

When should the recruiting process start?

The NCAA defines "prospect" as a student-athlete who has started classes for the ninth grade. An institution may not provide recruiting materials to a prospect until September 1 at the **beginning** of the prospect's junior year in high school. In all sports other than basketball, ice hockey and Division I-A and I-AA football, a college coach may not telephone prospects until July 1 **following** the prospect's junior year in high school.

Good college recruiters plan several years in advance by compiling a recruiting list of prospective recruits. The coaches then try to keep track of the prospect's progress throughout high school. It is imperative for student-athletes to get on the coaches list as early as possible.

In most sports, college coaches begin to add prospects to their list as early as freshmen in high school if there is something that impresses them about a prospect. Due to physical immaturity however, many high school freshmen and sophomores go unnoticed by college coaches. There are a lot of "late bloomers" who don't get noticed until it is too late.

When parents and their student-athlete try to initiate the recruiting process themselves, they are in a no win situation. If they don't send the student-athlete's information out to college coaches, they won't get noticed by coaches, yet if they do send it, the college coaches can feel as though they are being chased. College coaches are interested in a student-athlete's stats and their progression throughout high school. However the two most important pieces information that college coaches in most sports use to judge a prospect is a letter of recommendation from a professional and video.

American College Connection with the help of our Directors, gets a student-athlete exposure to college coaches that is just not possible by any other means.

Eligibility

To be academically eligible to participate in collegiate athletics a student-athlete must meet certain requirements coming out of high school. These requirements are a combination of *Grade Point Average* in core courses and *SAT* or *ACT* scores and vary with each level (Divisions I, II, III, NAIA and junior college). The high school counselor should have a list of the requirements.

Grades are important! The first question college coaches ask about a potential recruit is how are the grades? It doesn't matter how athletically talented a student-athlete is, if they cannot meet the academic demands in college they will not be eligible to compete in athletics. By recruiting a talented athlete who cannot stay eligible, the college coach not only wastes their time and scholarship money, but they also will lose out on another recruit who could have played for them for four years.

SAT- for NCAA purposes, the highest scores achieved on the verbal and math sections of the SAT from two different national testing dates may be combined in determining whether the student-athlete has met the minimum test-score requirements.

ACT- for NCAA purposes, the highest scores achieved on the individual subtests from more than one national testing date may be combined in determining whether a student-athlete's sum score meets the minimum test-score requirements.

It is a good idea to take the SAT/ACT more than once. It is recommended that you take your test(s) near the end of your junior year and once or twice early in your senior year if necessary. Don't wait until your senior year to begin.

Questions for the College Coach

The following questions are taken directly from the American College Connection student-athlete handbook.

ACADEMICS

1. What emphasis does the coach place on academics?
2. What academic support is available? Are tutors provided free to student-athletes?
3. What is the policy for making up classes and exams when the team travels?
4. Is there a required study table for team members?
5. Are summer school scholarships available and do many team members attend summer school?
6. What is the graduation rate for team members? Most student-athletes take 5 years to earn their degree. Are 5th year scholarships available?

TRAINING

1. When does the season begin?
2. How many hours a week does the team practice?
3. What strength training is done and how is it coordinated with practice?
4. Does the coach have any suggestions on how you should be training now?

COMPETITION

1. Who does the team play outside of their conference schedule?
2. Are there any special rivalries?
3. Where does the team travel?
4. How does the team travel?
5. Is there a select travel team? What are your chances for making the travel team?

EVALUATING

1. Does the coach and the assistants seem to be the type of people you could look up to?
2. Has the coach given you the impression that you could reach your athletic potential on his team?
3. Does the coach make you feel that you can handle the academic and athletic workload?
4. Can you afford to attend this school? You and your parents should establish a price range that is affordable. If the coach has not offered you enough to make this possible, don't be afraid to let him know.

Recruiting Trips

There are two types of recruiting trips; official and unofficial. A recruiting trip becomes an official visit when it is financed in whole or in part by the member institution in Division I and II. The NAIA's interpretation is similar.

During the senior year, a student-athlete make only one official visit to a particular institution and take no more than five official visits to five different institutions. An official visit is not allowed until the student-athlete provides the institution with a PSAT, ACT or SAT score from a test taken on a national testing date under national testing conditions. There are no limits on the number of official visits to NAIA schools.

During an official visit (which may not exceed 48 hours), a student-athlete may receive round-trip transportation between home and the campus, meals, lodging and complimentary admissions to campus athletic events.

An unofficial visit is made at the student-athlete's own expense. There are no limits to the number of unofficial visits a student-athlete can make to any and all institutions. When planning an unofficial visit, the parents and student-athlete should contact the coach well in advance to schedule meetings and observe the team.

Whether a visit is official or unofficial, American College Connection recommends that a student-athlete prepare a list of questions to ask the academic advisors, coaches and current student-athletes. Recruiting visits should be taken very seriously. Official recruiting visits are very costly to the institution and very time consuming for the coaching staff, the team and the student host.

A recruiting trip is not an excuse for a party. A student-athlete will have 48 hours to evaluate a school and athletic team. Selecting the right school is one of the most important decisions a young person will make. When the student-athlete returns home from a trip, parents should help them organize their information and make sure the right questions were answered.

As part of our education package, American College Connection provides an extensive list of criteria that student-athletes can use to evaluate institutions.

How to find a reputable scouting and recruiting firm?

10 questions to ask

1. How long does the company provide services? Do they stay with you and your child until they complete college or is their service a one-time shot? College sports are disappearing at an alarming rate. What will happen to your child if their sport is dropped or if they want to transfer?
2. Does the company think as college coaches think or does it think like businessmen whose primary objective is to close the sale and collect your money? Many companies are franchised out to individuals who have a limited knowledge of college athletics.
3. Do they address NCAA compliance? Do they have someone who is in charge of monitoring NCAA rules? It is very easy to jeopardize your child's eligibility by using a company that does not adhere to NCAA regulations.
4. Does the company offer you guidance and education throughout the recruiting process? As parents, you have to be involved in the recruiting process, but if the company does not provide you with inside knowledge of how the recruiting process works, you will be at the mercy of college recruiters.
5. Do they offer a sport's specific recruiting plan? Each sport is unique in the number of scholarships awarded and the kind of information the college coaches need to evaluate a recruit.
6. Does the company have sports professionals who actually work with your child or is the company managed by businessmen who have a limited sports background?
7. Does the company have credibility with college coaches? Do they have a secured website and do they have former college coaches and athletes working for them?
8. Is there a payment plan so that the program is affordable for everyone?
9. Does the company send your child's information directly to college coaches? A scouting and recruiting program will only work if it saves the college coaches time by providing pertinent and verified information.
10. After you sign up, will you have access to the company? Do you get to communicate with company personnel to get all of your questions answered and are they prompt in updating your child's profile?

American College Connection answers YES to all of the above. For more information about ACC, visit our website at www.ACCrecruits.com and submit a free profile or call our Lincoln office at (402) 420-6226.