



9 Keys To Being Recruited

1) Academics, Academics, Academics:

This should be without a doubt the #1 priority both at the high school and collegiate level. Why? Less than 1% of college volleyball players will have an opportunity to play at the professional level in the U.S or around the world. There just is not the opportunity in volleyball as there is in other sports. We know and understand the importance of playing volleyball competitively and for as long as possible. But in the end, you will need your academic background and interests to fall back on when the majority of you graduate from college. By excelling in academics both at the high school and collegiate level, you will be giving yourself more choices and opportunities to succeed in life after college to the point where you can now make a difference in your community and your life. We stress academics a great deal and put a great deal of emphasis on thinking about long term goals as well as short term goals.

2) Attitude, Work Ethic, Coachability:

This quality in a person is very important. A coach can tell what type of desire and attitude you have by the way you act, practice and the effort you put forth on the court. Honestly, this is not a very big problem with the players we work and meet with. But it can be a problem if you don't take it serious enough. One's attitude and work ethic is many times derived from by your family structure, self discipline and how much you want something. Also, don't be afraid to be coached. Ask questions and try and learn or come away with something new each day. It is not about just soaking up all the great comments you get, but how do you take constructive criticism from coaches to help you improve as a player. Always work hard, play hard and you will usually have the desire and drive to succeed.

3) Individual Skill Development:

Never assume you are good enough to the point you don't work hard and decide that you can't improve anymore. Each person or player can improve in certain areas of their game. Continually work with your coaches and on an individual level, work to improve your athleticism, on court training and skills. Many of you have not even reached your full potential yet and by continuing to put forth maximum effort you will become a better player. Attitude and work ethic are a big part of succeeding in this area. Don't be satisfied with where you are and be content. Most of you love the game of volleyball, competing and being with your teammates. Create some individual goals that you would like to meet that are realistic and take the steps needed to meet them.

4) Don't Assume Anything:

Volleyball recruiting is highly aggressive and competitive. Just because you get a letter or questionnaire from a school does not make you a recruit. It is one of the first steps in the recruiting process. Take your contacts from coaches seriously and respond back. Don't assume that since you have heard from them before you will in the future. There are too many qualified student-athletes across the country working to attain the same goals and results you are. If you become passive and content and do not follow through, you can be putting yourself in a difficult situation. Instead of assuming things during the recruiting process, why not communicate your thoughts and questions to coaches instead. This way you are getting answers and creating a dialogue with coaches. Assuming things and certain recruiting situations can certainly cause problems. If you are not sure, ask and communicate.

5) Be Aggressive, Be Pro-Active, And Be Realistic:

Being Aggressive: What is meant by this is you should take an aggressive approach towards your collegiate future, both academically and athletically. Don't become content but rather keep communicating and researching schools and programs to find new opportunities that meet your needs. Become the recruiter in a sense. If you receive info from colleges, respond, ask questions and let them know the interest you have in their program and university or college. When you are playing

volleyball, usually the team that is more aggressive, focused, has a set game plan and executes all parts of the plan will come out on top. Take the same physical and mental attributes you use in games and incorporate them into your recruiting plan and you will get great results.

Being Pro-Active: This correlates directly into being aggressive. Don't sit back and wait for things to happen. Believe it or not, many college coaches start contacting and learning about 'prospective student-athletes' in ones freshman and sophomore years. With many college coaches actually looking 2-3 years out in some cases, it is vitally important that you understand the importance of starting early and getting recognized and communicating with coaches early instead of waiting for your senior year to arrive.

Be Realistic: Quite simply you must know and understand your ability and what level of play you can play at and be successful. Everyone wants to play at the D1 level but unfortunately not everyone can. There are great opportunities at the D2, D3, NAIA level as well. All levels of competition are very competitive and have great players playing at a high level. Discuss with your coaches your ability, skill development and so forth to try and gauge where you will best be suited. Take a look at who is already showing interest as well. Maybe you increase your approach jump because of more aggressive training and grow an inch. Because of these physical and skill development changes, maybe you just went from a D3 player to a D2 player for an example. Keep evaluating yourself, communicate with your coaches. Keep an open mind to wanting to learn about new choices and opportunities. No matter what level of play you are, I am sure you will find it competitive and exciting competing at the collegiate level.

6) Think Long Term, Not Just Short Term:

This goes back to academics. When looking at schools, try to look at other aspects of a college as well and not just the volleyball program. Things you should be looking at are: 1) does the college have your academic major of choice, 2) size of school, 3) location or region of the country, 4) other groups or organizations you may be interested in on campus, 5) size of classes, 6) graduation rates, 7) schools retention rate of returning students, 8) campus life and living conditions, social life and many other areas that you feel are important for you. Many of you will probably meet your future best friends in college and create great memories. By choosing a school that meets your academic needs, you will be working towards becoming successful in life after college.

7) Understanding the Recruiting Process:

This is by far one of our biggest priorities. The very first step is to inform the player and parents with better education of the recruiting process. 99% of the families don't have a great deal of understanding of what is all involved. We spend a great deal of time going over recruiting, academic standards and criteria, definitions, timelines etc. so they are better informed and will be better prepared for what is to come. By spending so much time and effort in this area, our commitment to the student-athlete strengthens and shows that we are dedicated to educating families first. The old saying is, the better prepared you are the better the results you can attain. We are absolutely 100% positive that the in person or over the phone meetings we have will be extremely informative and thorough. It will start you on the right path towards your academic and athletic collegiate career. Don't take this part of the recruiting process for granted, it is very important.

8) Be Responsive, Communicate with Coaches:

This is an area that is taken for granted by many prospective student-athletes. When I communicate with coaches and ask them in their observation, what are some of the biggest mistakes a high school student-athlete makes during the recruiting process. Many coaches have responded to the fact that student-athletes don't respond to mailings, questionnaires, don't ask enough questions, don't state their interest and so forth. Yes the recruiting process can be intimidating and a little nerve racking at times. I stress to players to ask as many questions as you can. By asking questions regarding any topic, the answers you get will give you the valuable information you need to make the best informed decision you can make for your future. That is what we are talking about, your future. Coaches want your feedback, they want to communicate and learn more about you. Before making quick decisions on colleges, research them in many areas of interest; respond to the coaches' inquiries and letters. By not responding or communicating with coaches, it can simply imply to the coach(s) that you are not interested. Instead of possibly throwing opportunities away, take some time to learn more about the college and volleyball program as an entire entity and not just by the name of a college. Far too often I see kids make quick judgments just because they have never heard of a certain school. The fact of the matter is, there are over 1,200 colleges that play volleyball. You are not going to know about the majority of them. Take the time to learn about the potential opportunities before you decide not to respond.

9) Be Accountable:

This is another very important aspect of the recruiting process. Be accountable for everything involved in the recruiting process. All the way from individual skill development to returning information to colleges to communicating. If you get 10 contacts in a month and don't take the time to learn more about the colleges and don't respond and communicate with the coaches, you could very well be accountable for letting 10 opportunities go by. Just like when playing volleyball or practicing. If you decide that you are going to take it easy for 2 weeks in practice, you very well could be criticized by your coaches, teammates and your development may slow. Yes it does take time and effort to respond to colleges and research schools. But remember, all this time and effort is going towards your collegiate academic and athletic future. By implementing the 9 keys to success, you will be able to attain greater exposure, choices and opportunities for your academic and athletic future.

In review of these vitally important areas for student-athletes. As you can see, each one of these 9 attributes go hand in hand with all the others. You really do have to concentrate on all these areas to get maximum results and opportunities. If you don't take your academics seriously, you will lose out on opportunities. If you don't respond and communicate you cannot learn about colleges and opportunities. If you don't work hard and improve your skills you will not become a better player. You must incorporate all these attributes to gain maximum results, choices and opportunities. We want to help you become better prepared for the recruiting process.