

As you all navigate collegiate recruiting process, we have put together a detailed 4-week recruiting plan for you to follow.

Remember,

Week 1: Building Your Top 30 List

Take the first week to create your Top 30 College List based upon the criteria below. Create a pros and cons list as you uncover details about various colleges to build your list. This will be your target list you work off for the next 4-weeks. Remember: Most of the colleges on your list should be realistic options both athletically and academically.

- Financial Aspects: Consider tuition – both in-state and out of state and the % of students receiving financial aid.
- Academic Aspects: Evaluate the SAT, ACT and GPA requirements. Be realistic when evaluating your grades. Academics & college experience should be put before soccer. What major are you interested in and does the school offer it? Can you academically get into this institution?
- Social Atmosphere: Super important! If you didn't play soccer, would you still want to be at this college? Offer other interests you have such as Greek life, clubs, or activities outside of soccer.
- Soccer Program: Is it a realistic match? Look at the current team, alumni, style of play, social media handles, coaching staff and current players' youth playing bios to help determine if you can REALISTICALLY play there.
- Athletic Program: Take the time to research the entire athletic program. Other sports they offer. Facilities and support they provide athletes.
- Size of School: Public or Private? Large 4-Year? Small 4-Year? Big City or Small Town. Are you a small private, or big football team kind of person?
- Division: Make sure to consider ALL divisions (Div I, Div II, Div III, NAIA, Junior College) even those that may be outside of your initial thoughts; you will be surprised at the variety of opportunities out there.
- Geographical Location: Beach or Mountains? Do you like seasons or unchanging weather? Do you prefer a school close to home or are you looking for a brand-new experience in a completely different place?
- Quality of Life: Evaluate the quality of life, scholastic intensity & then soccer.

Your To-Do: Write down your top 30 schools.

Congrats you just created your recruiting list and will be working off this in the coming weeks!

Week 2: Emailing College Coaches

Your week 2 objective is to start connecting with college coaches that are on your Top 30 list. Email. Email. Email. Think about it... right before a big tournament coaches receive hundreds of emails so any downtime is a good time.

- Email is personalized: When coaches receive an email from a recruit, they want to know that it is NOT a copy/paste to every coach across the country. There should be something personal to show genuine interest. Keep it brief, yet informative, authentic AND personal. Tell them why you are interested in attending their college and being a part of their team!
- Player should write the email, not the Parent: Coaches want to hear from you; not from your parents or via a database email system. Also, make sure your email address is professional (your name and grad year is the best if possible) (ex. NO: partygirl@hotmail.com YES: SusieSmith23@gmail.com)
- Include Your Upcoming Tournaments/Games: You can include when/where you will be playing next and game details.
- Interested College Major: Many schools have very specialized majors so coaches will narrow their player search to those specific majors.
- GPA: Noting your GPA is always important... especially if it's stellar! Most highly academic schools can't recruit a player lower than their school GPA standard (Ex: 3.6+). If you DO have a stellar GPA it can be advantageous to the soccer program because perhaps you would qualify for an academic scholarship instead of having to use soccer scholarship money.

Your To-Do's: Send one email to every college program within your Top 30 list. Create a folder within your email account labeled "recruiting emails" and save your sent emails there so that you can keep track and properly follow-up.

Week 3: Create a Highlight Video

During week 3, begin by gathering your game highlights over the past 6 months to compile them into a reel. Highlight video/clips have become an important part of the recruiting process. By sending coaches your “highlights” you are staying in front of coaches. Here are some things to consider when creating your highlight video...

- **Keep it short (3-5 minutes):** Highlight videos should be just that, your highlights. Not entire games, just clips showing your special moments. If they are kept within 3-5 min, they will likely watch most of your video. If too lengthy, you will bore them, and they will move on. The main intention of your highlight video is to pique an interest. It's rare a player is offered a scholarship solely off a video. However, your video gives the coach an idea if you are someone they want to continue tracking and see play live. Or remind them who you are after they have already seen you play. Give them the good stuff and the sweet spot is somewhere between 3-5 min.
- **Keep it positive:** This is a HIGHLIGHT video – show your positives. This is not the time to show that you're human and make mistakes. Leave your bloopers off the reel and wow them with your talent.
- **Intro to your video:** A few must haves at the start: Name, Team, League/Level, Jersey #, Grad Year, & Your Email/Your Coach Email. Something to think about including... a quick 5-10 second intro of you speaking can show personality – and put a face to the player on the video. It's nice to have a personal touch to help you stand out and give the coach a look at you, the person. This is not a must have, but rather nice to add if it sees fitting to you. Also, DO NOT make it lengthy, if you do add a verbal intro-keep it to 5-10 seconds.
- **Make it relevant to your position:** It's helpful to have “sections” in the video that are specific to you/your position. For example: if you are a forward you can have sections for:
 1. Goals
 2. Assists
 3. Movement off the ball
 4. Set Pieces
- **Make YOURSELF Visible:** Remember, the scout doesn't know who you are. Add a circle, arrow, light, some indication as to which player they should be watching. Even if you indicate your jersey # at the start, they are not going to scan the field for your jersey # on each clip. Make it very obvious who you are on every clip.
- **Music:** If you are going to use music, make sure it is tasteful (and without profanity!).
- **Cost:** There are many resources and options to help create a video. Many players create great videos themselves. You can always search for companies to hire and make it even more professional.

Your To-Do's: Write down what you want the coaches to "see" about you. A coach has only a few minutes to decide on you... so what do you want to come across as you, the player? Make sure your video contains the important stuff noted above and that it is produced in a shareable link (YouTube, Vimeo and/or Hudl). There is so much technology available today that you may be able to create one yourself.

Week 4: Follow-Up

Week 4 will be your chance to circle back with another touch point to your Top 30 College List. Your highlight video may now be complete which is a perfect reason to follow-up. And if it's not quite done yet, even sending them a teaser with a few clips is a great reason to touch base with them again. Consistent communication is VERY important.

- Club coaches are an extremely important resource yet are underutilized in this process. You should rely on your coach for guidance in this process – they know you well as a player and a person. Good items to discuss:

1. Review Top 30 College List – does your list realistically match your athletic ability? Do you have reach schools and safe schools on your list?

2. Review Your Highlight Clips/Video – does your video/clips represent you as a player? Are you using the right footage to showcase your best moments?

3. Developmental Areas for Improvement – areas to work on to prepare for college soccer level – How can you prepare for the next level? Where aspect of your game can you improve upon?

****Make any adjustments to your Top 30 College List based upon feedback from your club coach.**

- Follow up email to college coaches: Go back to your email folder that you created labeled "recruiting emails" and "reply" to the emails that you initially sent with an updated personalized note. A great practice is to use the same email chain so the coaches can see the previous info you sent.

- How often should I email? There isn't a magic number with how often you should reach out. But what we can say... players that reach out more frequently have a better chance of being remembered and their emails read. Sending 1-2 emails in an entire year, makes it difficult for a coach to remember you. Have different touch points/reasons to reach back out if you really want them to remember you and truly know your interest level, you must make yourself visible.

Your To-Do's: It's time to send a follow up email. Refer back to your email folder "Recruiting Emails" and your Top 30 College List and make sure that every coach gets a follow-up/personalized email from you that includes your highlight video OR a teaser clip that gives them an idea of the type of player you are.