

Key Recruiting Checklist

Courtesy of [STACK Magazine](#)

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 over-all 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 life-style 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-school sponsored athletic leagues in your area—club teams, AAU, summer leagues, etc.
- Participate in non-school sponsored 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

Prior to Junior Year continued...

**"The difference between failure and success is doing a thing nearly right and doing it exactly right."
-- Edward C. Simmons**

- ↪ 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.

"If you are going to be a champion, you must be willing to pay a greater price."

**-- Bud
Wilkinson**

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.

**"It isn't hard to be good from time to time in sports. What is tough, is being good every day."
-- Willie Mays**