your team. First and foremost, I'd like to know where I stand among your recruits for next year.

Will you be able to offer me a roster spot, as a recruit, immediately? What kind of contribution do you think I can make as a freshman, and throughout my time at U.U.?

As for admissions, if I apply do you intend to support my application? For that matter, what do you think are my chances of being admitted? If admitted, would an athletic scholarship be available for me?

Though I'm still deliberating over a few details, I want to be clear that U.U. is definitely one of my top three choices. I'm very enthusiastic about U.U.'s academic and extracurricular opportunities and, of course, about the soccer team as well.

In general, I'd like to know how you think I can fit in with your team and plans for the future. I'm very excited to hear back from you on these issues.

All the best,

Buckwheat Rios

GUARANTEED POSITIONS & PLAYING TIME

While you're having these decisive conversations be wary of hollow promises. A coach might, for example, guarantee you a starting position.

Remember that **he still hasn't seen you play with his team**. He can't be certain how you'll fit in with the team and adapt to the college game. You may be the Michael Jordan of your club team but require development to be effective at the college level.



From your end, don't press coaches for such guarantees. Instead of going on the offensive and asking a coach to promise that you'll be a starter, phrase the question in a more general, and less confrontational fashion: "What would you say are my chances for playing time as a freshman?"

CaptainU Recruiting is about getting yourself onto a college team where you can eventually contribute. Actually **earning minutes on the field is something you have to do when you arrive on campus**. If you want playing time as a freshman, you have to prove yourself during pre-season.

FOLLOW-UP E-MAIL

After you've sorted out your standing with a coach and determined that he wants you on his team, you should ask him how exactly to proceed. Figure out what steps you need to take to apply to the college, get your financial aid/scholarship situation in order, and meet eligibility requirements.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Sort your list of Reach, Match, and Safety schools, in part, by where you'll be able to be a significant contributor to the team.

[Sign in](#)



To: reuben@xyzu.edu
From: Renata Limon <lemon@de.com>
Date: August 1, 2012
Subj: The next step

Dear Coach Reuben,

After our recent series of conversations I'm more excited than ever about playing for XYZ University. Thank you so much for your interest in having me on your team. From our correspondence over the last few months and my overnight stay with Angie I have a very positive impression of the team.

At this point, I want to do everything I can to make sure that it works out. What steps do I/we need to take to make sure that I am admitted? I know that you've said that you would support my application. From my end of the table, what do you suggest I do to strengthen my application?

As far as paying for college, I know that your team doesn't offer athletic scholarships. In sorting out how to pay for school, are there specific people in the financial aid office who have been particularly helpful in the past? Who should my parents and I speak with?

I just want to say again that I am very excited about the prospect of playing for your team. Thank you again for all of your help over the last few months.

Sincerely,

Renata Limon



FAQ

What if the coach at a candidate school tells me that under no circumstances does he see a place for me on his team?

Unfortunately, responses of this sort are not unusual. It's what inevitably happens when you try to funnel a few million high school athletes into the college ranks, which can only accommodate a few hundred thousand athletes.

This statistic is small consolation; rejections are bound to sting. Such an outcome may wound your pride, but don't let it shatter your confidence. Don't give up your hopes just because one coach doesn't have a place for you on his team. Just delete that college from your list and focus your recruiting efforts on the teams that are interested.

If at the outset of the CaptainU Recruiting process you found ten or so teams that matched your ability, by the end you should have at least one or two coaches who want you to play for them.



SCHOLARSHIPS



Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the Strategy tool to know when the time is right to discuss scholarships with the coaches on your list.

[Sign in](#)



Many players and parents mistakenly believe that if you can't get an athletic scholarship you can't play in college. The reality is that **the majority of college athletes do not have athletic scholarships**. Demand is way too high and supply is way too low. Put simply, there are far more college athletes than there are athletic scholarships.

ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Unless you're one of the top athletes in the country, don't expect a team to give you a *full athletic scholarship*.

In most cases, *partial scholarships* are more likely. College coaches are strictly limited to a certain number of total scholarships. Being extremely resource-constrained, coaches often divide their scholarships among a number of players.

If you aren't offered an athletic scholarship, don't give up your college sports dreams. Nor should you necessarily remove a college from your list simply because they don't offer you an athletic scholarship.

FAQ

If a coach doesn't offer me a scholarship, does that mean he doesn't want me on his team?

No. Year in and out this myth races through circles of players and parents. It has been the downfall of many college sports careers before they even begin. **DON'T BE DETERRED IF YOU AREN'T OFFERED A SCHOLARSHIP.**

The reality is that between dramatic legal and financial restrictions, college teams are very limited in their ability to pay for their players' tuition. Does that mean that you might not get an athletic scholarship? Possibly. Does it necessarily mean that a coach doesn't want you on his team? No.

When An Athletic Scholarship Is Not Available

Many schools don't even offer athletic scholarships. There are no scholarships in the prestigious Ivy League nor in the entirety of Division III.

Schools that do offer athletic scholarships are strictly limited by the NCAA to a certain number of scholarships. Whether a school actually funds the full allotment of scholarships is another factor that can work against you.

When it comes to tuition, there are usually payment alternatives. You and your parents just have to be creative and persistent.

Never write off a college for financial reasons without consulting the school's financial aid office. With the financial aid people, discuss academic scholarships, minority scholarships, community service scholarships, federal grants, and loans.



Scholarship Limitations

In a given year, a Division I women's soccer team, for example, is allowed a total of fourteen scholarships. The coach can divide those twelve scholarships among as many players as she wishes. So twelve players may get full scholarships, or 24 players might get half scholarships. **Coaches tend to choose the latter course, dividing scholarships among a number of players.**

As mentioned before, a college may offer athletic scholarships, but not *fully fund* the NCAA/NAIA allowance. So there are Division I women's teams out there that only have, say, eight scholarships.

When you factor in the large size of a college team, the outlook for a full scholarship for the average athlete is rather bleak.

Early Research

In your early correspondence with coaches, **determine what kind of scholarship money might theoretically be available for you.**

Find out the size of the scholarship pools from which you'd be drawing. Determine if your candidate teams are fully funded—i.e. if the team you're investigating has the full allotment of scholarships.

This can be a strong indicator of a school's financial commitment to the team and of the team's commitment to you. It says a lot if a team is offering you a 75% scholarship out of its pool of four total scholarships.

Spend some time taking detailed notes on your scholarship outlook with each candidate team. File the notes in Log.

A coach who is committed to getting a recruit will often investigate the recruit's chances of getting institutional financial aid. If the team was going to offer the recruit a 50% scholarship, but the college will offer a 60% scholarship, it makes sense to go the non-athletic financial aid route.

SCHOLARSHIPS ALLOWED in soccer

	Women's Teams	Men's Teams
NCAA Division I	14	9.9
NCAA Division II	9.9	9.0
NCAA Division III	none	none
NAIA	12	12

Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the College Profile tool to determine what division each college is in and then navigate to resources about scholarships.

[Sign in](#)



Later In The Process...

Once you are well into the CaptainU Recruiting process and the coach at one of your colleges **has a strong sense of your ability, discuss your scholarship outlook more specifically**. Build on your discussions from Chapter 18, where you determined how serious the coach is about getting you on his team.

Ask the coach if he will offer you an athletic scholarship—and in what amount. Assess the offer, and what it means your family will have to pay.



To: juarez@pojoaque.edu
From: Zack Andriopoulos <zack@z.com>
Date: October 9, 2012
Subj: Scholarships

Dear Coach Juarez,

I was thrilled to find out the other day that I am one of your top recruits. Thanks for the huge vote of confidence! I'm quite certain at this point that I'm going to apply.

Amidst all the excitement, my parents and I are trying to figure out how to finance my college education. You and I had that phone conversation a few weeks ago regarding athletic scholarships. I know you said that you expect to be able to offer me a scholarship, though you didn't specify the exact amount.

I recognize that you only have six scholarships to divide among the entire team. Any scholarship money you can offer me is greatly appreciated.

As my parents and I try to work through this whole paying for college thing, an estimate of the athletic scholarship I should expect will really help.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

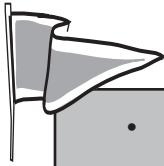
Zzack

THE RULES OF ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

There are many rules that govern athletic scholarships. If you're offered a scholarship, go to the NCAA's website and familiarize yourself with some of the rules.

Download a copy of the *NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*. Learning about scholarships will prevent you from following dead-end leads and breaking rules that endanger your eligibility.





- **ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS ARE NOT GUARANTEED FOR FOUR YEARS.** They are awarded one academic year at a time for up to five years. So sometimes a player will get a scholarship one year and not the next.

Coaches are usually considerate about keeping injured players on scholarship. However, before signing with a team, you should ask the coach how he deals with injured players who are on scholarship. If you get injured and have to sit out a year, will you lose your scholarship?

- Division III schools **DO NOT OFFER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS.** Non-athletic scholarships, however, are often available on the basis of academic excellence, extracurricular talents, and demonstrated need.
- Pell Grants and other **GOVERNMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP** programs may be available in addition to athletic scholarships. Contact individual admissions departments to learn more about such opportunities and whether you can mix athletic scholarships and institutional financial aid.

(Source: NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete - www.ncaa.org)

NON-ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Institutional financial aid is available at many schools as need-based, academic, minority, and departmental scholarships—to name a few categories.

These awards are a great way to deal with skyrocketing tuition, though competition for this money is intense. For each college on your list, **research the non-athletic scholarship opportunities through the admissions department and financial aid office.**

Questionable Scholarships

In recent years some colleges have found loopholes in NCAA regulations. They offer murky “leadership” or “activities” scholarships that allow them to circumvent NCAA bylaws.

Think long and hard if you’re offered a sketchy scholarship. Discuss its legality with the coach, admissions department, and perhaps even a lawyer. If the NCAA determines that it is a violation, you could lose your eligibility.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

There are a number of federal college scholarship funds and programs, including Pell Grants, low-interest government loans, and Federal Work Study. To apply for these funds, you have to start with the FAFSA.

The FAFSA is basically a family finances questionnaire. Based on your responses, the Department of Education produces a Student Aid Report which includes your *Expected Family Contribution (EFC.)*

This report is made available to you and the colleges to which you apply. Schools use your EFC to determine if you should receive federal financial aid, and the form in which it should be—loans, grants, etc.

For more information, and to complete the FAFSA online, visit:

www.fafsa.ed.gov





PARENTS

Making financial arrangements for college is intimidating for high school students. Parents can be a tremendous help by contacting admissions and financial aid departments and working through the financial aspect.

In your conversations with a school's financial aid people, try to devise a solution to the essential question: **IF MY CHILD REALLY WANTS TO GO TO YOUR SCHOOL, WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?**

The answer may not come easily, but don't tear out your hair. Work towards the answer systematically, with the guidance of the admissions department. Keep in mind that **IF THEY ACCEPT YOUR CHILD, IT'S BECAUSE THEY WANT HER TO ACTUALLY COME TO THEIR SCHOOL.**

Tip for CaptainU Users

Be absolutely sure to take notes on these conversations on your Recruiting Log.

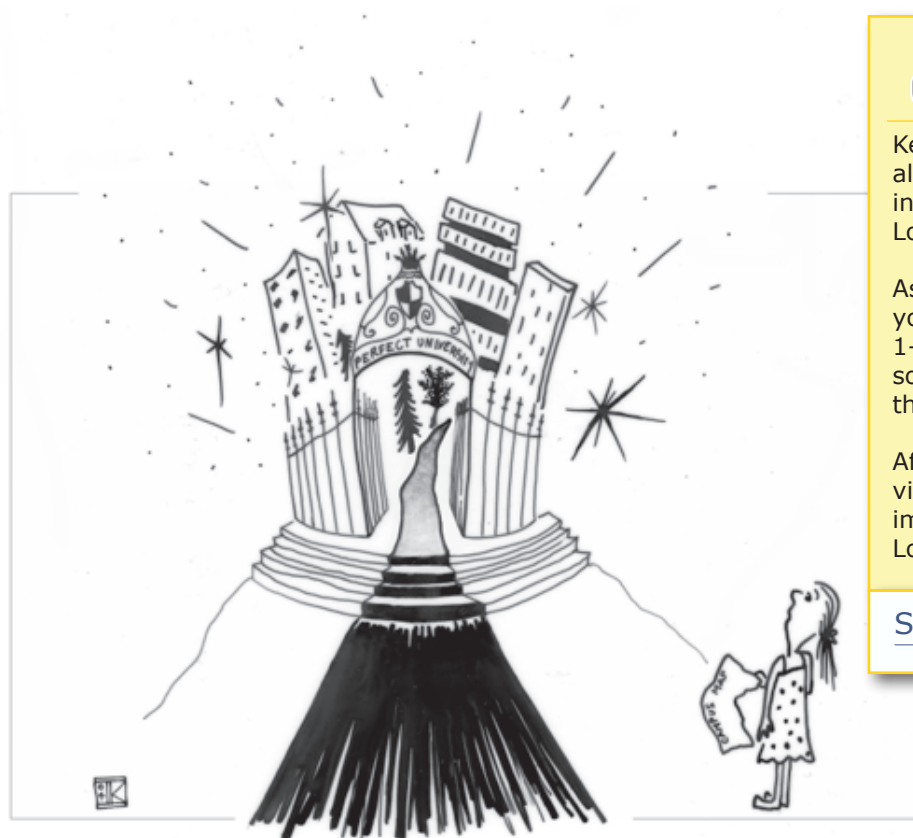
Keeping track of the options at each school is half the battle.

[Sign in](#)



20

CAMPUS VISIT



Tip for CaptainU Users

Keep track of all your visit information on the Log.

As you set up your visit, take 1-sentence notes, so you know where things stand.

After each visit write your impressions in the Log as well.

[Sign in](#)



A campus visit is an essential component of determining which college is right for you. **It is your opportunity to get a sense of the school and the team first-hand.** Going on a campus visit -- especially if it's unofficial -- is a great CaptainU Recruiting move because it proves to the coach that you're serious about his team.

If you do a good job promoting yourself to college coaches, they'll ask you to come visit. **If they don't ask, you should volunteer.** Let coaches know that you'd like to come see the place.

It's better to visit once the coach has a pretty clear sense of you personally and as an athlete, so the best time for most recruits is during the fall of your senior year—once you're well into the CaptainU Recruiting process and are poised to actually apply.

If your schedule demands that you visit before he has seen you play, it's not the end of the world. At the very least, before you start making major travel plans, the coach should have your cover letter and profile. You should also gauge his interest.

Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the free CaptainU College Choice Calculator to evaluate each college and figure out which ones are really right for you.

Click [here](#) to download the calculator.

[Sign in](#)



VISIT YOUR TOP SCHOOLS

Unless you're willing to shuttle all over the place, visiting your original list of ten colleges will probably not be feasible.

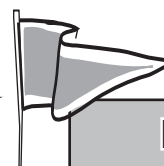
By now, you should have cut your list down to five or six top choices. If not, **before you break the bank visiting them all, evaluate each school and try to narrow the field.** Look over your notes and review your impressions. Assess the quality of feedback you've received from each school.

Visit the candidate schools that you determine are best suited for you. Don't be afraid to let a few of the less appealing schools fall by the wayside.

OFFICIAL VISITS

If you've promoted yourself well, you'll be asked to come on an *official visit* during the fall of your senior year. Such visits are paid for by the team—**meals, admissions to campus athletic events, and transportation may be paid out of team funds.**

With the exception of top recruits at top Division I teams, it's unlikely that the team will pay your travel expenses. Teams' budgets are already stretched thin. So don't worry if a coach doesn't offer to pay for your transportation. You should be willing to get yourself there.



NO ATTENTION

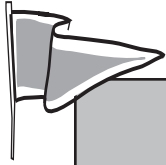
If at this late stage in the process a coach is still not responding, you should assess your odds with that team.

Then again, if you're determined to make a college team, you can't fold at the slightest sign of adversity. Who knows, a coach may just be disorganized, overwhelmed with work, or even bluffing a bit to see how committed you really are.

If you still want to play at a school where you haven't received much of a response, don't write it off before you've had an honest discussion with the coach.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO PRESS THE COACH FOR AN EXPLANATION. Does he think you're qualified for his team? If the answers to these questions are not favorable, move on and concentrate on your remaining candidate schools.





THE RULES OF VISITING

Strict NCAA guidelines govern official visits. You should familiarize yourself with the rules before making any visiting commitments. A few of the most important rules are listed below. The *NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete* describes the rules in greater detail.

- Recruits are **LIMITED TO 5 OFFICIAL VISITS**.
- Only **1 OFFICIAL VISIT** may be made **AT EACH SCHOOL**.
- Official visits may **ONLY OCCUR DURING A RECRUIT'S SENIOR YEAR** of high school.

UNOFFICIAL VISITS

Before your senior year, all visits are unofficial. You must pay all of your expenses, including travel, meals, and admissions to athletic events. These visits are great to do during the spring of your junior year to get a feel for a campus. **You may make as many unofficial visits to a campus as you like.**

Unofficial visits may not be as glamorous as official visits, but they are no less important. Going on an unofficial visit is a great way to convince a coach that you're really serious about his team. **You should still coordinate your visit with the coach, even though it's not official.** He'll be able to help you arrange to stay overnight with one of the players, which is one of the most important things to do while you're there.

UNANNOUNCED VISITS

Your visit might also be entirely different from two planned scenarios described above. You might take a whirlwind 20-day, 16-state college trip during the summer, when no one is on campus.

Whatever the circumstances, **e-mail or call in advance to arrange to meet the coach while you're on campus.** If for some reason you can't give advanced warning, find the coach's office and knock on the door.



ON CAMPUS AT LONG LAST

You may arrive for your visit and find an schedule waiting for you. Don't be freaked out if you aren't given a hero's welcome. Some coaches roll out the red carpet for recruits. Others require you to be more self-sufficient. Face it, there are also some coaches who just aren't organized well enough to put together a detailed schedule for you.

Some coaches provide transportation to and from the airport. Make airport pick-up arrangements before your trip, so you don't have to spend the night on the baggage carousel.

While you're on campus, keep in mind that **this is an opportunity for you to evaluate the school and the team**. You have a lot of say in this decision. As much as you're trying to win the coach over, so too must his school and team prove that they're right for you. If you don't like a college, **you don't have to go there just because the coach wants you to come**.

Most importantly, **recognize that this is your potential team for the next four years**. Do you like what you see in terms of style, quality of play and instruction, the team's attitude on the field, as well as the social dynamic?

There are many components to a successful visit. Whether or not an itinerary has been made for your visit, while you're on campus you should meet with the coach, watch a game or practice, and stay overnight with a player.

Meet With The Coach

There's no substitute for a face-to-face discussion with the coach. Arrange a time during your stay to drop by his office for a chat.

As with the phone calls described in Chapters 11 and 18, prepare yourself with questions you want to ask. Don't feel like you have to start the conversation with the tough questions about where you stand.

Instead, be prepared to start with a normal conversation about your stay, your current high school team, whatever. Most coaches want to get a sense of you on a personal level—as you should of them.



PARENTS

If you visit with your kid, **DON'T DOMINATE THE CONVERSATION WITH THE COACH**. It's fine to contribute, but don't monopolize the conversation.

If your kid is quiet, ask some questions that will provoke his input and get him involved in the conversation.



Steer the conversation towards where you stand in the coach's recruiting class. Be persistent without being aggressive by asking something to the effect of, *"Honestly, where do you feel I can fit in with your team?"* This question gets to the heart of the matter without being confrontational. It's a question you have to ask because if you don't, you won't be clear on your status.

Build on earlier conversations you had regarding your standing—for example, *"I know that you've said that you would bring me onto the pre-season roster. Do you think that I can be a significant contributor as a freshman?"* **Try to leave his office with a clear sense of what your role will be with the team.**

See A Game

When planning a campus visit, check out the team's schedule. If possible, **schedule your visit to coincide with a home game, so you can get an idea of what it's really like to be on the team at that school.**

Take in the whole experience. Is there a crowd? What's the overall vibe? Watch the game closely as well. The coach may ask for your impressions afterwards!

- What players impress you? Are you eager to play with anyone in particular?
- Do you think your play will fit well with the team, in terms of talent and style?
- Do you like the way the coach interacts with his players, opponents, and referees?

Watch Practice

Going to a practice can be as valuable as watching a game. If you schedule your visit for a couple of days that include a game, you'll probably be able to watch practice as well. During practice, pay attention and imagine yourself participating.

- Are the drills useful? Enjoyable?
- Is the team enthusiastic about practicing? Do they work hard? Do they have fun?
- How well is practice organized? Does practice have a theme, or does it just go from one drill to the next?
- How does the coach give instructions? Is he positive and encouraging or negative and belittling?



Stay Overnight With A Player

Staying overnight with a player on the team is a great experience. It will show you what the college itself is really like, shed light on the social dynamics of the team, and give you insights on the players' true feelings for their coach. It's also just downright fun.

Staying with a player will **give you a sense of what college life is like and what the players do "off the field."** Ask questions of as many players as possible.

Find out how they balance schoolwork and sports. What do they do on the weekends? Do they live together? Are they in fraternities? Do they only socialize with other athletes?

Ask them about the coach. Do they like playing for him? If they had the opportunity to choose a college team again, would they make the same decision? The players are a great resource for honest answers to all your questions about the school. **In their opinions, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the college and team?**

Finally, if you enjoy your stay and make good personal connections, **get the players' e-mail addresses** so that you can contact them directly if you have any further questions. When you get home, put all of this contact information in your Log.

FOLLOW-UP

Take notes immediately after visiting a school. You may forget some details after a couple of days, so write down your impressions while they are still fresh in your memory.



10/12/10

Just returned from visit to Gondwanaland University. Had an excellent overnight stay with Winford Mizner, a talkative sophomore center fullback - wmizner@gndwnlnd.edu. Met most of the team, all of whom seem very friendly. Team watches movies and plays a lot of whiffle-ball together. I think I could fit in very well.

I really like Coach Pangea. He thinks that I will be able to help the team as a freshman - he thinks I'll get significant playing time, probably on the left wing.

The campus is incredible. Students are always out in the main quad studying, throwing frisbees, etc. It seems like there's a lot going on.

The classes I sat in on were interesting. The economics professor was pretty dull compared to the animated geology professor.

The team's game was a bit disappointing. They didn't play very well and lost 2-1. The quality of practice was much higher - it was clear that these guys are good players. I think it would be a good setting for me as a player.



Thank The Coach

Send a thank you e-mail to the coach. Let him know that you enjoyed your visit, staying with the team, and watching the match.

Thank the coach for taking the time to meet with you. If you forgot to ask him a question during your meeting, ask now. Finally, let him know that you're excited about moving forward with the recruiting and application process.



To: thenicki@estrn.edu
From: Thaddeus Finneran <thadd@olivebranch.com>
Date: September 30, 2010
Subj: Great Visit to Eastern

Dear Coach Hodnicki,

Thanks for helping me set up my visit to Eastern this past weekend. The result for the team on Saturday was unfortunate, but I enjoyed watching them nonetheless. Waylon was a great host. We had a great time on campus and downtown on Saturday night.

I'm glad that you and I had the opportunity to meet in your office. The meeting shed much light on the cross country program and what it's like to be a student-athlete at Eastern. I have a quick question that I meant to ask during the meeting:

How are professors about accommodating athletics-related absences? In other words, if I miss an assignment or a test because I'm on the road with the team, will I be able to make it up? Or will I be penalized?

Overall, the visit really strengthened the case for Eastern. Having been there now, I'm almost certain that it will be a great fit. I hope you had an equally favorable impression of my stay.

I'll be in touch soon,
Thaddeus Finneran

Thank Your Host

You should also send a thank you e-mail to the player who hosted you. Let him know that you really appreciate him having taken the time to show you around campus and introduce you to the team. **Your host is a great connection to have in case you have additional questions down the road that you want to ask a player.**

More importantly, your host could be your teammate in the near future. Now is a great time to start building a new friendship. That way you'll know someone when you arrive on campus.





To: waylon@estrn.edu
From: Thaddeus Finneran <thadd@olivebranch.com>
Date: September 30, 2010
Subj: Eastern Visit

Waylon,

I just wanted to drop you an e-mail and say thanks for hosting me this weekend. As you warned, the couch was small, but comfortable enough! I had a great time seeing the city and watching the street performances downtown on Saturday night. Thanks for getting the team together so I could meet everyone.

I know you were disappointed with the meet on Saturday. For what it's worth, I thought the team was really great. I would love to be out there with you next year.

Thanks again for hosting me.

Thadd

FAQ

What if I decide at some point during the recruiting process that a given school or team is not right for me? How do I bow out gracefully?

After extended, favorable contact with a coach, you might visit a school only to discover that it has all the appeal of a medieval dungeon.

BE DECISIVE BUT CONSIDERATE IF YOU DECIDE THAT YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED. Let the coach know. You don't have to make a hullabaloo over it, or explain in depth what you didn't like. Write a quick e-mail, explaining that after further consideration, you've decided the school does not represent an appropriate choice for you. Thank him for his time and wish him well. Move on.



APPLICATIONS & ADMISSIONS



Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the College Profiles to get coaches' phone numbers. Then call and tell them that you're going to apply.

After each call, add a note to your Log describing your conversation.

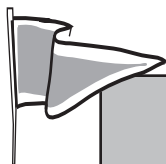
[Sign in](#)



Once you've decided to apply to a college, call the coach immediately and let him know your intentions. Show that you are very excited.

Few college coaches can simply snap their fingers and have a recruit accepted. However, **coaches who are effective recruiters have strong ties with the college admissions office.**

The arrangements are different for each school, but most colleges have a system where **coaches identify and prioritize their recruits for the admissions department**. The coach might also write a blurb about each recruit and indicate his expectations of the player.



TYPICAL ADMISSIONS DESIGNATIONS

- Blue Chip—An immediate impact player.
- Will contribute as a freshman.
- Can contribute within a few years.
- Likely walk-on.
- Long-shot—Athletically, a real stretch.

Keep coaches updated on your application progress. Drop the coach an e-mail to tell him that you stayed up until midnight the night before putting the finishing touches on your essay. Tell him that you took the SATs again and scored fifty points higher. Let him know if you're going to apply *Early Decision*.

When you finally send in your application, e-mail the coach immediately so he has a written record of it. Also remind him of your conversations regarding admissions—i.e. *“I know you said that you can't guarantee admission but that you would strongly endorse my application—at this point, what does that exactly consist of? I really appreciate any help you can offer.”*

If you've been diligent about promoting yourself throughout the recruiting process, you will be in a position where the coach will support your application.

FAQ

I've heard that being recruited to play sports at a college guarantees admission to that school. Will my athletic ability allow me to get around the school's academic standards?

Being a recruited athlete rarely opens the admissions door if you don't measure up academically. If a coach knows that your academic record is sub-par, it's unlikely that he'll make a stand for you with admissions.

Coaches know that standing up for academically unqualified recruits usually fails. It also weakens the coach's credibility with the admissions department. An admissions department will be apprehensive of a coach who brings academically unqualified recruits to the table.



INDICATE YOUR TOP CHOICE

If the coach at your favorite college wants you on his team, **a powerful way to strengthen your application is to let him know that his school is your top choice.** He will pass that information on to the admissions department.

The blurb he writes about you for the admissions department might say something to the effect of, *“Kyle will definitely come if he is admitted.”* A phrase like that pleases admissions officers, who are always aware of how many accepted students actually enroll.



WARNING!

Do not go telling every coach that his school is your first choice. Honesty and integrity are essential.

EARLY DECISION

Binding Early Decision applications have grown in popularity in recent years. Early Decision candidates apply to only one school during the early fall of their senior year. Acceptance letters are sent out in November or December. **If accepted, Early Decision applicants are *required* to attend.** If denied, they still have time to apply elsewhere.

Not only does Early Decision seem to increase the probability of acceptance, it also guarantees that the applicant will enroll. **To a coach, this means that once a player is accepted through Early Decision, recruiting of that player is complete.** The coach doesn't have to make the argument that his college is superior to the six other schools who accepted the player.

In some circles Early Decision is a controversial topic. Its opponents argue that it puts too much pressure on applicants. Its advocates insist that it simplifies the college selection process for applicants and allows admissions departments to hand-select their students.

Early Decision is a reality whether or not you agree with it philosophically. Its proliferation has not been lost on college coaches, who are always laboring to have their top recruits admitted and signed as quickly as possible. Many coaches now rely heavily on Early Decision to help them handpick their recruiting classes.

Think It Over Carefully

If you've played your recruiting hand well and a coach asks you to apply early, **recognize the seriousness of the decision.** Don't let such a request go to your head and make you irrational. Sit down and reason through it.

Thoroughly outline the pros and cons of the school and its sports program. Discuss the situation at length with your parents and teachers. If you decide that Early Decision is the right choice, by all means, go for it.

If you choose to apply Early Decision, you and your parents should **discuss with the coach what guarantee you have of a place on the team** should you be accepted. Consider requesting something in writing that says that if accepted, you will also be offered a place on the team.

STANDARD DECISION

If you are torn between a few schools, don't feel that you have to apply Early Decision. Go with standard, non-binding applications.

A coach may pressure you to apply early. If you aren't convinced that his school is *exactly* what you want, don't bow to the pressure. A coach's primary concern is to finalize his recruiting class. Your primary concern is to find the school that best fits your needs. **If you prefer to keep your options open, apply under standard, non-binding terms.**



ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY



Tip for CaptainU Users

Post your academic Transcript on your Profile so college coaches can see that you have been taking the right classes and will be eligible.

[Sign in](#)



The NCAA carefully evaluates student-athletes' academic eligibility. Approval from the NCAA Eligibility Center is required for all Division I and Division II athletes.

Prospective DI and DII players don't have to contact the Eligibility Center until the fall of their senior year. As a sophomore or junior, however, you, your parents, and your guidance counselor should sit down and **assess your high school curriculum to make sure that you will satisfy the Eligibility Center's core course requirements.**

It all sounds very complicated, but the good news is that the graduation requirements of most high schools usually satisfy the requirements of the Eligibility Center. To be sure, however, you should discuss this with your guidance counselor.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The NCAA Eligibility Center bases academic eligibility on your high school coursework, grades, and standardized test scores. The general requirements for Division I are outlined below. Division II requirements are slightly different. Consult official Eligibility Center literature for more specifics.

DIVISION I REQUIREMENTS

1. YOU MUST GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL:

You must have a *core course* GPA of at least 2.0. Furthermore, to be eligible you must have SAT and ACT scores that correlate with your GPA, based on the NCAA's GPA/Test Score Index.

The GPA/Test Score Index basically says that given your GPA, your test scores must be at a certain level. So if you have a 2.0, you need at least a 1010 SAT to be eligible. By comparison, if you have a 3.5 GPA, all you need is a 400 SAT!

In determining your composite SAT score, the Eligibility Center accepts your best section scores. So if you take the SAT on multiple occasions, **THE ELIGIBILITY CENTER WILL USE YOUR BEST VERBAL SCORE AND YOUR BEST MATH SCORE.**

2. YOU MUST COMPLETE 16 CORE COURSES:

ENGLISH	Language/literature	4 years
MATH	Algebra I or higher	3 years
SCIENCE	Natural/physical plus lab if offered	2 years
ADDITIONAL	English, math, or science	1 year
SOCIAL SCIENCE	History, economics, or government	2 years
ADDITIONAL	Any above area or language, religion, or philosophy	4 years



NCAA ELIGIBILITY TIMING

Early in your high school career make sure that you will fulfill the core course requirements.

During the fall of your senior year, about the time you begin working on your college applications, you must submit an *Initial Eligibility* form to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Submit the designated documents from the form to your high school, which must send your transcript directly to the Eligibility Center.

After your senior year, submit a *Final Eligibility* form, which proves to the NCAA that you graduated.

GET THE FORMS!

Academic eligibility forms can be downloaded from the Eligibility Center website:

<https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter>

You can also request these materials in hard-copy by calling the NCAA:

(877) 262-1492

DIVISION III ELIGIBILITY

NCAA Division III athletes do not have to register with the Eligibility Center. **This does not mean that Division III schools are lenient about academics.**

All NCAA student-athletes, regardless of division, are required to meet a set of academic requirements. The difference with Division III is that the eligibility standards are not universal.

Division III conferences and colleges set their own academic standards. In many cases these standards are actually higher than those of the Eligibility Center. Check with individual schools for more details.



NAIA ELIGIBILITY

The NAIA is separate from the NCAA and has no eligibility center. Its eligibility requirements, however, are not so different from those of the NCAA. To play in the NAIA you must graduate from high school and meet certain academic standards.

NAIA REQUIREMENTS MUST MEET 2 OUT OF 3

1. STANDARDIZED TEST MINIMUM:

You must achieve at least an 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT. Scores must be achieved on a single test. You can't use your best verbal score from one test and your best math score from another.

2. MINIMUM GPA:

Your overall high school GPA must be at least 2.0.

3. CLASS RANK:

You must rank in the top half of your high school graduating class.

More details regarding NAIA eligibility are available at: <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/legislative/currentissues/FreshmenEligibilityRequirements.htm>



23

HOW TO DECIDE



Tip for CaptainU Users

Use the free CaptainU College Choice Calculator to objectively rate each school you're considering on a variety of academic and athletic factors. Download it here.

[Sign in](#)



Admissions letters for standard deadline applications will reach you in mid-spring.

When the time comes to choose between the schools to which you've been accepted, **your first consideration should be academics**. Narrow down the field of colleges accordingly.

REEVALUATE THE COLLEGES

Of the schools that accepted you, which cater best to your academic and social needs? Which will be the best for your intellectual and social growth? That, after all, is what college is all about.

Once you've identified the two, three, or four schools which will best suit you academically and socially, reassess their sports programs. Study the notes you have compiled in your file folders. If you've done a good job taking notes, you will have a lot of information at your fingertips.



CALL COACHES TO REPORT THE GOOD NEWS

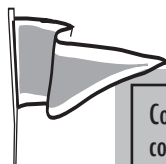
CALL EACH COACH AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF YOUR APPLICATION. Though coaches may have already received word from their admissions offices, some schools prohibit coaches from informing recruits of their application fate.

When you call the coaches, have honest, straightforward discussions. Describe to them in general terms the other offers you have on the table. **ASK EACH COACH FRANKLY IF (AND WHY) HE BELIEVES HIS SCHOOL AND SPORTS PROGRAM ARE YOUR BEST OPTION.**

DETERMINE WHERE YOU NOW STAND ON EACH COACH'S RECRUITING BOARD. If initially you were on the bubble at a particular school, but the top few recruits didn't get in or decided to go elsewhere, you may now find yourself directly in the spotlight. You may have vaulted a few spots higher on the coach's recruiting board.

REEVALUATE THE TEAMS

Think long and hard about the teams you have to choose from. Reassess the coach, players, and quality of play. Peruse the notes you made on your log sheets. Look over the promotional materials coaches sent you—team brochures, newsletters, stat sheets, etc. Skim the letters and e-mails you saved.



Coaching changes can disrupt college athletic careers. In your conversations with a coach, ask him if he intends to stay at the school for the next few years.

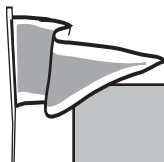




PARENTS

Help your son or daughter make a well-reasoned choice once he or she has been accepted into a few schools. Review the schools by revisiting the early literature you consulted.

Look at the college profile books again, do some in-depth surfing on the colleges' websites, and make a list of pros and cons for each college. Which school stands out above the rest? Present your assessment to your kid.



CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS FOR EACH SCHOOL

- Is the **BALANCE** of athletics and academics right for you?
- Do you like the **OVERALL ENVIRONMENT**—academic, social, athletic, geographic, etc.?
- Does the school offer the right **ACADEMIC MAJOR** for you?
- Have you had a favorable **IMPRESSION OF THE COACH** throughout the recruiting process?
- Do you have a positive **IMPRESSION OF THE TEAM**?
- When you visited, did you **GET ALONG WITH THE PLAYERS**?
- Has the team offered you an **ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP**?
- Has the university offered you **INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID**?
- How soon will you be able to **CONTRIBUTE ON THE FIELD**?
- Did you like the **FACILITIES**?

Tip for CaptainU Users

By now, you'll have a lot of history with each school on your Colleges page.

Read through the emails and notes to remind yourself where things stand with each college team.

[Sign in](#)



THE IMPORTANCE OF A GUARANTEE

As we've said all along, the best outcome of recruiting is to be guaranteed a spot on the team long before you arrive on campus. You haven't done yourself much good if somewhere along the way there is a misunderstanding and you arrive on campus only to find that you have to try out, that you're not assured of anything.

Therefore, the significance of a guarantee cannot be overstated. **It ensures that you will be on the team, and that you don't have to try out when you arrive on campus.** This should weigh heavily on your decision. Don't let your situation be ambiguous.



Tryouts are a real gamble. There are countless circumstances that can tilt the odds against you. For starters, a coach might select only one player from a huge candidate pool; tryouts might only last one afternoon; you might sustain a minor injury that prevents you from participating in tryouts and ends your college career before it begins. Any number of things could go wrong.

You want to avoid the numbers game. So get a clear answer from each coach. **Will he guarantee you a spot on his team?**



WARNING!

Don't try to start a bidding war for your services. The coaching world is small and tight-knit. What you regard as savvy wheeling and dealing may come back to haunt you.

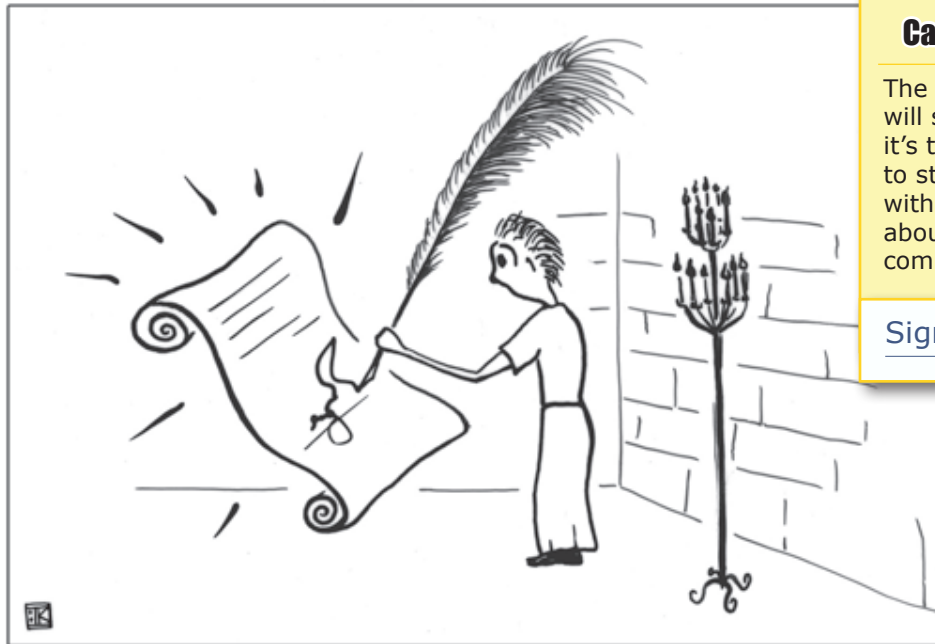
Your efforts to milk a coach for every last dime of scholarship money or a guaranteed starting position—by dangling your offer from another school in front of him—may anger or convince him that you are not the type of person he wants to deal with.

Being on uncomfortable personal terms with the coach is the wrong way to begin your college career.



24

FINALIZING THE DEAL



Tip for CaptainU Users

The Strategy tool will show you when it's the right time to start talking with coaches about making a commitment.

[Sign in](#)



When you have chosen the school that offers the best academic, social, and athletic environment for you, **inform the coach that you are going to enroll**. You don't have to go over the top with it, but show him that you're very excited about your decision.

As for sealing the deal, the procedures for finalizing athletic commitments vary by school and division.

NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT

The *National Letter of Intent* is how athletes commit formally to an NCAA Division I or II college. Depending on your sport, there's a window of time during the year during which you can sign with a team. Players are forbidden from signing with DI or DII schools before the signing window opens.

Find out from the coach and the college what is required of you to formally become part of the team. Are you required to sign the National Letter of Intent?

The National Letter of Intent office can be contacted for answers to questions as well as thorough literature.

(205) 458-3000

www.national-letter.org

VERBAL COMMITMENTS

At some point, a coach may ask you to make a *verbal commitment*—a spoken agreement that you will attend his college and have a spot on the team.

Top recruits at elite Division I schools are often asked to verbally commit before they have even applied. In such situations, the admissions office will often conduct an *early read* of an application to assure the athlete and coach that the recruit will be accepted.

Top Division III and NAIA recruits also may be asked to verbally commit since those schools do not use the National Letter of Intent.

Don't allow yourself to be pressured into making a verbal commitment. If you are asked for such a commitment, **you don't have to respond immediately.** Take a few days to think it over and talk it through with your parents and counselors. You should only verbally commit to a school once you are absolutely certain that the school is right for you.

Technically, verbal commitments are not legally binding; you haven't actually signed anything. Taking back a verbal commitment, however, is considered an act of very bad faith. Typically, college coaching circles are very tight-knit, so you should be careful about hurting your reputation by renegeing on a verbal commitment.

DIVISION III

There is no NCAA-mandated letter of intent for Division III schools.

Often, arrangements are made simply in good faith. In other words, a Division III coach and recruit will often have an understanding that the recruit will be offered a place on the roster. Some DIII teams and/or athletic departments develop their own letters of intent. For other schools, sending in your deposit is enough to secure your place on the team.

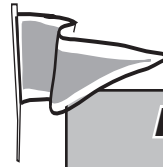


If you've chosen a Division III school, **figure out what needs to be done to finalize the deal.** Discuss the team's signing protocol with the coach.

NAIA

Like the NCAA Division III, the NAIA does not use the National Letter of Intent. The requirements for signing with an NAIA team are decided by the schools themselves.

Similar to Division III players, NAIA recruits should discuss with NAIA coaches the procedure for finalizing a deal.



A GUARANTEE

For schools that don't use the National Letter of Intent, determine what you can obtain from the coach indicating his commitment to you.

Some coaches are willing to draft and sign a document that guarantees you an invitation to pre-season. **As a recruit, you're entitled to such a guarantee.**

Of course, tread lightly. Don't give the coach the impression that you doubt his honesty.

INFORM OTHER COACHES OF YOUR DECISION

Once you've signed the National Letter of Intent or sent in your deposit, as a courtesy, **inform other coaches by e-mail that you have made a commitment to go elsewhere.**



To: pnzotto@timespace.edu
From: Samantha Salamanca <sammysalami@newdeli.com>
Date: May 23, 2012 03:05:08 PST
Subj: College Decision

Dear Coach Pinnizotto,

I'm sorry to inform you that I've decided to attend Flora & Fauna College. In the end, I determined that FFC's academic and social environment is best for me.

It has truly been a pleasure corresponding with you for the last year and a half. I deeply appreciate the interest that you have shown in me.

I hold Intergalactic Space University and your soccer program in the highest esteem. I wish you and your players the best.

Sincerely,

Samantha Salamanca

LETTER TO YOUR COACH

Take care of serious business first: sign with the team of your choice, send in your deposit, and inform the other coaches of your decision. Once you've done all of this and the dust has settled, sit down and write a thoughtful letter or e-mail to your new coach. Thank him for the personal interest he has taken in you, and voice your excitement about the road ahead.



Petra Cantus
The Bazaar College
4 Marketplace Rd.
Souk, GA 43671

May 9, 2002

Dear Coach Cantus,

I am thrilled to be joining your team in the fall. TBC has made such a good impression on me. I can't wait to arrive on campus and play with the team.

Corresponding with you over the last year has been a great experience. I really appreciate all the time and energy you have put into recruiting me. All the e-mails and phone calls have provided us with a good foundation; I think you have a pretty good sense of me as a person. Now I really look forward to working with you on the field.

I had a great time with the girls when I visited back in the fall. Please let them know that I am coming and that I can't wait to play with them.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, looped 'O' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ophelia



WALK-ON TRYOUTS: THE LAST RESORT



Tip for CaptainU Users

Continue to use the Mail tool on a regular basis throughout the summer before you go to school. Email the coach every couple weeks.

[Sign in](#)



The situation may arise where the coach at the school you've decided to attend won't guarantee you a spot on the team.

You're undeterred—you've decided to attend because you love the school, the students, and especially the Organic Chemistry Department. Still, you really want to make the team at that college.

This predicament is not ideal, but not hopeless. **Most college teams hold walk-on tryouts, which are one last opportunity for non-recruits to make the team.**

Unfortunately, there are a lot of stories in which excellent players spend the summer working hard, preparing themselves for walk-on tryouts. Then, when they arrive at tryouts, they find themselves among a multitude of hopefuls. The 35-player tryout lasts one hour, after which the coach cuts 34 people.

You want to minimize the probability of this scenario—or at least solidify your chances of being the chosen one.

CORRESPONDENCE IS KEY

Just because a coach doesn't offer you a recruited spot on his team, doesn't mean you can't continue to correspond with him.

Correspondence for walk-ons is absolutely critical. In no uncertain terms, **state to the coach that you're committed to making the team.**

Maintain regular contact with the coach throughout the spring of your senior year and during the summer after you graduate. Be in touch every few weeks to let him know that you're eager to prove yourself.

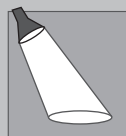
Keep him posted on your preparations. Inform him, for example, that you've discovered a regular pick-up game with local college players. In addition to playing four days a week, you're lifting weights on a regular basis, and following the team's summer training program to the letter.

In preparing yourself for tryouts, **equip yourself with as much knowledge of the process as possible.** Find out from the coach exactly how tryouts will be organized, and what kind of timeframe you have in which to prove yourself.

ON-FIELD APPEARANCES

Say it's the summer before you go to college and the coach at the school you've chosen, for whatever reason, still hasn't seen you play. Maybe you started the recruiting process during the winter of your senior year.

College coaches are recruiting machines during the summer. Many coaches travel extensively to camps and tournaments.



WALK-ONS DEFINED

The term "walk-on" gets used pretty loosely and, unfortunately at times, disparagingly. Walk-ons are non-recruited **PLAYERS WHO GET ONTO COLLEGIATE TEAMS BY TRYING OUT WHEN THEY ARRIVE ON CAMPUS.** By contrast, recruited players are on the roster without trying out.

Walk-on tryouts are a no-less legitimate way of getting onto a team. Being a walk-on may lack the glitz of being a recruited player. Yet there have been All-Americans who walked on.



Try to attend a summer camp that the coach plans to work. (See Chapter 16.) If he likes your play, you will have dramatically improved your chances of walking on. He might even bring you into the fold without a tryout.

If you can't go to a camp where the coach will be, try to arrange for him to see you at a tournament. Ask him what tournaments he plans to attend during the summer. If your team's travel plans are completely different, consider *guest playing* with a team that is going to one of those tournaments.

SUMMER TRAINING

When you arrive on campus as a walk-on, you will have to prove yourself. A strict summer fitness and playing regimen will prepare you mentally and physically.

Some coaches voluntarily distribute summer fitness programs to walk-on candidates. **If you don't get a fitness plan automatically, e-mail the coach and request one.** (See Chapter 26.)

ARRIVE FOR TRYOUTS EARLY

Visit the coach in his office a day or two before tryouts. Describe your summer training program and state clearly that you are determined to make the team. Ask if you can observe pre-season practices.

On the day of tryouts, **arrive 20-30 minutes before they start.** It's unfair, but coaches often don't provide a formal or adequate warm-up during walk-on tryouts. Give yourself time to warm up and stretch—get comfortable and work the butterflies out of your system. **When tryouts start, breathe deeply and don't worry about little mistakes.**



PART VII

THE FINAL PUSH

Once you've inked a deal with a team and enrolled in the college, blow-up some balloons and celebrate. The real work, however, has just begun.

26

SUMMER PREPARATIONS



After you've been invited to join a team, the best thing you can do is **prepare yourself for the rigors and intensity of college sports**. At this point you've put a lot of work into CaptainU Recruiting. Don't blow your opportunity by being a couch potato.

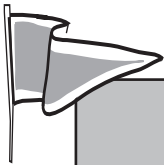
GET FIT

Almost every serious college team has a summer fitness plan. Most coaches require your participation in their program. During pre-season it doesn't take much to see who didn't follow the workout plan.

When you commit to a school, make sure the coach has your correct address so he can send you a fitness manual as soon as it's available.

Pre-season is surprisingly short; before you know it the first game is upon you. **Arriving to pre-season in shape is essential.** Even if you were the top recruit, your status will evaporate quickly if you show up unprepared and out of shape.

Though training itself is outside the scope of this book, the following pointers will help you get through the dog days of summer.



SUMMER FITNESS WORK

GET A PARTNER

It's infinitely easier to motivate yourself to run ladders and such if you have a partner. If possible, work with one of your college teammates-to-be. Otherwise, train with a friend who's going to play elsewhere or a teammate who has another year of high school.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Find a consistent time and place to do your workouts. Expect to meet your partner the same time each day at an appointed location.

FIND GAMES

Sometimes it takes a lot of effort to find regular action during the summer. Arrange to train with a club team or scope out the local pick-up scene. Get yourself regular action so that your skills are honed when you arrive for pre-season.

IMPROVE YOUR TECHNIQUE College players are more skilled than the average high school player. Go out to the park by yourself and get some extra practice.

PAPERWORK

Make sure you understand what forms need to be completed so that you can play as soon as you arrive on campus. This may include academic eligibility forms and a physical exam by your doctor.

STANDARD PAPERWORK

HEALTH EXAMS

Each school has its own policy regarding physical examinations. Most schools won't let you to participate in athletics until you have had a physical. If you're required to see your own doctor, schedule an appointment early in the summer. You don't want to be scrambling for an appointment shortly before you are expected on campus.

CLEARINGHOUSE

Once you've graduated, submit the Final Eligibility Form to the NCAA Clearinghouse. This proof of graduation will ensure that you are eligible when you arrive on campus.

CONTINUED CORRESPONDENCE

Continue to correspond with your coach through the spring and summer leading up to your freshman season. Let him know how your preparations are going. E-mail him your times on runs and describe the quality of the games you're playing. Give him confidence that you are ready to be a college athlete.