

Three College Recruiting Tactics That Will Get the Attention of College Coaches

Suppose you're a high school athlete and you know that you want to take your game to the next level. You may have gotten a few letters, a few e-mails, maybe a call or two from college coaches at nearby schools. You want to get the word out more broadly, and you're not exactly sure how to go about it. Here are three ideas for you to pursue to make sure coaches take notice of you:

1

Send out an articulate and personalized cover letter to coaches at schools you're interested in, directing them to wherever they need to go to see more information about you.

You may be tempted to send e-mails all over the place but it's much too easy to delete an e-mail without reading it while a letter will get opened and read. There are several things you want to accomplish with this letter:

First, make sure you mention something that will set you apart. It could be something about your size, speed, stats, academic record, one spectacular performance, or an award you won. It should be something that is intriguing enough for this coach to want to know more.

Second, make sure you mention something about the sports program that helps the coach understand why you're interested and how you can add some value. Every kid who contacts this coach wants a spot, but you will impress a coach by showing that you've done your homework and you understand enough about their program to speak intelligently about how you would fit.

Third, direct the coach to where they can find more information about you. There are lots of options for this (see 2 below). Just make sure you remember to invite them to take the next step.

2

Prepare a resume with your athletic and academic profile, and videotape of a game or skills at a minimum. You may also choose to add highlights, a personal interview, and a high school coach interview to your videotape.

You can find templates for the letter suggested in number 1 above, and the resume in number 2 above in my book, *Put Me In, Coach* (www.rightfitpress.com). There are several venues for your information:

You may choose to make and send out a hard copy of your profile and your videotape. These can be sent along with your cover letter. You also need to decide whether to send your videotape to every coach you're interested in, or just to invite the coach to request it. One disadvantage of mailings is the expense of producing and mailing individual copies to many coaches when only a few will probably be interested.

You may want to post your information to a recruiting website like www.berecruited.com. For a relatively minor fee, these websites let you archive your profile, some videotape, and sometimes other things like recommendation letters from high school or club coaches. The advantage of posting your information is that once it's posted, you just need to direct coaches to it. You may still need to offer to send videotape as not all recruiting websites will store a long piece of game tape. Do not assume that once your information is posted, coaches will flock to it. You still need to send out cover letters or make phone calls to give them a reason to go to your information. Some sites offer help with coach e-mail addresses as well.

You may also choose to develop your own website and it can be custom made to reflect whatever you want it to. Again, make sure that you send out cover letters to drive coaches to your site.

3

Follow up with a personal phone call to the coaches at the top of your list.

This is probably the hardest thing to do because most student athletes are a little intimidated by coaches and unsure of what to say. Coaches are busy people so don't assume that if they don't call back right away, they're not interested. On the other hand, if you're contacting coaches at the most competitive programs, understand that they've probably been tracking their top recruits for a long time and are not going to be very receptive to a kid they know nothing about. Make sure you target programs that are appropriate to your skills.

Coaches are generally very happy to talk to kids who are interested in their program and are the right skill level for their program. Just tell them you're starting your search, you think their program might be a good fit because (whatever reason you've come up with), and you'd like to make sure they have an opportunity to review your information. Offer to send your information to them or ask them if they would like to know where to see whatever you've posted on the web.

Follow these three steps and you will attract some attention. Keep in mind that as interested as coaches are in your athletic ability and academics, they're equally interested in your maturity level and your communication skills, and this marketing process is a great way to display them.