

Managing College Recruiting: A Student Athlete's Perspective

How to organize and market yourself to college coaches/recruiters

By Brad Woodall, Former Major League Pitcher and Owner of Woodall Training

For those of us who follow college sports, we are at least remotely in tune to college recruiting for the big revenue sports such as football and basketball. We hear about the standout athletes that are going on Division I college visits and verbally committing or signing a letter of intent as early as 8th grade.



For most high school athletes, the college recruiting process is very different. Most prospective college athletes have to take the initiative and find creative ways for college recruiters to find them. My wife Kari (former All-American Swimmer and Division I coach) and I consistently receive questions regarding college recruiting and requests to help them become more visible to college recruiters.

After going through the process myself (I played baseball for the UNC Tarheels), consulting with many other college coaches, and working through the college recruiting process with many of the athletes that we train, we have boiled it down to a few strategies that can help make sense of an otherwise complex and sometimes confusing process.

From a student-athlete's perspective, getting noticed by college recruiters is not much different than marketing yourself for a job. You have to have the resume and you have to **promote yourself** to the potential employer (or in this case the college recruiter). The following steps will guide you through the process and put you in position for your favorite colleges to effectively make a decision on your prospects as a college athlete.

1. Pick Your Prospective Schools
2. Create a Sports Resume
3. Video (and Information) Accessibility
4. Personal and Specific Communication

Pick Your Prospective Schools

Make a list of 5-7 schools at which you have an interest in their academic and athletic programs, and at which you have a realistic chance of being an athlete. Typically, these are schools that you would attend even if you could not be an athlete but are interested in their academic programs and overall college experience they are offering.

Next make a list of 5-7 schools that are on your "long shot" list. These are the athletic programs that may be slightly out of reach but if things work out well and they have a need in the program, you may have a chance of making the team as a walk on or recruited walk on with a chance for scholarship money over time. Again, these are schools that you would attend even without athletics. As we all know, a college degree lasts a lot longer than our athletic careers.

Create a Sports Resume

Create a resume for your "potential employer" that highlights your sports credentials and accomplishments. This should include, at a minimum, the team(s) for which you play, contact information for your coaches and yourself. Also include your high school name, phone number and address, your age, birthdate, height and weight (if applicable). You should also include relevant statistics and accomplishments in athletics, the classroom, and within your community. Basically, start with the athletic-specific information and then expand from there. Coaches (and college

admissions boards) like to see a well-rounded and successful student so let them know if you are active and successful in areas outside of athletics.

Video Production

One of the first things a coach would want to see is you performing in competition and/or in practice. With the technology of today, it is relatively simple to provide a video of you in action in practice and/or games. This video does not have to be a Martin Scorsese production, but a 2-3 minute video of the most pertinent actions in competition. For a baseball player, it should be as simple as about 10 swings in the batting cage, a few field/ throws from your position, or about 10-15 pitches from a couple of angles in practice. Combine with a few clips of game action and that should do it.

You have a couple of options to deliver this to the college recruiters. The best way is to upload the video to a YouTube account with which you can send the colleges a web link to the video. The other is to create a DVD so that you can send a hard copy of the video to the colleges. Many coaches do prefer the YouTube option so that they have access to the video even from the road without a DVD.

Another option is to develop your own website (e.g. www.johndoebaseball.com) that will host your video(s) relevant resume information and recent accomplishments in athletics and academics. This is not common or completely necessary but it will exhibit your initiative, skill and desire to do whatever it takes to be a collegiate athlete.

Personal and Specific Communication

After you have the resume and video, you can now start to broadcast your interest to your list(s) of schools. However, one mistake many athletes make is their "cover letter" is very generic and does not show the athlete's specific interests in attending their college. The introduction or "cover letter" should be a quick note to the school explaining specifically why you are interested in their college on and athletic and academic level. Coaches and administrators want an athlete that truly has a desire to be at their college for the whole package. If you express this, it shows that you are in it for not just athletics, but for the entire college experience (most importantly the degree). This will give you an edge over another similar athlete that sends out a generic email or letter with no specific information on why they would like to attend their college or university.

And Don't Forget....

When I consult with athletes on becoming a collegiate athlete, I always discuss with them what it will take to be in position to become a collegiate athlete. The most important aspect of getting recruited by your dream school is to perform on the field (court, course, or pool) and in the classroom. If you do not put the work in to excel in athletics **and** academics, the colleges that will consider your services as a student athlete will be limited. In other words, if you spend all of your time trying to be recruited by colleges, you may be taking away from the devotion and commitment necessary to reach your potential as a student athlete.

While there is more to the strategy of managing the college recruiting process, taking these steps above will not only provide the information to market yourself to college recruiters, but will also help organize your efforts to navigate the complex process of making the right decisions on becoming a student athlete.

Brad Woodall and Woodall Training provide sports instruction, fitness training and college recruiting seminars/consultation to student-athletes throughout the nation. For more information, go to www.woodalltraining.com or contact Woodall Training at brad@woodalltraining.com

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