

8 Steps to Getting Recruited

You've played your way to a respectable high school and club soccer career and you have an idea of different schools you would be interested in attending. Now what?

There are a couple of big steps to be made before recruiting gets rolling. One is being proactive, and the other is being informed.

Being on top of what different schools can offer you--and being realistic about where your talents could fit in--will make it easier to be effective when you make college soccer coaches aware of your abilities. The first step is knowing the number of scholarships out there so you have a better idea of what coaches have to work with.

NCAA Division I

How Many Schools: There are 199 men's soccer programs in Division I, including powerhouses like Indiana and UCLA. There are 320 women's programs, including titans like North Carolina, Notre Dame and Portland.

Scholarship Count: Women's soccer is allowed 14 scholarships. Men's soccer is allowed 9.9 scholarships.

Scholarship Breakdown: Scholarships can be full or partial rides at the Division-I level, but with rosters exceeding 20 players, they are used carefully.

NCAA Division II

How Many Schools: There are 179 men's programs and 227 women's programs in Division II soccer.

Scholarship Count: Women's soccer has 9.9 scholarships to work with. Men have nine scholarships.

Scholarship Breakdown: Partial rides are common in Division II soccer, as coaches can distribute the money to as many players as they wish.

NCAA Division III

How Many Schools: Division III soccer consists of 401 men's programs and 424 women's programs. Powers include Messiah (Pa.) College for the men and Wheaton (Ill.) College for the women.

Scholarship Count: Athletic scholarships are not offered in Division III athletics.

Scholarship Breakdown: With no athletic scholarships, students often find financial aid or academic scholarships to assist with costs while playing soccer.

NAIA

How Many Schools: There 218 men's programs in the NAIA and 223 women's programs.

Scholarship Count: Both men's and women's soccer are allowed 12 scholarships per team.

Scholarship Breakdown: Partial scholarships are common. Strong students who meet certain academic criteria can receive aid without it counting toward the program's limit.

NJCAA Division I

How Many Schools: There are 136 men's soccer programs at the junior-college level and 118 women's programs.

Scholarship Count: Men's and women's soccer are allowed 18 scholarships at the junior-college level.

Scholarship Breakdown: Many scholarships at the junior-college level are full rides, but partial rides are common, too.

NJCAA Division III

How Many Schools: There are 78 men's programs in NJCAA Division III, and 58 women's programs.

Scholarship Count: Much like Division III four-year schools, D-III schools at the junior-college level do not offer scholarships.

The 8 Steps:

No.1: Take the Right Classes

Long before college catalogs clog mailboxes, and recruiting tapes are viewed, a student-athlete takes classes in their freshman year of high school that directly affect their NCAA eligibility.

Because eligibility standards continue to evolve--in 2008 the NCAA increased the number of English and math courses required by one--it's an athlete's responsibility to make sure their class schedule fulfills NCAA core course requirements.

The best way to make sure you meet all requirements is to schedule an appointment with a high school guidance counselor to ensure your course schedule is in-line with the approved high school core course list. (It's a good idea to do this each year as high school curriculums can change as often as [NCAA compliance](#) standards.)

Quick Tip: Let your guidance counselor "guide" you in your high school course selections--starting with your freshman year and continuing throughout your high school career.

No.2: Register with the NCAA

It used to be called the NCAA clearinghouse, but now it's the NCAA Eligibility Center that students must register with to validate their status as an amateur athlete. (This is to ensure an athlete isn't secretly playing defensive back for the Denver Broncos during their high school career.)

The process is relatively pain-free; all you need is \$50 and a Social Security number. But don't leave it to the last minute. Every year a few student athletes miss out on the chance to play collegiately, because they fail to register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).

Quick Tip: Register with the NCAA by your junior year.

No.3: Make Your List(s)

Before you compile a list of 200 schools you would just die to play for, remember the function of the list is to help you focus your search going into your sophomore and junior year, not overly complicate the process with unrealistic expectations.

"One: a list of their dream schools, two: a list of schools that they could realistically get into and three: a list of fallback schools in case something happens at the last minute."

Quick Tip: Make three lists--with four or five schools per list--to focus your college search.

No.4: Create a Video

The recruiting video is one of the most important ways an athlete can attract the attention of coaches at the university level. Unfortunately, it's also where many athletes come up short, with substandard video quality and unnecessary production components.

The structure and contents of your video will depend on the sport being promoted. Play-by-play sports such as volleyball, football and baseball generally work best with a collection of 15-25 highlight plays that illustrate an athlete's ability. Continuous play sports such as soccer, basketball and lacrosse should have 10 to 15 highlight plays-- with an additional game half included to show real-time ability.

So how do you make the video? Well, like anything in life, quality does count. This doesn't mean you have to hire Steven Spielberg to shoot your footage, but many people find hiring a videographer a worthwhile expense.

For those on a tighter budget, it is acceptable to shoot footage from the stands with a modest camcorder. Just make sure to use a tripod, if possible, to avoid camera shake and practice following the action numerous times to get the feel of filming a live sport. (The general rule of film is to shoot five times more footage than you'll actually need.) Also, skip the heavy metal soundtrack and colorful graphics. Coaches hate them!

Quick Tip: Keep your video short, simple and as professional-looking as possible.

No. 5: Research the Schools

This task used to be a lot more difficult 10 years ago. But with the rise of the internet there is a multitude of [recruiting information](#), both official and unofficial, about virtually any college or university you're interested in.

For starters, check out the school's website to find out the best coach or school official to contact. For smaller schools, individual e-mail addresses for coaches can be found quite easily, as they often view the website as a promotional tool for their institution. Bigger schools may require a little detective work to find contact information for specific coaches, but it is not impossible.

Simply find the e-mail address path (Eg: first name.last name@university.com, first name.last initial@university.com), usually found in the athletic department directory of websites. Then plug in the name of the coach you want to contact and let them know you're interested in attending the university.

Another great resource is to talk to current and former players who've already been through the recruiting process at that particular university. You can get player referrals directly from the school, or perhaps do a search for athletes who've played at the university on social networking sites such as MySpace and face book. Just let them know you're interested in attending their alma mater and ask if they have any tips or information about the program. Though the information you receive may not be entirely reliable, it can be an invaluable way to peek inside a program, warts and all.

Quick Tip: Check out a school's website. Find out who's on their roster and collect contact information for relevant coaches.

No.6: First Contact

Now it's time to place yourself on a college's radar in an aggressive--but friendly--way. It used to be this could wait until your junior year, but with the pace of youth sports increasing all the time, it's probably a good idea to begin contacting coaches in the summer before your sophomore year.

So what do you include in your e-mail or letter to the coach? Well, some sort of introduction explaining who you are and why you're contacting them. (Keep it short-- coaches are busy.) A few paragraphs should do.

A copy of your recruiting video or a link where they can view your video--the latter quickly becoming a popular choice with coaches--as well as a [recruiting resume](#) with details such as stats, honors, academic data and contact information for your high school coaches should also be included.

Some people prefer to make contact with a coach by phone. This is fine as long it is the athlete who's making contact, and not the athlete's mom or dad claiming their kid is the next Reggie Bush. (Not only does it come off as unprofessional, but it also robs the coach of a chance to get to know the athlete on a personal basis.)

Quick Tip: Check out a school's website. Find out who's on their roster and let the coaches know you're interested.

No.7: Increase Your Game--and Your Exposure--at a University Camp

[Sports camps](#) generally serve two different functions: to help an athlete get better and to help an athlete get noticed. Some [sports camps](#), especially those at universities you've targeted, can often do both at the same time. (Many coaches find camps a great way to fill out their rosters.)

Unfortunately those hoping a few days at a university camp will magically get an athlete recruited, without having established rapport with that institution beforehand, are often disappointed.

This is because the coaching fraternity, despite the large number of colleges in the United States, is actually quite small. Though you may not get an offer from Penn State simply by attending one of their camps, this doesn't mean the coach running the camp can't point you toward an opening at a different university.

Like any job, it's all about networking and creating relationships. So be on your best behavior and be ready to learn as much as possible. You might just get recruited, without even realizing it.

Quick Tip: Attend a camp and be flexible; you never know where that first impression might lead.

No.8: The Final Choice

Ok. It's your senior year and, hopefully, you have a few offers on the table. So what do you do? How do you [narrow it down to the one school](#) that is right for you?

For most athletes, it will depend on the [financial package](#) being offered by the school. Are they offering a full-ride? A partial scholarship? If one school offers a significantly greater financial award, it shouldn't be considered lightly. (Not just to avoid going into major debt, but because it demonstrates their interest in you as an athlete and a student.)

For others, it will be a question of possible playing time on the next level. Do you have a good chance of getting in the starting lineup by your sophomore and junior year? If you're a third baseman, and they've already got two underclass third basemen in front of you, there might be better places for you to pursue your higher education while playing the hot corner.

Ultimately, though, most people suggest basing your final decision on the university itself. Not just the athletic department, but the overall collegiate experience a school has to offer.

Quick Tip: Choose a university that offers you the best environment for athletic, academic and personal development.

(Information listed above obtained from active.com)

After researching opportunities to assist your child in getting recruited, the below additional information are additional resources to help you along and can be used as a guide, reference or point you and your child in the right direction.

College Athlete Recruiting References

Great link for college opportunities and scholarships –

<http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/soccer.htm>

Link for FAQ's about college soccer opportunities –

<http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/faqs.htm>

The College Board.

The [College Board](#) is a national nonprofit membership association whose mission is to prepare, inspire, and connect students to college success and opportunity. This site provides all types of information about a specific college you are interested in attending.

Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 4,300 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves over three million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning.

How to contact all the colleges that fit your needs and offer the sporting program you are looking for. Find the schools that match your academic and athletic skill -

We don't normally promote services or products on this website but if you want to compile a mailing list of college coaches and-or search a detailed college database then this is the one. **This is simply the best I have seen. It costs nothing to check out a small sample of what they offer.** This is a comprehensive and detailed database and it's easy to use. [COLLEGE COACHES ONLINE](#) is the directory that is used by the NCAA. **Yes it's that good!!!!**

College Coaches Online offers an easy-to-use search engine that helps identify NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA schools which match student academic and athletic skills. Find coaches names, addresses, emails and phone numbers in seconds. There are over 25,000 coaches on this database. Search for colleges by specific needs: location, size, tuition costs, sport, division and academics (grades, class rank, SAT/ACT) -- you personalize the list!

What do I send to a coach?

You need to prepare a target letter addressed to the coach/s at the college or colleges of your choice. Our [TARGET LETTERS](#) page will walk you through this process.

Write down some information about yourself: Your sport, accomplishments, grades, goals, list of colleges and any other pertinent information you can think of. Now sit down and write a letter about yourself to the head coach of your sport at the colleges you have chosen.

Go over your letter several times for content, punctuation, spelling etc. Have someone check it for you, your coach or one of your parents. Address the letter directly to the head coach of your sport. You should include letters of recommendation, information sheet, statistics sheet, and your team's roster. You will find 2 examples shown below. Highlight the assets that you will bring to the college sports program. Prepare a follow up letter to send to each of the sports coaches that haven't replied to you. Text shown in red to be replaced by your own information.

Example 1

7/3/2009

Mr. Ken Lancaster
Head Soccer Coach
Central State University
Texas 76101.

Dear Coach Lancaster,

My name is John Smith and I am asking you to consider me for the Tigers Soccer team at Central State University. I am currently a senior at Texas Community High School and I will be attending college in the fall semester of 2009.

I was the starting goalie for 2 years on the sophomore team and will be a 2 year starter on the varsity team. I am a heads-up team player and a hard worker willing to do the things it takes to win. I lead by example and I know I can contribute to your team.

I am attaching an information sheet, statistic sheet, and a letter of recommendation from my varsity coach.

If you have any question please contact me or one of my coaches. My coach's names and phone numbers are on my information sheet.

Thank you for considering me for your team.

John Smith.
433 Main Street,
Anytown, TX. 76102.
Phone. 555-555-5555. E-mail Address

EXAMPLE 2.

7/3/2009

Mr. Ken Lancaster
Head Soccer Coach
Central State University
Texas 76101.

Dear Coach Lancaster,

My name is John Smith and I am asking you to consider me for a roster spot on the Redbirds Soccer Team at Large State University. I am currently a senior at Texas Community High School and will be attending college in the fall semester of 2009.

I have just completed my senior year and I was the starting Center Mid for the past 2 seasons. My team, the Texas Stars, has been the Prairie Conference Champions for the last 2 seasons; we played some of the top ranked teams in the state and played in the Texas State Regional Semi-Final Game.

I am a very hard worker and willing to do the things it takes to win. I have always been a team leader and I know that I can compete at college level. I am registered with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

I have attached an information sheet, statistic sheet, and a letter of recommendation from my varsity coach.

If you have any question please contact me or one of my coaches. My coach's names and phone numbers are on my information sheet.

Thank you for considering me for your team.

John Smith.
433 Main Street,
Anytown, TX. 76102.
Phone. 555-555-5555. E-mail Address

You will need to prepare a resume to attach to your target letter. A [RESUME](#) page will walk you through this process as well. **YOU MAY INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IF YOU WISH.** Information sheet. Our [INFORMATION SHEET](#) page will also walk you through this process. CD Copy. Our [CD-R/FLOPPY DISC WEB PROFILE](#) page will show you how to set this up.

The **athletic information sheet or athletic profile** sheet if you prefer, can make an excellent attachment to any letter that you send to a coach. Think of this personal information as, "you at a glance".

The information sheet is only one page but you can squeeze a lot of information onto one page and have it customized to your personal sporting situation. The example below should get you started.

Web profile Site: www.collegesportsscholarships.com/jjohnson.htm will put your profile online for free. [Click here](#) for details.

The profile would like this:

Name: James Johnson.

Address: 2215 Main St, New York.

Home Phone: 555-555-5555

Email Address: jj14@athletics.com

Position: Center Mid.

Other Positions: Forward

Date of Birth: 10/5/85.

Height: 6'1".

Weight: 175.

High School: Ohio High School.

Address: 2323 Main St, Canton OH 44599.

Phone: 555-555-4321.

High School Web Site:

Graduation Date: June 2004.

GPA: 3.3

ACT/SAT: 21.

College Major: Business.

Varsity H.S. Coach: George Higgins.

Phone: 555-555-5555 Ext 123.

Sophomore H.S. Coach: Nick Brentano. Phone: 555-555-5555 Ext 434.

Summer Coach: Sam Jordan.

Phone: 555-555-5555.

Honors/Highlights H.S. Conference Champions 2002 and 2003.

H.S. All Conference Shortstop 2003.

Led H.S. Team batting average and runs 2003.

WEB BASED SPORTS RESUME

This is your opportunity to put your athletic-sports profile online. We are offering this service completely free of charge. There are no hidden costs and updates are free. Get the exposure you need now.

Your profile would include pictures, statistics, letters of recommendation, academic achievements, sporting achievements, both at high school and at club level, and any other material that you think is relevant.

All you need to do is prepare your [profile](#), there is lots of information on our site to help you, and [email](#) it to us at profile@collegesportsscholarships.com. You can include a photo if you wish. We will publish your profile and have it linked to the appropriate sports pages of our site.

You need to remember that a web based athletic resume is only one of the methods you can use to get noticed by the college coaches, don't rely on it getting you recruited, use it as part of your overall strategy. Go to our [tools](#) page for more great ways to help you get recruited.

Put in as much detail as you can, just one small paragraph will not be enough. Coaches want to know all about you so you need to provide the information they want.

When you submit your sports profile be sure to include an email address so that the coaches can contact you. We recommend that you don't include your private address or phone number.

Our site gets over 7,000 unique visitors each day including athletes, coaches and parents.

When you write to college coaches you will be able to include a link to your sports page that is hosted on our site. We are not a recruiting service and the college coaches know this.

Your college years should be the best years of your life so have fun and enjoy the experience.

You know you want to go to college; maybe you even have a couple of colleges in mind. If you want to play sports in college, you'll need to [assess your abilities](#).

If you don't want to post your **Athletic Scholarship Resume** on the web then consider "burning" a read only CD or DVD. That includes a copy of your athletic profile. After all, a web page is just a HTML document that can be read by any browser such as Internet Explorer or Google Chrome.

Every college coach has access to a computer with internet capabilities and will therefore have no problems accessing your profile on DVD or CD.

All you have to do is copy your web page(s) to the DVD or CD and label the disc with the main file name and you are on the way. This is just another creative possibility to get your message out to the college coaches.

Washington Youth Soccer has a chart indicating the player pathway to college and beyond. Harbor Soccer Club with its Harbor FC program is a member of the Regional Club League which puts your child ahead of many other players and on the right path. There is a lot more information out there about preparing your child for a possible college career but we hope this helps point you and your player in the right direction.

