

Recruiting 101

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NCAA Divisions (Div I)

- 352 Div I schools
 - Different tiering: not all schools are playing at championship weekend
- Eligibility requirements: Set by NCAA
- Scholarships: Yes
 - Vast majority of athletes receive partial scholarships
 - Usually 25% - 50% scholarships
- Workload: eat, breathe, live lacrosse
 - 40+ hours per week (does not include classes)
 - Year round commitment

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NCAA Divisions (Div II)

- 313 Div II schools
 - Different tiering: not all schools are playing at championship weekend
 - Multiple schools are competitive in their conferences
- Eligibility requirements: Set by NCAA
- Scholarships: Yes
 - Vast majority of athletes receive partial scholarships
 - Usually 25% - 50% scholarships
- Workload: more balanced experience
 - 20-40 hours per week (does not include classes)

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NCAA Divisions (Div III)

- 442 Div III schools
 - Different tiering: not all schools are playing at championship weekend
 - Multiple schools are competitive in their conferences
- Eligibility requirements: Set by the school
- Scholarships: No
 - Though most schools have generous aid packages
- Workload: well-rounded experience
 - 20+ hours per week (does not include classes)

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NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)

- 250 NAIA schools
 - Predominantly private smaller schools
- Scholarships: Yes
- Workload: well-rounded experience
 - 20+ hours per week (does not include classes)
 - Depending on school, it may be like participating in a Div II or III school

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Recruiting Process (coach's perspective)

1. Gather a list of prospective athletes
2. Send out recruiting letters, questionnaires, camp invites
 - Div I & II coaches cannot contact athletes before September of their rising junior year
3. Conduct evaluations
4. Extend verbal offers and scholarships
5. Sign athletes

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How to Navigate the Recruiting Process

1. Gather a list of prospective colleges/programs
 - Make sure your high school coach and/or club coach knows you are interested in playing in college
 - Start paring down a list of colleges that might be a good fit for you (academically, athletically, financially, etc)
 - Start collecting game film for highlight videos
 - Establish a profile on a third party recruiting service, not necessary but could help
 - Email potential college coaches of your interest in their program
 - Make sure those programs know of your game schedules (both high school and club)

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How to Navigate the Recruiting Process

2. Understand your skill level
 - Athletes need to understand where they “rank” in their year group
 - Can get this information via their high school / club coach or third party “coaching” sessions
 - Example: The high school coach has identified your son’s skill level more in line with a Div III program. NOTE: Like searching for college’s, athlete’s can still have their “wish list” programs they’d like to shoot for but not create unrealistic expectations

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How to Navigate the Recruiting Process

3. Incoming communications from coaches/programs

- Coaches start to narrow down their lists of candidates
- Athletes need to think about the academic requirements are for the schools they're thinking about
 - Coaches have enough to worry about without having to worry about your son's grades
- Communications with coaches should be succinct and informative
 - These communications are like job interviews.
 - A 4 step process: **introductory email to coach, follow-up call to the coach (Div III), respond to recruiting letters from coaches (Div III)**, keep in touch with coaches and update them on new stats
 - The program should be a good fit for the athlete. What's the culture like? Can you talk to some of the other players (prospect days/camps usually is a great opportunity for this)?

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How to Navigate the Recruiting Process

4. Coaches conduct evaluations

- Starts with a large pool of players
- Gets whittled down via highlight videos, evaluations, and contact with the athlete (and parents!)
 - Parents get "evaluated" as well. Will coaches want to deal with overbearing parents?
- Remember that communications with coaches should be succinct and informative
- Managing social media is important!!! Coaches will look at it!
 - Social media needs to be "cleansed"

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How to Navigate the Recruiting Process

5. Verbal offers and scholarships

- Coaches narrow down their “picks”
 - Coaches have a “board” with their top picks (almost like draft day)
- Remember: With Div I & II contact restrictions, there is a natural pecking order. Usually, Div II will make offers after Div I rosters are complete.

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Letter to a coach

- 1. Address the coach:** Be sure to include “Coach” before a coach’s name in the greeting. Instead of just saying “Hi, Mike,” address them as “Coach Mike.”
- 2. Introduce yourself:** Who are you? Where are you from? What do you want?
- 3. Express why you’re interested in the program:** Find something that stands out to you about the school or team (prove you did your research!)
- 4. Provide key athletic and academic info:** Coaches need to know this information upfront for eligibility purposes and to see whether you fit their recruiting needs.

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Communications with a coach

- If you are interested in a program, you can:
 - Fill out online questionnaires: Completing these forms shows your commitment to being recruited.
 - Give them a call: If you already have a connection with the coach, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and keep the conversation going. Just make sure you have a purpose and some questions prepared.
 - Send a text: Keep your name on their radar with a thoughtful text message. Make sure it's sent at an appropriate time and has a genuine reason, like congratulating them on a recent game.
 - Stay active on social media: Follow the coach and their team on platforms like X (Twitter) and Instagram. Engage with their posts by liking, sharing and commenting on anything related to their program.
 - Show face: Try to attend camps, showcases or nearby games if possible. Face-to-face interactions can leave a strong impression on coaches, and it's hard to deny someone's interest when they show up!
- Do not “ghost” programs you are not interested in
 - Not polite...and coaches tend to have extensive networks (yes, they do talk to each other) and this will reflect negatively on you
 - Be honest / Express appreciation for their offer/interest / give a short explanation for your decision

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FAQs

- How soon should I start the recruiting process?
 - Can't hurt to get started freshman year. Most schools are not recruiting that early but the more information you have out there the better
- When should my son attend prospect camps and showcases?
 - Not really necessary until rising junior year but might be beneficial to gain a sense of what it's like in earlier years
 - Remember: most schools are not actively recruiting your son's year group until their sophomore year (eg camps and prospect days are a money-making opportunity for coaches!)
- My son's skill level has been identified as being more in line with a Div II or III school but wants to play for a Div I school. Will this work?
 - In general, most kids in this situation may make the team but may not see much playing time. This possibility is even increased with the changes to the transfer portals. Kids should have realistic expectations!

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FAQs

- When can Div I and II schools start to contact athletes?
 - September 1 of Junior year
- General timelines for athlete actions
 - Rising Freshmen: Team up with your parents, high school/club coach or guidance counselor to identify target schools and the right division level. Start filling out online questionnaires at these schools to express your interest in being recruited.
 - Rising Sophomores: Now's the time to gather information about the colleges you're eyeing. Once you feel confident that your grades and skills make you a strong prospect for that school, you can send introductory emails.

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FAQs

- When can Div I and II schools start to contact athletes?
 - September 1 of Junior year
- General timelines for athlete actions
 - Rising Juniors: This is a pivotal year for coach communication, especially for D1 and D2 schools as they can now contact you directly. Continue to send introductory emails to your top schools and start preparing for coach phone calls by having a list of questions and answers ready to go.
 - Rising Seniors: At this stage, you should have already established connections with your target schools. Focus on nurturing these relationships through phone calls, texting, and social media as you receive offers and make your final decision.

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