

2009 Key Recruiting Checklist

Literally hundreds of tasks are necessary to achieve your goal of playing at the college of your dreams—ranging from tearing it up on the field to making sure your No. 2 pencil is sharpened at SAT time. And each task, no matter how significant or how small, presents a risk and an opportunity. Use the following checklist to avoid the pitfalls and make yourself the best recruit possible.

Prior to junior year

- Set seasonal, yearly and overall high school athletic and academic goals
 - Write them down
 - Be realistic
 - Keep them where you'll see them regularly
 - Assess your progress at the end of each season/school quarter
- Maintain good academic standing
 - Don't cut class
 - Strive for good grades
 - Take advantage of study halls and tutors
 - Don't cheat
 - Show respect to teachers and fellow students
 - Avoid detentions and suspensions
- Identify athletic weaknesses; research safe and effective methods, or professionals, to help you eliminate them
- Develop good relationships with teachers who will eventually write your college letters of recommendation
- Get involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities
- Be aware of your off-field lifestyle and the image it portrays
 - Choose friends wisely; avoid troublesome crowds
 - Keep online profiles clean
 - Avoid drugs, alcohol and tobacco
 - Don't fight
 - Don't break the law
 - Adhere to a reasonable curfew
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss NCAA curriculum and grade requirements
- Consider playing multiple sports to develop and display well-rounded athleticism
- Maintain poise and sportsmanship at all times. College coaches watch you during competition, even when you are not playing. Always:
 - Cheer on teammates
 - Respond to referees and/or bad calls in a professional manner
 - Interact positively with coaches on the sideline
 - Keep your head up. Don't pout regardless of score or situation
 - Avoid fighting
 - Celebrate with class
- Have all athletic competitions videotaped for future use
- Create a filing system to organize athletic awards, newspaper clippings and outstanding achievements
- Research the best non-schoolsponsored athletic leagues in your area—club teams, AAU, summer leagues, etc.
- Participate in non-schoolsponsored athletic competition
- Create a resume that includes academic and athletic achievements

- Send initial contact letters to college coaches at schools you are interested in attending
 - Find name, address and other information about coach on school's website
 - Express your interest in playing for the program
 - Include athletic and academic resume
 - Attach a schedule of your games for the upcoming seasons
- Create a filing system for materials and info you receive from colleges and coaches
- Complete and return all questionnaires
- Inform college coaches about camps and clinics you'll be attending
- Attend camps and clinics at schools you are interested in attending
- Begin pulling clips and creating a highlight tape
- Attend a college competition in your sport
 - Contact parents of athletes on the college team's roster to find out if they're happy with their son's or daughter's experiences with the team
 - Observe the way the coach interacts with his team
 - Gauge the level of play compared to your ability
- Assess your athletic ability
 - Talk to your coaches
 - Measure yourself against other players at your position in your state/district/conference
 - Compare your accomplishments to the high school accomplishments of players on rosters of colleges that you think you could play for
- Begin thinking about the academic area of study you might want to major in, and research which schools excel in that area
- Solicit information about colleges by talking to:
 - Friends
 - Guidance counselors
 - College's alumni
- Talk with parents or guardians about:
 - Cost and what you can afford
 - Location
 - Academic opportunities and programs
 - Their academic and athletic expectations for you in college
- Create a target list of colleges in each of the following categories:
 - Likely admission
 - Safety net
 - Reach
- Send follow-up letters to coaches who haven't responded to your initial contact
- Assess benefits of using a recruiting service
- Familiarize yourself with the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Athlete
- Open a dialogue with your high school coaches about the college coaches who have contacted them about you and the colleges that most interest you

Junior year

- Register, prep for and take standardized tests
- Register with NCAA Eligibility Center [must be done by end of junior year]
- Schedule and take unofficial visits
 - Find time to meet with coaches around their busy schedules
 - Bring pen and notepad, and have a few questions ready about the program, the coach's level of interest and his or her plans to remain at the school during your four years
 - Provide coaches with your highlight tape and stat sheet
 - Talk to players on the team
 - Check out the facilities
 - Go to a class in your area of interest
 - Keep a journal to list pros and cons of each school and coaching staff after visits
- Continue to update college coaches on your athletic successes
- Update highlight tape with recent clips
- Talk to athletes from your school who now play at the collegiate level. Ask about:
 - The level of competition
 - How college life and sports differ from their high school experiences
 - Any additional advice they have to offer
- Update wardrobe with clothes appropriate for meetings with college coaches
- Send thank you note after any meeting with a coach
- Have high school coach call college coaches to recommend you as an athlete
- Prepare a list of questions for coaches when they call (they can call after May 1 of your junior year for football and after July 1 for most other sports). Cover these topics:
 - Their level of interest
 - Chance of an official visit
 - Possibility of a scholarship
 - Who they have at your position (height, weight, stats)
 - Your upcoming game schedule and the possibility of their attendance

Senior year

- Be prepared for an in-school visit from a college coach at any time
 - Have questions ready in your locker
 - Dress appropriately at all times
- Retake standardized tests if necessary
- Avoid senioritis—continue to take challenging courses and strive for good grades
- Narrow down schools you're interested in and eliminate those in which you definitely have no interest
- Plan and take official visits. Remember, only five are allowed
 - Bring pen and notepad. Have questions ready for meetings with coaches (see Communicating with a Coach, page 33)
 - Talk to as many players as possible, not just the happy ones
 - Go to a class in your field of interest
 - Stay on campus
 - Always conduct yourself properly
 - Keep a journal to list pros and cons of each school and coaching staff after visits
- Set time standards as to when you want to take phone calls from coaches
- Assess financial needs by talking with parents and various schools' financial aid offices
- Apply for financial aid
- Research and apply for alternative sources of funds
- Once you begin receiving financial aid offers from colleges, share them with other coaches to improve your final offer
- Create timetable for all application deadlines
- Ask teachers for recommendations
- Calculate your GPA and find out your class rank
- Request official transcript from guidance counselor
- Ask college coaches to waive application fees
- Decide whether to apply early action or early decision
- Write application essays early so you have time to edit and perfect them
- Complete the rest of applications and mail before deadlines
- Narrow college choices to your top three opportunities
- Make final decision
- Notify all college coaches you've been speaking with of your final decision
- Contact your new college coach to receive strength and conditioning manual
- Mail thank you letter and/or graduation party invite to