

Recruiting Tip: The top five college recruiting tips of all time

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The college recruiting process is a complicated, time-consuming and sometimes confusing endeavor. The first time you go through the recruiting process is (probably) the only time you will go through the process, so you will have many questions. Everyone's recruiting journey is different, but most recruits face similar issues and challenges. Here are my top five tips that should make the process easier.

1. Start the Recruiting Process early

If you wait to start the college recruiting process the summer after your junior year in high school, you will be in "panic mode" your entire senior year. It's never too early to start thinking about where you would like to play, and which colleges are the most appropriate for you. In today's competitive recruiting environment, athletes are committing to colleges as early as the seventh grade. Don't wait until the fourth quarter to decide to kick it in gear!

2. NCAA Division I is not the only option

High school athletes need to understand that NCAA Division I is not the only or even the best option. You can find an athletic scholarship in most sports at the NCAA Division II, NAIA and junior college levels. These schools offer a quality education, an opportunity for a high school athlete to continue his or her athletic career and a scholarship to help cover the costs. Don't rule out NCAA Division III schools, either. Although these schools don't offer athletic scholarships, they do offer grants, loans and other financial aid, and the athletic department generally can be a big help in finding sources of money to help with the cost of tuition.

3. Don't rely on someone else to find your scholarship

Be the driver, not the passenger in your college recruiting journey. If you rely on someone else to find your scholarship, you may not like the result. While college coaches like hearing from your current coach endorsing your abilities, ultimately, being in contact with college coaches is your responsibility. If you want that scholarship, you need to be the primary contact for the college coaches. They love to see athletes taking initiative to reach out to them. It makes their job easier!

4. Academics Matter

Parents and students often don't understand the importance of academics in the college recruiting process and the emphasis that college athletic programs place on grades. Good grades and high standardized test scores make a student much more attractive to a college coach. Here is a simple formula: ATHLETICS + ACADEMICS = COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

5. Develop a game plan and be persistent

The best advice I can give any recruit is to develop a recruiting game plan and be persistent. Developing a game plan is really not that hard: (1) identify realistic colleges, (2) get your coach involved as a reference, and (3) reach out to the schools on your list. If you follow this game plan and invest a few minutes a day, three times a week, you will find your college scholarship.

Being persistent means contacting multiple realistic schools, multiple times. You have to understand that your initial contact with a coach is an introduction and you aren't going to land a roster spot with one email. Be prepared to hear nothing from many of the schools you contact, but don't take it personally.

Here's the deal

The recruiting process can be a fun, exciting and enjoyable journey as long as you are prepared, work hard and have realistic expectations.