

The National College Planning Summit

What Parents Need to Hear!

You Don't Pick the School, The School Picks You!

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*Jack Renkens, founder of Recruiting Realities, is a national expert on the College Athletic Recruiting Process. He is a former College Basketball coach and tells it like it is! It may not be what parents **want** to hear, but it's definitely what they **need** to hear!*

1. Jack, can you give us some basic information that parents and students need to know about playing sports in college?

- a. Families need to be realistic about the opportunities that are available and understand it is about getting your education - not about hitting the ball. You must find the right match academically.
- b. There are a lot of student athletes and less than 1% are going to Division 1 Schools.
- c. However, 99% can play at the college level in divisions other than D1.
- d. The key is finding the right school & right financial aid package.

2. What are the 3 basic realities that StudentAthletes need to come to terms with?-(if these are your objectives for the future):

- a. You want to go to school to get your education. This is a 40 year decision. Where you go to college will impact the rest of your life.
- b. You want to go to a school where you are actually going to get to play - not sit on the bench or be a walk-on.
- c. You want to have it financially funded in some way.
- d. If these are your objectives, you don't get to pick the school, the school picks you.

3. What do you mean by “You don’t get to pick the school, the school picks you?”

- a. Collegecoachescan’t recruit you if they don't know who you are. Student athletes need to market themselves. You need to understand the college athletic recruiting process.
- b. Top Tier –Division 1 –These are student athletes that are rated, ranked and evaluated byhundreds of services across the country. You can buy a list of the top 100 Quarterbacks in the US. But only 3-5% of athletes will be rated and evaluated.
 - i. These athletes are going to have some opportunities.

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- c. Even if you are rated the 87th best quarterback in the country, you are not going to get to pick the school.
- d. 95-97 % are not rated, ranked and evaluated. Those are the athletes who need to market themselves.
- e. Families think - OK, I'll make a list of 10 - 15 schools that my son or daughter wants to attend. But the reality is they will have to contact 150-200 colleges.

4. What about recruiting services?

- a. There are 100's of recruiting services on the internet. Some good and bad.

5. Can My High School Coach help me get recruited?

- a. Let's use Baseball as an example. There are 1628 college baseball programs in the US.
- b. Does the High School Coach have the email for every position coach at every college (pitching, third base, etc.)?
- c. Does he know the academic criteria for each college?
- d. Does he have the rosters of each college program with all the freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors and the positions each one plays?
- e. High School coaches love their kids, but the average High School coach doesn't even know 5% of the college coaches and their programs.

6. What are some marketing strategies that student athletes can use?

- a. Research the college website.
- b. Reach out by email and call on the phone.
- c. Social media

7. How large a group of schools should I reach out to?

- a. 100-200 colleges - Start as a freshman and do some each week.
- b. You need to have a forward looking view and work on developing relationships with as many college coaches as you can.

8. What other research do I need to do?

- a. Look at the Sunday Sports section & look at the college scores.
- b. Do we know what state these colleges are in?
- c. What level are they? NCAA, NAIA, Division 1, 2 or 3?
- d. What are the academic offerings at the college?
- e. What are the facilities?

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9. This is a true story.

- a. I asked a HS student, “If you got fully funded to Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio. Would you go?” The student says, “I’ve never heard of it, I don’t want to go there.” My response is, “Then you don’t want to play!”

10. Here is another example.

- a. “What if your daughter got fully funded at Carleton College in Minnesota?” Parent’s response, “No, we want her to go to a good school.” My response, “Carleton College is the 7th ranked Liberal Arts College in the country by US News & World Report.”
- b. Baldwin Wallace College and Carleton College are NCAA Division 3 colleges.

11. In Division 3 - Academics are the primary focus.

- a. They do not offer athletic aid, but they offer very generous funding. Parents need to step back and look at colleges in all the different divisions and in different parts of the country. Financial goals can be met if the family is realistic and does their research.

12. What are some of the challenges parents have?

- a. Parents have an unrealistic belief about how good their student is in a particular sport.
- b. They do not understand where their student fits in the recruiting process.

13. How do you know how good your student athlete is?

- a. Here are a few critical recruiting dates and contacts from the NCAA Guide for College Bound Student Athlete.
- b. For Division 1 Football - if you don’t receive a call from the coach by June 15th of your sophomore year, no one knows about your student.
- c. Dates and contact periods are different for every sport.
- d. Parents need to know the dates – use the NCAA Guide to learn about contact periods.
- e. Families need to start early in freshman year. College coaches need to know who you are so they can track you.

14. Who should reach out - student or parent?

- a. Coaches would prefer to talk to student but parents need to get involved and do research. Students need to get on the coaches radar.

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15. Don't get hung up on the word "Athletic Scholarship"

- a. Students and parents want to talk about Athletic Scholarships but what they really need to understand is putting together a Financial Aid Package made up of Merit Aid, Grant Aid and Academic Aid. They need to focus on funding rather than Athletic Scholarships and they need to understand negotiating.
- b. I used to coach basketball at Assumption College. An NCAA Division 2 school which costs about \$52,000 per year.
- c. Let's say, I'm recruiting your son. I've got a folder on your family. I make an Official Home Visit. I know the dog's name, I sent mom & dad an anniversary card and my seven assistant coaches emailed your son every day for 2 years. They sent him 10 hand written notes every week. I also know that your son has 9 offers. I've got to pay or I'm not getting your son to play for Assumption College. You are in the position to negotiate. "If they don't pay, you don't play!"
- d. But what if the folder tells me that you have no offers and took Unofficial Visits to other schools - I'm not making a home visit. I'm going to invite you for an Unofficial Visit. When you get on campus, I'm going to tell you exactly what you want to hear. "Financial Aid" (but it is need based only.) The family is not in a position to negotiate.
- e. Students and parents need to get into a position where they can negotiate. "What is the student's potential?" "Where are you going to fit in?" "What potential schools are there?" - be realistic.
- f. You won't be in a position to negotiate if you are not involved with a lot of schools.
- g. It is just like applying for a job. Do you send out 3 resumes or 100 resumes?

16. How much do grades and SAT scores matter for High School Student Athletes?

- a. The #1 criteria for coaches is "What is their academic background?" If it is strong, the coach knows the student can get accepted into the school & the coach can get them some money.

17. Can the Coach help the student be admitted to the university?

- a. They have a little leeway.

18. What is the NCAA Eligibility Center?

- a. The Center verifies that the student athlete is eligible athletically.
- b. It has nothing to do with admissions.
- c. It costs \$75 and you can register after your sophomore year in HS.
- d. If you are not a member of the Eligibility Center for D1 & D2, you cannot take an Official Paid Visit.

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- e. D3 is not required to register with the Eligibility Center. However, you are eliminating opportunities at lower level Division 2 schools. I recommend that every single family register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

19. Can you tell us about the different Collegiate Athletic Organizations?

- a. NCAA
 - i. D1 - more students, large athletic budgets.
 - ii. D2 - more life balance - academic and athletically gifted students can compete at high levels.
 - iii. D3 - main focus is academic while playing a sport. Great opportunities to play sports in college.
- b. NAIA - National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Another governing body.
- c. National Junior College Athletic Association - every state in US, except California which has its own governing body.

20. Are Community College Students eligible to transfer to 4 year colleges?

- a. Yes - Every school has admissions standards for community college students. Check with each individual school.
- b. There are ratings, rankings and evaluations of Junior College Student Athletes.

21. What are the playing opportunities for women and women's scholarships?

- a. Enormous
- b. Title IX - opportunities for women.
 - i. Another True Story - Lindsay Wilson College in Paducah, KY - Woman's Golf. The High School Student had only broken 95 once in her life and received a fully funded scholarship to Lindsay Wilson College which is a member of the NAIA.

22. What is a full ride scholarships?

- a. Room, Board, Books, Fees, Tuition

23. Can you explain Headcount Sports Scholarships?

- a. Men's - football, basketball
- b. Women's - basketball, tennis, gymnastics, golf
- c. If you are in Division 1 in a Headcount sport, you are going to get the full ride.

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24. What about Equivalency Sports Scholarships?

- a. In NCAA Division 1 or 2 the Coach has one big pool of money to be divided up among all the athletes.
- b. The school can give Athletic Aid, Academic Aid, and Grant Aid to put together the Financial Aid Package
- c. With Equivalency sports, it's harder to get fully funded unless, you are in a position to negotiate.

25. How many years is the athletic scholarship good for?

- a. One year- On or before July 1 you will find out if your scholarship is going to be renewed. Most are renewed, unless you had some type of scandal.

26. Does the NCAA provide the scholarship or does it come from the college?

- a. The college.

27. What is an Official Visit for College Recruiting?

- a. The College pays for transportation, hotel, dinner and three complimentary tickets to a sporting event over a 48 hour period of time.

28. What questions should parents ask college coaches?

- a. "Are you going to be offering us an Official Paid Visit?" If they say no, they are not serious about recruiting your student.
- b. "Are you going to make a Home Visit?" If they are serious about your student, they will make a Home Visit.
- c. "Can you waive the Application Fee? If the coach is serious about you, he will ask you to apply for Admission. The coach can waive the fee.
- d. Everyone gets invited for Unofficial Visits. Only serious recruits are invited to Official Visits.

29. What is the National Letter of Intent? (NLI)

- a. This letter indicates that you are signing & agreeing to attend this college for the next academic year and no one else can recruit you.
- b. All the Financial Aid is explicitly spelled out in the NLI - Grant Money, Athletic Money, and Merit Money.

30. Can you comment on this? "I heard that Mike, who is in 9th grade, has already received scholarship offers from a university. Is that possible?"

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- a. Absolutely—it is a verbal commitment.
- b. It is not binding for either party.
- c. If you make a verbal commitment at an early age it is not a good thing - for example, if the coach gets fired and the new coach is not interested in you.

31. “I heard that the coach from XYZ University is going to be at the girls’ volleyball tournament. Do you think my daughter will be discovered?”

- a. There may be 15-20 college coaches in attendance. Every coach that attends club or AAU events are usually only D1 - they are the only schools with the money. Local D2 or D3 will attend if it is a 2-3 hour drive.
- b. But no matter what level, coaches are going to the event to evaluate the kids they are actively recruiting.
- c. They are not going there to discover anybody. They are looking for a specific position to fill, for the upcoming or maybe two seasons down the road.
- d. Students need to be recruited first and then they get evaluated at these events.

32. Do you have any Final Thoughts?

- a. “There is a place to play and they'll pay!”
- b. The levels of play can vary from school to school, even if they are in the same division.
 - i. Division 3 - U of Wisconsin is the Division 3 National Championship Winner. It's highly competitive.
 - ii. But you can go to Colby Sawyer College in Vermont (also Division 3) & you can play there.
- c. Understand where your potentials are, get out there as broadly as possible and look for the good fit.

33. Can you tell us about Recruiting Realities and how to contact you?

- a. The best way to contact us is through our website: www.recruitingrealities.com
- b. You can purchase my Student Athlete Guidebook for \$29.95. It has everything you need to know about the College Athletic Recruiting Process.