

Coach and Player Information Exchange On “COLLEGE SOCCER RECRUITING” from our PANELISTS

The Player’s View of Recruiting & College Soccer:

- **Get on a good club team that plays in tournaments** as often as possible -- even if you’re “guest playing” with many teams. Your high school team experience does not really matter! Utilize the support of your club DOC, coach and all the resources they can provide. This is the environment where 99.9% of the process occurs.
- **How to get seen by top coaches.** Tournaments & more tournaments. Go to the best, and if your team isn’t attending guest play. Personally send the coaches your schedule before the tournament or game at least a week in advance. Stay in contact with them they will come to see you play. Attend a college camp.
- **Do your research.** Figure out what you want in a school (size, academics, location, student life). Look up schools that match what you want and start to make a list.
- **Decide where you want to go:** Factor in distance from home, school size, city vs. rural, academic level, soccer level/division. These are very tough decisions to make.
- **Prepare for college academically, athletically, and socially.** Keep your grades high, take challenging classes, and take SAT early. Play at the highest level possible on the best team you can. Make smart life decisions and remember that you represent your family, your team and your coaches.
- **Contact coaches and do it early** Take personal responsibility to email or call the coaches you are interested in. Give them all your information - more is better (mailing, phone, email address, team played for etc.) If the school is far away and they can’t see you, consider DVD or video, but only a full game or training session.
- **Contact coaches at the schools you are interested in.** Remember: Email is best and make it personal (no mass emails). Give coaches as much information (soccer/academic/personal) as possible about you (what teams/coaches you've played for, tournaments you're in, how to reach you/your coaches, your number).
- **Watch the college game as much as you can...**the more interested you are, the more games you should watch.
- **Make college visits.** Even if you’re going to a school far away, check out schools near you. Warning: You may think you want a small school (5,000 or fewer), but when you visit, you may find it's actually too small.
- **Visiting the campus** Visit as many schools as possible early in your Junior year or Sophomore year. Even if you aren’t interested in the school you can get an idea of what you like and do not like. Watch local college teams play to give yourself an idea of level of competition and where you may fit. Before your visit set up to meet with the coaches if possible. Do your research online first so that you can spend your visit talking about questions that can’t be found online. Write out a list of questions that you have, don’t be afraid to ask the tough questions.
- **Never be afraid to ask questions.** If a coach can't be up front when answering your "tough" question, it tells you something about the coach. If any one thing about a campus is important to you (even if it seems small, like food options on campus), just ask and expect to get an answer.
- **Making your decision** Don’t base your decision on one factor, be sure to balance academics, athletics, and student life. Where do you want to spend four years of your life? Take your time and make sure you are happy!

- **Don't pick your college for just one reason.** Even if soccer is all you care about in college, be sure you're happy with the campus and classes. Otherwise, you won't enjoy yourself off or on the field. (Plus: It's tough to transfer, and there are strict regulations and restrictions). Remember: Coaches might leave, even if it wasn't their intention when you signed to play for them.
- **How to succeed in college.** Big point: find the right "balance" between academics and athletics. Compromise: Sacrifice things so you can succeed as a student athlete.
- **College Soccer Experience.** Some of the best experiences of your life. Learn life lessons to always remember. Some difficult times as well. Game is quicker & more physical and there are lots of good players. Mental aspects of your game will need to be stronger, tougher because of the demands on you and the game are greater. You most likely will not be the best player on your team.

Coaches View of Recruiting & College Soccer

- **Big questions: Character on the field-** Are you someone who when you lose the ball, you'll double back and get it back? That's what coaches look for. Do you leave gaps in the midfield or back, or work to fill them in? Are you conscientious "worker" as a player on the field? **Character off the field?** Are you a good student & citizen?
 - **Interviews:** In one-on-ones with a candidate, people should understand what your expectations are as a player. And as coach, he/she also wants to know what you're looking for, since you and he/she will spend 4 years together. Be ready to make a case for yourself.
 - **Key Example of "top prospect":** "We have a forward this fall, and he/she fills a need since we've lacked a natural forward for a year. With size and good strength in the air, he/she can finish, plus hold the ball. Bonus: Academically, he/she's very solid, and we won't have to babysit him/her. He/she fits the bill on the field, in the classroom, and as a player." We're all looking for the complete student-athlete.
 - **Consider Div. III schools when the "shoe fits.** They offer a participatory level of play that you won't find elsewhere as easily." And if you're a good student there are financial awards available. As well, some DIII schools can compete with DII & DI programs.
- **What makes a player a good candidate?**
- **KEY POINT: Character Counts – in all parts of your life.** It's there in how you act as you present yourself to coaches at recruiting meetings, how you work on any team, even how you interact with your parents – with your mom or dad. Character counts – and people see it.
 - **"Character is what shows when no one is watching"** – In the showcase tournament a coach went to see a player he was recruiting. The player was complaining even about calls that went his way. Then, when he came off for a sub, he took his jersey off, and threw it under the bench. Whose now interested in this player?
 - **"There's a college out there for every kid trying to get in"** – you just have to look hard.
- **Players- "Four P's APPROACH" for PLANNING:**
- **PREPARE: This is the first truly important decision** in your life. Treat it as a large investment. **Think of the college selection process as an additional academic subject.** How big an investment of time and effort is it? A men's soccer program may offer scholarships worth \$20,000-\$30,000 or more. With that, you can buy a nice car, or pay for the college you've set your heart on. You are the salesman and must market yourself to the college coach.
 - **Remember:** A Division 1 school is allowed 9.9 scholarships for men, 14 scholarships for women. Division II 9 scholarships. The number of "full rides" is small, but help is there.

- **PROMOTE: Begin early and proceed to promote yourself in an organized, systematic manner.** There are many aspects to the process. We'll cover the main ones.
- **USE CAREFUL PROCEDURE for BIG DECISIONS:** It's YOUR decision, not your parents. They have a vested interest in you, but YOU are deciding where to spend 4 years of your life. Your decision impacts your entire life. Learn **how to make big decisions**. Do you know how to start?
- **STAY PROACTIVE in this PROCESS.** Expect obstacles and ask "veterans" (players, coaches, others) about them. Learn from coaches and players available at the College Night. Get tips from anyone who's withstood the obstacles of recruiting. Some resources can help: parents' friends, your coaches, guidance counselors, etc. Ultimately, the responsibility for your future is yours, and it's a tough one. Start tonight. Make calls, do Google searches, talk/email coaches and others. **You'll see the effort pay off 6 months from now.**

ADDENDUM for the PARENTS READING THIS

- **Use the resources and support from the club DOC, coaches and former players.** They have a vested interest in you playing, experience and college connections.
- **Your son or daughter must be the one to take the initiative** in contacting the coaches, especially in Div. III (versus Div. I). Encourage him or her to do it early.
- **Set up a time for meeting with every coach on every campus you tour** – no matter where. (Most meetings will exclude parents.) This approach offers practice in posing good questions, and leads to good decisions.
- **Your big role: Help your son/daughter develop a soccer resume plus good questions for the coach visits** and contacts.
- **Learn and use all the NCAA regulations.** They're vital in Div. 1.
- **Find a college you want, and THEN let soccer be the bonus.** That way, you'll get the best of both worlds. Otherwise, your child can break a leg, suffer an ACL injury and wind up being stuck on a campus that offers too little for the future.
- **There are few resources out there by way of books.** Most work is just research and more research, and talks, and more talks with people in actual soccer programs. That's why this is a tough process, and why you must start early.