



College Recruiting

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Topics



The Landscape

**Levels of college athletics,
characteristics, and trends**



The Process

**The step-by-step journey of
college athletic recruiting**



The Playbook

**Essential tips and advice for
athletes and families**

What type of athlete are you?



Detached

Don't do what is asked



Compliant

Do what is asked



Committed

Do more than what is asked

The College Level

The Talent Level is High

- The best on their high school teams
- The top athletes in their high school
- Receive Team, League, and State awards



The Numbers

40M



Youth Athletes

8M



High School Athletes

20%

500k+



**College Varsity roster
spots, all divisions**

3.5%–7%

↓ For HS athletes

2M+



**Club sport
participation**

The Numbers by Sport

"I thought my daughter could play professionally or in the Olympics as a water polo player. I believe that," said Asia Mape, founder of the "I Love to Watch You Play" website and a speaker at the Project Play Summit. "I also think it's important to remember that it's OK. Dreaming is a big part of what we're doing for our kids. ... That's sort of our role. We support, we guide, we grow."

"But then there comes a point where we have to pivot, and this is one of the biggest problems. We don't pivot with our kids. We stay stuck on their initial dreams. We stay stuck on our dreams for them. And when they change, we have to change. Or when society tells us we have to change because they're not making their high school or middle school team, then we have to pivot with them."

Odds of High School Athletes Playing NCAA Division I College Sports

Sport	Male	Female
Baseball	2.4%	N/A
Basketball	1.0%	1.4%
Cross Country	2.1%	2.9%
Field Hockey	N/A	3.6%
Football	3.0%	N/A
Golf	1.9%	2.8%
Ice Hockey	5.0%	10.2%
Lacrosse	3.3%	4.3%
Soccer	1.4%	2.7%
Softball	N/A	2.0%
Swimming and diving	3.3%	4.2%
Tennis	1.5%	1.5%
Track and field	1.9%	2.8%
Volleyball	0.7%	1.2%
Water polo	3.1%	4.4%
Wrestling	1.0%	N/A

Source: NCAA

Note: The above odds of U.S. athletes playing in college are even lower in many sports, as the calculations made by the NCAA (total number of graduating high school athletes divided by the total number of Division I college athletes) do not account for international athletes. In sports such as tennis, soccer and golf, many Division I roster spots go to international athletes.



Division I

Athletic Profile & Rules

Membership & Scale

Top division featuring **351 schools** across Power Conferences, Mid-Majors, and the Ivy League.

Financials & Aid

Largest athletic budgets in collegiate sports. Full athletic scholarships available (except Ivy League).

Expectations & Compliance

Demands the highest level of commitment with the most stringent recruiting rules in the NCAA.

RECRUITING CALENDAR

Division I Football Subdivision

DEAD PERIOD
CONTACT PERIOD



RECRUITING CALENDAR

Women's Lacrosse

DEAD PERIOD
CONTACT PERIOD
RECRUITING SHUTDOWN





Division II

Athletic Profile & Balance

Membership & Scale

A diverse division featuring **293 schools** committed to academic and athletic excellence.

Financials & Scholarships

Offers **partial scholarships**, blending athletic talent with need-based and merit-based financial aid.

Balanced Schedule

Focuses on integration, offering student-athletes a highly competitive environment with more personal balance.

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Division III

Athletic Profile & Integration

Membership & Scale

The largest division in the NCAA, featuring **430 schools** committed to academic and athletic integration.

Financials & Scholarships

No athletic scholarships are offered, but student-athletes are eligible for need-based and merit-based financial aid.

Balanced Schedule

Focuses on a highly competitive environment with **no NCAA recruiting calendar**, ensuring a well-rounded college experience.

430

Active Member Schools

100%

Academic & Merit Aid Focus

NAIA

Athletic Profile & Flexibility

Membership & Campus Life

Governs 250+ member schools across the U.S. and Canada. Operates as a single division with smaller, focused campuses (82% private, 65% faith-based).

Recruiting & Eligibility

Eligibility is simpler with alternative criteria options like GPA or class rank. There are no recruiting calendar restrictions, allowing continuous communication.

Scholarship Flexibility

Scholarships are equivalency-based, meaning funding can be split among athletes and stacked with academic aid.

83,000+

Student-Athletes Competing Annually

\$1.3 Billion

Scholarship Aid Awarded Each Year

28

National Championships Hosted



Key Trends

High School Recruiting Gets Harder

- ❖ **Transfer Portal**
- ❖ **NIL and player payment**
- ❖ **D1 age-based eligibility (5 years)**
- ❖ **Roster limits**

What you can do

- **Start Earlier**
- **Generate Awareness**
- **Patience + Persistence**
- **Differentiate**
- **Think Beyond D1**

Recruiting

What Programs Look For?

- 01 College-level skill**
- 02 Specific class-year needs**
- 03 Requisite grades and transcript**
- 04 Athletes (e.g. multi-sport)**
- 05 Intangibles (e.g. coachable, leadership, want)**

The Want

THE REALITY

- ★ The process is a ton of work
- ★ Athletes must be committed

KEY QUESTIONS

- ? Is your athlete driving the process?
- ? Are you committed?
e.g. training, nutrition, private coaching,
academics

The Signals

POSITIVE (PERSONAL)

- ★ Coach reaches out directly and regularly (text, DM)
- ★ Coaches follow you on social media
- ★ Personal invitations to visit/camp/showcase/prospect day
- ★ Position coach and/or head coach personally host your visit
- ★ Coach makes it clear you are at the top of their depth chart
- ★ Coach asks about your timeline and commitment
- ★ Coach wants to speak with your parents/guardian

NEUTRAL / NEGATIVE (GENERIC)

- ? Receive general communication inviting to camps, Junior days, Prospect days
- ? No direct replies or responses such as "thanks!" or "come to our camp"
- ? Visits are scheduled by you; recruiting coordinator or other staff member host your visit

The Funnel





Questions for Coaches



Early in process

- What do you look for in a student-athlete?
- What makes for a successful experience at your school?
- What is the recruiting process and timeline?
- Do players participate in non-sports activities (e.g., study abroad)? Is something like that possible?
- **What camps and showcases will you be attending?**

Later in process

- What makes for a successful athlete in your program?
- Do I fill a need for the program this recruiting class?
- How would you describe the team culture?
- What's generally the schedule for your players both in-season and off-season?
- Based on my video, what do you see? Any areas to work on?
- **Where am I on your recruiting depth chart?**



High School, Camps and Showcases



FOOTBALL



**TRACK &
FIELD**



**WATER
POLO**



Clubs, Camps and Tournaments

LACROSSE

SOCCER

BASKETBALL

BASEBALL

SOFTBALL

SWIMMING

VOLLEYBALL

**FIELD
HOCKEY**

What percentage of current college athletes have played club sports?



Soccer

Women: 88%

Men: 77%



Basketball

Women: 92%

Men: 91%



Volleyball

Women: 91%



Field
Hockey

79%



Swimming

Women: 79%

Men: 79%



Softball
Baseball

Softball: 94%

Baseball: 85%



Lacrosse

Women: 81%

Men: 82%

Example



The Start

Sophomore Year

- College Football decision (QB)
- **Independent evaluation** (D3, D1 FCS & Ivy)
- Inform coaches; seek advice
- A few summer camps (low stress to gain experience)
- Private Coach



Junior and Senior Year

Jan (Jr. year)

- List of 30 target schools
- Roster Research
- Highlight video and intro email
- Recruiting Questionnaires
- Register with NCAA
- MaxPreps, YouTube, Hudl, X, IG

Summer

- Camps at target schools w/ Coach meetups
- More emails/DM and content (athletic resume)
- Jr. transcript, Sr. Class schedule for pre-read
- Coach recommendation
- Interest clarifies >> 5 interested programs



Spring

- Visit schools and coaches
- Prospect and Junior days
- More emails/DM and video (coaching sessions)
- Align with college counseling
- Interest takes shape >> D3

Fall/Winter (Sr. year)

- Offers >> 2 and a PWO
- College applications
- Continue communications
- Programs want ED1 or ED2



Tips and Advice

How To Evaluate Your Talent?

01

**Seek at least two
independent
evaluations**

02

Ask your coaches

03

**Attend camps
outside our area**

04

**Contact a variety of
schools across all
levels >> Who is
responding?**

**** There is no crystal ball; recruiting is subjective ****

Tip: <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZP8jfx6f6/>

Communication

Key Guidelines

- Most coaches DM and email
- Coaches read/write from their phone
- **Make all communication purposeful;**
what do you want the coach to do?

Example Email Signature

Hudson Karnes

6'4" 210 lb. QB

Woodside Priory School (Portola Valley, CA)

Cell: (650) 779-8144

[Highlight Video \(HUDL link\)](#)

Twitter: @HudsonKarnes

Instagram: hudson_karnes

Head Coach, Doug Sargent, (650) 743-7258

Videos

Video Guidelines

- Record a lot of clips to have a rich content library.
- Keep highlight videos to 2–3 min; update every 1–2 months.
- Lead with your best clips first, then showcase your variety of skills.
- Send shorter 15–30 sec specific clips as follow-ups.

Sharing & Evaluation

Distribution Plan:

- Email your videos directly to target coaches.
- Post onto Hudl, X (Twitter), IG, and YouTube.

Coach Evaluation Styles:

- Football: Game Video | Baseball: Skills | Track: Metrics

Tips: [NCSA Recruiting Video Guide](#) | [YouTube Video Strategy Tips](#)

Example: [HUDL Highlight Video Example](#)



Athletes



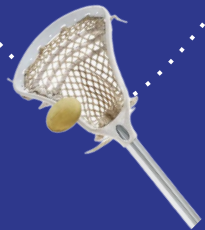
- Stay positive and **BELIEVE**
- Seek help and support
- Be aspirational and realistic
- Have a plan when communicating with coaches (email, DM, at camps)
- Leverage (not abuse) Social Media
- Enjoy High School



Families, Caregivers



- **Live in the background $\Rightarrow$ You are not being recruited**
- **The best time to communicate with coaches is during campus visits**
- **Offer support, encouragement, positive energy $\Rightarrow$ A lot of stress and rejection**
- **Help with the details (e.g. organization, timelines, content, budget)**
- **Pay attention to The Want and help decode The Signals**



Caution



- **“You have been identified” emails $\neq$ interest**
- **Over-hyped social media, e.g. “Offered!” “Benched 300 lbs.!”**
- **Overestimating level and ability (not everyone is D1)**
- **Underestimating D3**
- **Overcrowded camps or showcases**
- **The roaming, sideline “sports parent”**

? Common Questions ?

- **How do we know whether this is possible?**
- **Paid Recruiting Services (e.g. NCSA)**
- **Prioritizing school choices: Academic vs. Athletic goals**
- **How many camps to attend (evaluation vs. exposure)**
- **Walk-on opportunities**
- **Club Sports**
- **PG and JUCO**

Club Sports

Approx. 2M+ play, and it's growing



Competitive



Student and Coach driven



More inclusive



Balanced schedule



Schools fund and support



Scholarships

Postgraduate (PG) Year

- **An extra year of high school (and costs) after graduation but before college**
- **Available at private or independent schools**
- **Improve preparedness (academic, athletic)**
- **Strengthen candidacy for college**
- **Re-classifying option**

The NCAA allows athletes in all sports, except for tennis and hockey, a one year grace-period after they graduate high school. After the one-year period the NCAA can start taking away years of eligibility.

Resources

Advice and Information

PRI⁺ORY

- ❖ **Jeff Karnes**
- ❖ **College Counseling**
- ❖ **Coaches**
- ❖ **Mark Stogner**



Getting Started Checklist

- ☐ **Connect with your coach and college counselor**
- ☐ **Determine your goals**
- ☐ **Determine financial considerations**
- ☐ **Come up with a list of 30 schools**
- ☐ **Complete recruiting questionnaires**
- ☐ **Create highlight reel of 3 minutes (or less)**
- ☐ **Align social media with your video and important stats**
- ☐ **Create a tracking spreadsheet with schools, tasks, contacts**
- ☐ **Send an introductory emails and track responses**

D3

- [NESCAC](#)
- [SCIAC](#)
- [Northwest Conference](#)
- [Liberty](#)
- [MIAC](#)
- [NEWMAC](#)

D1, mid-majors

- [Ivy League](#)
- [Patriot League](#)
- [Colonial Athletic Association](#)
- [Atlantic 10](#)
- [The Big West](#)

D2

- [NE10](#)

General Checklist

- ☐ **College goals**
- ☐ **Financial considerations**
- ☐ **Academic fit**
- ☐ **Athletic fit (be realistic)**
- ☐ **Timelines & Rules (D1 vs. D3)**
- ☐ **Identify key coaches & contacts**
- ☐ **Complete Recruiting Questionnaires; register with NCAA**
- ☐ **Communicate (Email, DM, X, IG, YouTube, Hudl, MaxPreps)**
- ☐ **Prioritize levels (D1, D2, D3)**
- ☐ **Target ~ 30 schools**
- ☐ **Evaluate colleges independent of playing varsity sports**
- ☐ **Pay attention to the signals**
- ☐ **Visit (in-person or virtual)**
- ☐ **Camps and showcases**
- ☐ **Coach recommendations**



Go Panthers!

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