

COMMON MISTAKES PARENTS AND STUDENTS MAKE IN THE ATHLETIC RECRUITING PROCESS

The college recruiting process is often paved with a myriad of mistakes by parents, students, and high school coaches. Some mistakes are fairly obvious, others are not. Here is a brief list of common mistakes that can really put you at a disadvantage in your recruiting process. Keep them in mind.

- Parents often believe their son or daughter is better than they actually are, and assume they will be recruited while they wait for their mailbox to fill up with scholarship offers or wait for phone calls from coaches. This is the **number one mistake**. You have to be proactive in contacting coaches, and parents should not be the ones to do it all. Coaches want to hear from the student and people who coach the student.
- Student athletes **overestimate** their ability and often believe they are better than they actually are. Again, same situation as listed above occurs. Overestimating your talent can leave you in the cold for a college career if you only target schools that are above your talent level. Though many kids make this mistake and end up transferring, a lot just get cut and never play their sport again. And that's a shame.
- Student-athletes **underestimate** their ability, and they think they would not be capable of getting a scholarship and they don't even try to obtain a scholarship. You don't have to be the best player in your league or even on your team to get some scholarship money, but you have to be a pretty good athlete and skilled at your sport. Most of all you have to try and in many cases have to ask for a scholarship. Scholarship talent is usually noticed, but not always. Don't be shy about your ability, or about calling attention to it and your aspirations.
- Parents and student-athletes often see other athletes get recruited and assume the same thing will happen to them since "I am better" or "I am just as good as they are." Few people realize how college and professional scouts evaluate players. A .440 hitter in high school who has reached his talent ceiling will scratch his head when a .250 hitter, who has barely scratched the surface of his ability is offered a scholarship or drafted. Stats don't always tell the story.
- Parents and student-athletes often feel anything less than an athletic scholarship to a Division I program is unacceptable. As the emergence of camps, showcases and private instruction takes on a new and more important role, many families feel that they need a scholarship to justify the time and expense they have already put into athletics. Understand that scholarships are rare, full scholarships even more so, and that a lot of times, a grant and aid package from a non-scholarship school is more lucrative than one with athletic aid.
- Student-athletes get a letter in the mail from a coach and think they are being recruited and think they are now a top college prospect. Colleges send thousands of direct mail pieces to students on lists they purchase. Be glad you got a letter, return any enclosed paper work, research the school, wait for the coach to contact you (call them if you don't hear), and then the actual recruiting process might begin.
- Parents and student-athletes assume that if they are talented enough on the athletic field, their grades do not matter much because a coach will get them into the school. Wrong! The first thing a college coach needs to know about a student-athlete is if they are eligible to play or enroll at their school.
- Parents and students don't realize how rare a full scholarship is. Aside of Division I football and basketball powerhouses, most scholarships issued to players are partial scholarships.
- Parents and students often receive help and encouragement from people who know very little about the recruiting process and little about college athletics. Listen to the right people and do your own homework. Also, beware of any agendas someone might have.
- Parents and students do not always know how to evaluate athletic ability accurately. Success on your team or league does not mean you are ready to be a college athlete or capable of receiving a college scholarship or even competing at the college level. Playing in camps or tournaments out of your local area is a good way to measure yourself against the larger population of athletes.
- Families start the process too late and end up making a rushed decision. Start researching schools as early as possible and make first contact with college coaches at the start of your junior year, possibly even the end of your sophomore year. Just get your name in their pipeline by submitting a player profile questionnaire found on-line at any college sports Web site.