

By <http://www.recruiting-101.com>

## How do college coaches narrow down recruiting databases and eventually offer the top athletes?

As I have mentioned, some college coaching staffs begin the recruiting process with over 5,000 prospective recruits. With a list like that, it is definitely not an overnight project to narrow it down to the thirty to fifty (that number varies by school) prospects that they will eventually offer athletic scholarships. Schools like Nebraska, Air Force, Mississippi and others have been renowned for offering hundreds of prospects but I would guess that most college programs end up offering athletic scholarships to forty or fifty sought after prospects. That will depend on how many players they need to sign and if they are landing any of these athletes.

When the coaches build this list, the first thing they will do is send out questionnaires to the prospective athletes trying to find out more information about them. These sheets are vital to fill out but at this point, the coaches may be looking more to cut down that recruiting database. If the player has lack luster stats or bad grades, chances are that once the form is filled out, they will be taken out of the database or at least downgraded in the level that they are recruited.

So out of that 5,000, lets just say that 1,000 meets the criteria that the college coaches are looking for. That is when the coach will start showing more interest, sending more letters, and requesting video tape. I have always said putting together a quality highlight video is something that is vital in the recruiting process. My guess is that 500 of those athletes will either not be able to get their hands on tape or the highlight video is so bad that the coaches can't see much. So the list is down to 500.

Now the coaches will go through the highlight videos and **judge** which players have the ability to play at their level. With so many prospects to evaluate for an athletic scholarship, unless you have other offers, I am willing to bet that the coaching staff just does not have much time to spend on you and will need to be wowed by your highlight tape early. I have seen about five underrated prospects highlight videos that wowed me into thinking that they would get a Division I scholarship. When all was said and done, all of these athletes ended up getting major Division I scholarships. Before seeing these videos, I would say that the prospects were flying under the radar.

So the coaches cut out 300 of the players because they are just not good enough and now are now down to 200. This is when the coaches should be sending hand written letters and showing much more interest. I would assume this should be around the spring or summer. While you are high on their list, if you don't have an athletic scholarship at this point, you are not among their top tier of athletes. The coaches take this time to judge how serious you are about their school and then rank the recruits accordingly. The coaches need to do this because if option A, B, and C all fall through, they need to quickly respond and look harder at options D, E, and F to see if they are worth offering.

With the top 200, the coaches will try to bring these athletes on campus for their camp so that they can evaluate the prospective recruit in person. This gives the coaches a chance to see you in person, see if you really are 6-foot-3, can handle coaching, and adapt quickly. Let me note that just because you are invited to a camp, that does not mean you are on their top tier of recruits.

After the camp, the coaches cross 100 recruits off who are just not good enough and are down to 100. Lets say that there are 30 scholarships out, back up plans for the other positions, and the possibility that if you are among those players you can walk on. Like I have said before, it is important to know that going in. These coaches need to keep the backup options uncommitted if things fall through with their top recruits. They will feed you many lines about that they need more evaluations but it is because you are on their second tier of athletes. Unless you make drastic improvements, your offer from that school hinges on on what other recruits decide to do.

That is a quick look at how coaches cut down a list of over 5,000 to around 100 prospects they are somewhat serious about. In the end, around fifty get athletic scholarship offers and the class ends up around twenty to twenty five players. It is different in basketball but the coaches do what they can narrow things down and offer as few prospects as they can.

In that original piece, I spoke about camp invites, form letters, hand written letters, phone calls, verbal scholarship offers, and written scholarship offers. While I will once again keep all of these areas in the discussion, I have added some new levels of interest that I will talk about. They include: Junior Day Invites, Official Visits, Emails, School Visits and Questionnaires. These four new areas will throw a wrench into my previous order so this is definitely worth checking out.

In reverse order of importance, here are my thoughts on the level of attention that colleges are showing you:

## Updated: Levels of recruiting interest from college coaches

**Camp Invite** - While it is very true that college coaches will invite players to a camp to seriously consider them for a scholarship, these same coaches have to invite a lot of other players as well. Some will tell the player that if they are the best quarterback or running back at the camp, they will offer. And in some respects, that may be true but unlikely to happen. At basketball and football programs across the country, the pay of coaches is supplemented with money that is earned during summer camps. So if a coach wants to **earn more money**, he needs to get more athletes at the camp. And at the same time, what this coach can do is invite any player who was named All State, All Conference, or All District the previous season. If one player shocks everyone and eventually receives a scholarship, it was worth the \$300 plus to go to the camp. If not, the coach still gets paid for the camp by the player. In the majority of cases, the player does leave camp without a scholarship offer. But at least they get a t-shirt of the school.

**Questionnaires** - College coaches will send out questionnaires to recruits to learn more about them. When they originally start their recruiting database with thousands and thousands of athletes, the questionnaires will help them narrow things down. For example, some schools may send out these to many athletes in the area. But if it is a Division I school and the player averaged five points as a junior, that is likely to be their last piece of mail that they send the kid. I list this above camp invite because with this, they are least want to learn more about you and your skills.

**Form Letters** - These are the generic letters from college coaches that are typed up and not personal at all. It can include brief talks about the school, updates on the program, and anything generic that has nothing personal about you at all. This is another letter that could go to 5,000 different athletes throughout the country. While these are nice to receive, getting one from a Division I school is far from being a Division I player. Two quick notes about these before moving on. When I was in high school, I received a form letter from the University of Texas El Paso, aka UTEP after my junior year. This was after I put up less than one point per game. In that same year, a soccer player who was in my grade had played football his first two years of high school but didn't as a junior. After that year, the University of Nebraska sent him a form letter. So again, form letters mean little to nothing.

**Emails** - While there has been software developed recently over the last few years that allows coaches to send out mass emails to prospective recruits (Trust me, more coaches than you think use these), emails are a step above the form letter when it becomes a personal thing. If they are just email blasts with no substance included, then I would actually rank this below form letters. But if it is personal and to just you, then it is a step above. Getting an email from a college coach is a good thing but do realize that they send a lot of mass emails out about their program.

**School Visits** - While it is great to say hello to a college coach visiting your school, many of these coaches go through the same schools every year. They do this as a way to talk to the **head coach**. They may not be serious about you as a prospect but something that the coach does every year just in case your school has a prospect. It is building up that relationship for future use. With how many high schools college coaches visit, I really don't think it is that big of a deal to have them in attendance.

**Hand Written Letters** - Receiving hand written letters from college coaches means that they are serious enough about you to spend enough attention to write out what should be a personalized note. While it is unknown how many of these they write, and if they actually do write them (Which is what graduate assistants may be used for), they are a step up the recruiting importance chain. One thing to note on these hand written letters. I wrote about an athlete a few years back who was being recruited hard by two Division I football teams in-state and had received hand written letters from them during the spring of his junior year. And this kid ended up playing sports at the Division III level. Like I said, hand written letters are a step up but nothing to get a big head about. Some schools may also send out supposed hand written notes that are actually a font on the computer. These are the fun ones to try and figure out.

**Junior Day Visits** - Regarding the Junior Day visit, let me state that it really depends on the school. I have seen some programs keep their visit numbers very low and all of the players there eventually go on to a scholarship somewhere. On the other hands, there are schools like Louisville and Iowa State that bring in as many kids will come. Did you play varsity? Then come on to the Junior Day. The bigger the numbers, the less prestigious it is. If there are above fifty athletes there, than rank this lower than the hand written letter. Coaches at the school mentioned before are likely trying to use this as a way to get kids to camp. While it

will be a good evaluation tool, these coaches have to realize that many of these players are not even good enough for scholarship football.

**Phone Calls** - When receiving a phone call from a coach, you know that it is something that they are doing and it is impossible (Well, lets hope) for them to fake. This gives you as a player a chance to learn more about the coach and their program. This gives the coach a chance to learn more about you as a person and not just an athlete. Athletes that are being seriously recruited by a school will receive a call during the open periods. If you are a quiet kid, make sure to ask the coach questions about the program and show them they you are interested. While they would not stop recruiting you from this, coaches will dread calling kids who are quiet and tough to talk to. That is a known fact from coaches at all levels.

**Official Visits** - I wouldn't say that official visits are sure fire offers because some of the players on these do end up walking on. But if a school is going to pay for you to visit campus, that says a lot about what they think of you as a player. My guess is that if you are brought on an official visit, unless you get in trouble while there, the least they will offer you is a walk on spot. While that is not for sure, I would guess it would happen in 99% of the cases.

**Verbal Scholarship Offers** - From what I have learned over the past few years, I personally wouldn't think that I have an official offer until the paperwork comes in the mail. Some coaches will verbally offer a player or hint around about it. Really, this is a big step for you in the recruiting process. The coach could tell you over the phone that there is an offer for you or while on a visit. It is something to get excited about and few coaches will go back on their word. But some may and that is why the official paperwork is what seals the deal.

**Written Scholarship Offer** - This may come after talking to the coaching staff or even randomly in the mail. Some schools have been known not to say anything before and the paperwork shows up at an athlete's house. This basically means that you are in a great situation and you will likely not have to pay for college. It is the dream of any athlete and shows that the time and effort you have put in over the past years of your life has paid off. But it is important to realize that the **hard work** is only beginning if you are planning to play sports at the scholarship level.

## **TEN THINGS NOT TO DO TO GET RECRUITED:**

I recently read an article about ten things you can do to not get rich during your life. Because of how interesting the article was, I thought I would put together a piece that talks about the ten things you should do to not get recruited. This applies to all sports so keep this in mind no matter what sport you play. There are in reverse order to build up the suspense:

### **10.) Do poorly in school**

There is little doubt that doing poorly in school will scare many schools away. Not putting much time into your school **work** and struggling early on usually creates a hole that is very hard to get out of.

### **9.) Talking back to officials/refs/umpires**

College coaches want to find athletes who just play and not have an ongoing sideshow with an athlete. The more you focus on succeeding in the game, the better of you will be.

### **8.) Get in trouble off of the field/court/diamond**

With the amount of publicity that athletes get for off the field problems, the last thing you want to do in high school is get in trouble. When there is less supervision, watch out because more trouble can be had.

### **7.) Treat your teammates bad**

Why would a college coach want to recruit an 18-year who thinks that they are better than their teammates? I can promise you that coaches will watch your demeanor in all phases of the game if they are considering you.

### **6.) Disrespect your parents**

I read an article a while back about a coach who had an in home visit with an athlete and he moved on as soon as he heard the athlete talk to his parents. Treating your parents poorly is a huge sign of disrespect towards those around you.

### **5.) Skip workouts/practice/team meetings**

College coaches do not want to have to deal with players who are headaches off the court. Skipping this type of thing means you don't care all that much.

### **4.) Have bad sportsmanship**

If you are someone who feels that it is necessary to taunt your opponent every time you can, that is just bad sportsmanship. You are not going to help your case.

### **3.) Lying about recruiting attention**

Aka the Kevin Hart factor, athletes want to make themselves feel important to Rivals, Scout, and other recruiting sites. But don't lie about who has been recruiting you and don't assume schools will offer you.

### **2.) Have a poor relationship with your coaches**

When college coaches call about an athlete, they won't initially be talking to you or your parent. They will call your coach. And if you have treated your coach badly and that has resulted in a poor relationship, good luck getting recruited.

### **1.) Dismiss any recruiting attention because of the level**

This one just kills me when it happens. You may have Division I eyes but don't ever think you are better than a school. With how hard the recruiting process is to figure out, you just never know what can happen in your life.

## I'm a junior with football recruiting interest but no offers. What do I do?

After having talked about what junior football players should do during the recruiting process before the season, I thought now would be a great time to update what I had previously talked about. This mid-season review is just to help those juniors going through the football recruiting process. It is not an easy time but you can help yourself by reading this article and doing these steps.

With September 1st being the first day that college programs can officially send you personalized mail (And not camp invites, my personal favorite), juniors should be able to start receiving mail at this point. No matter what you say, there should be no excuses as to why you are not getting mail. I will never buy the lines about waiting until later to get yourself out there or hoping that your junior season will catch the interest of college coaches.

I say this in every article along this line but what you must do is market yourself. It could be you or your parents but your family needs to personally market yourself to college coaches. The reason that I stress your family needs to actually do it is because there is no one anywhere who will take such a vested interest in the outcome. There are some services out there that will do work, but at the end of the day, they do not care as much as you do about getting your son to a school that he wants to play for.

I seem to always stress this in articles like this but what I would recommend going through [The Five Steps of a Scholarship Offer](#). At this point, focus on the first three. Right now, putting together a recruiting profile is very essential. What I would do if I were a family with a junior football player is update it after every game. I wouldn't send out the same profile to the same coaches every week but time should be taken to look up schools that the athlete might be interested in.

Each week, try to target five to ten and send out the updated profile every week. Yes, this does take time but it is good for a number of reasons. If you do it yourself, you are saving a lot of money. Second, this is a great bonding experience between your family. Your son will love the fact that you are helping him at this difficult time and you will be spending a lot of time together. Keep that in the back of your head before doing it.

**The fourth step that you should have already started looking into is the highlight video process. If you have not started looking ahead to the postseason, you should be doing that by now.** The reason is because when things get hectic because of a number of different things in November, having done the work ahead of time will help you then. You can look locally or try a site like [www.highlight-videos.com](http://www.highlight-videos.com). In the end, going the professional route may be worth it to impress college coaches.

Another part of this fourth step is to be lining up the full game tape needed for these highlights. You can speak with the high school coach about it and the desire to play in college. Because you need good footage, your best bet is getting your hands on a video now. If the quality is terrible, it may be time to start looking into other options (ie: Having a family member do it). It does take away from the game experience for a dad or mom to do it but you need good footage.

The fall is also a fantastic time for those with college interest to make game day visits. If you are a recruit, schools throughout your area should be throwing [tickets](#) around to

get prep athletes on their campus. Many of these schools invite a ton of prospects simply because they do not want to miss out on someone. If you are on their prospect list, then you will likely get tickets, even if you end up playing Division III [football](#). The key obviously is to get on their recruiting list and that can be done by marketing yourself to the college coaches.

The reason these visits are important is because there is nothing that simulates game day at a college. It doesn't matter if they bring you to a spring practice or a basketball game, the football atmosphere at schools is completely unique. There is nothing like it. Keep in mind that there will be three free tickets to the game as well.

The biggest factor in all of these steps is that you are having a productive junior season of football. The better you do during the season, the better it will help you after. The reason for this is because it will help you garner postseason honors (Which do in turn catch the eye of college coaches), help your highlight video, and give you a good name as a football player in your area. The more pub that you can get, the better.

If you have been receiving Division I interest, now is the time to also get your name out there to a number of different recruiting websites. Being listed by Rivals, Scout, and ESPN are all great ways to get your name out there. In the end, you will hurt nothing if you get on these sites. But make sure to be honest with the amount of recruiting attention you are getting. The last thing you want to do is be caught in a lie ([Rivals Advice](#), [Scout Advice](#), and [ESPN Advice](#)).

While your focus needs to be on the season, keep in mind that you should always be looking ahead. Think about the highlight video, college visits, updated recruiting profiles, and small things that will really pay off in the end. It may not be easy but putting in the time now is much better than trying to play catch up as a senior. Also take the time to look into taking your ACT this fall and getting it out of the way early. The cost for the test is well worth it in the long run.

## Focusing on phone calls from college coaches during the athletic recruiting process

If you are a senior athlete hoping to get recruited, one of the ways that college coaches will express a great deal of interest in you is by calling. As shown in the [Levels of Recruiting Interest Article](#), the only thing that a coach can do in the recruiting process to show more interest is bring you for an official visit or extend a scholarship offer. This phone call means that they really are serious about you.

While it is great to receive call after call, it is not always an easy process for a teenager to be able to focus on what the coach is talking about. You may be talking to so many different coaches that it is tough to focus ask the questions that you are looking to get answered. Schools at all levels call athletes, even if they have Division I offers. It just happens. So here are some hints and tips as to what you should do when taking calls. The first thing you need to realize is that if you are getting any calls at all, you are a very good athlete. These schools only call athletes that they are at least somewhat interested in. While call after call can get annoying (just wait football recruits who haven't made a decision), you are very lucky to have been put in this situation. Things could be much worse

with no calls and a lack of overall interest. The more calls, the more interest you have so realize that it is a good thing.

When these coaches do call, I would recommend to have a file about each school that calls. You should have some blank sheets of paper where you can write down notes and you may also look ahead and have questions about the school. Because you are never 100% sure about what schools specifically are going to call, it may be best to have a master list of questions that you ask all schools that call. I would talk to your parents and family about helping you set up a recruiting filing system so you can track when they are contacting you.

One of the toughest things for a teenager to do during the call is actually focus on the call itself. With video games, TV, and computers, there are distractions everywhere. I have always said that you should consider all your options so even if it is a Division III school, unless you have Division I or II offers, you should focus on the call and learn more about their school. Yes, it will take some of your time away but it won't hurt to broaden your recruiting base and see what this school has to offer.

During the months of December and January, things seem to really start heating up in the football recruiting process. If you are a recruit who has been getting looks from Division I-AA (FCS) and Division II schools, there is little doubt that you must brace yourself for a very stressful and hectic time. This will include visits to the schools, coaches visiting you, and also a number of phone calls. There is also a balance for you with your family and your friends as well.

If you are that good of an athlete that you receive ten to twenty calls a week, you must do a **great job** managing your time. These coaches are likely going to call during the evening while you may be studying for a test or doing homework. Will you put down the books to talk to the college coaches? Or will you call them back at another time? This is something that you must seriously think about during each and every evening because there are likely going to be a lot of schools and coaches calling.

That is why having files on each school is so important. If there are really fifteen schools calling you (which really may happen), you may confuse the coaches and the schools. There will just be a lot going through your head at this time. So if you keep detailed notes about what you talked about and what the coach says about visits and offers, you can refer to those when speaking with them again.

The calls are made to help create a bond between you and the coaches. If they call you four times before you visit, they will know a lot about you going into the trip and be able to fit what you are looking for better. You will be more comfortable and they may have already been able to lineup a professor in the Business department to speak with you about your interest in that as a major. This legwork needs to be done beforehand and if you sit on the phone just listening to the coach, this interaction and bond will not happen.

Take advantage of these calls from college coaches no matter what sport you play. I will be talking about what questions you should ask in the near future but for senior recruits, this is something that you should start preparing for if it has not been happening already.



## How much football recruiting interest can I receive as a sophomore?

Posted by [admin](#) | June 23, 2008 .

While most college coaches normally focus on older prospects, they also want to have a good feel for the top up and coming prospects. That is why it is always important to show interest to sophomores and even sometimes freshmen if they are good enough. While few receive scholarships that early in the process, many wonder how much attention that you can get at that early age.

And while I have talked about it before as far as what mail a college coach can send a sophomore, I decided to talk about it a little more in-depth. This article takes a look at what college coaches can do in terms of visits, calls, mail, and contact outside of the campus during the football recruiting process.

### **What kind of football recruiting materials can I receive from Division I coaches?**

Throughout your entire sophomore year, the only items that college coaches are legally able to send you are camp brochures and questionnaires. As I have mentioned before, if they are sending you hand written letters, then it is a direct violation of NCAA rules. It is also very important to take the time to fill out the questionnaires so that the college coaches will have your contact information. In many cases, the colleges will send these to your high school. Once you fill it out, they will likely send future mail to your house.

### **Can I receive calls from Division I coaches?**

The simple and easy answer is no, you cannot. There is not time during your sophomore year that a Division I football coach should be calling you. If you have their number and want to speak with them, you are allowed unlimited calls at your own expense. If a college coach really likes a prospect, what the college coach may do is call your high school coach (Which is legal) and have the high school coach tell you to call the college coach. However, they should not be directly calling you this early in the football recruiting process.

### **Can a college coach make off campus contact?**

The college coach legally should not be making any contact with you off campus. He should not be seeing you at the school or watching you compete during the spring. But with the coaches wanting to see juniors and visiting many schools, these things do happen. But if you are going per NCAA rules, they should not be.

### **Can I make official visits?**

No and there is not much else to say.

### **Can I make unofficial recruiting visits?**

You are allowed as many unofficial visits as you would like to take. The top sophomores are sometimes invited to Junior Days so that you can learn more about the coaches, the facilities, and their program. When you do make the visit, they are allowed to speak with you about any number of things. But it is you paying for the trip that allows this to happen. There are some rules on the amount of tickets and games that prospects can go to but if you are just coming to visit the school, you can come as much as you want.