

Welcome to the TCA Recruiting LAB



We realize that there are a lot of variables in the recruiting process and it can also sometimes get overwhelming. Therefore we have created the TCA Recruiting LAB as a resource that will provide you support throughout your journey. Our LAB is designed to help you create a plan of action, give you pieces to that action, and provide personal attention to your needs.

Here are a few examples of what you can find in the LAB:

1. Copy of Form Letter to send to colleges
2. Information on making a recruiting video
3. Information on how to get yourself recruited
4. Information on how to identify your Best Fit
5. Questions to ask College Coaches
6. A sample plan of action you can follow

Please scroll through the rest of the page to view our information. We hope that this helps you in your efforts and good luck.

THE RECRUITING PROCESS BEGINS

The recruiting process starts at different times for different players. Some due to ability level, some due to knowledge of the process, and others due to procrastination. No matter the reasons of when you get started below are a few guidelines for the process.

The process begins in one of two ways:

1. First a college coach identifies you as a potential prospect. This could happen by the coach seeing you play at a tournament, camp, recruiting website, or some type of volleyball event.
2. The second way is you identify a school that you have interest in and you begin making contact through filling out online forms, attending camp, sending letters, making phone calls to the coach, or sending a recruiting video.

Again the process can begin upon entering high school or as late as your senior year. The average start is between the Sophomore and Junior Year. Now that you have an idea of when and how the process begins lets get started on your plan of action.

Step One: Create a Letter and Profile Sheet
This is a sample letter and can be modified to fit your style.

7429 Masonboro Sound Road
Wilmington, NC 28409

January 12, 2009

Hello Coach,

My name is _____ and I am a right side hitter from _____, _____ graduating in the Class of 2010. My goal is to compete as a collegiate volleyball player at a strong academic institution. Therefore, I am very interested in the volleyball program at _____.

I am a junior at _____ High School in _____, _____ and I am 6'1". I played on the varsity volleyball team as a middle hitter and lettered in my sophomore and junior years. The team finished the season 22-7,12-0 as Mideastern Conference Champions. In addition, to being the team MVP, I was selected as the Mideastern Conference Player of the Year 2008. I started as MH on the _____ Region Select High Performance Team that competed in Fort Lauderdale, FL. in 2007. I have played RH/OH for Piedmont National club teams for the past 2 years in Greensboro, NC coached by Blaine Tendler and Trevor Hewitt. We recently won the Quest for Excellence tournament in Greensboro, NC.

My club season is underway and I play for _____. We recently won the Quest for Excellence tournament in Greensboro, NC gold division. My uniform number is #11. In addition to our Region Schedule, we will be competing in the following tournaments and I hope you will be able to see me play at one of these events:

- Monument Classic - Richmond, VA January 17-19
- President Day Tourney – Dayton, OH February 14-15
- Mid-Atlantic Power League – Richmond, VA February 28 - March 1
- Mid-Atlantic Power League – Raleigh, NC March 14-15
- Big South Qualifier – Atlanta, GA April 3-5
- North East Qualifier – Baltimore, MD April 17-19
- Quest/MAPL – Greensboro, NC May 16-17
- Memorial Day Invitational – Chicago, IL May 23-25

I am enrolled in the Honors Program at _____ High School (1900 students) and rank 29 out of 454 in my class. I currently have a weighted GPA of 4.56 and a combined SAT score of 1920. In addition to sports and academics, I am a committed musician. I play the violin in the Wilmington Symphony Youth Orchestra and take piano lessons as well. I am also active in youth group activities and mission projects with my church.

I am passionate about playing volleyball and look forward to hearing from you regarding your need for a RH in 2010. You may contact me at: futureballplayer@bellsouth.net or (555) 555-5555 or at the address above.

Sincerely,

Step Two: Fill Out Player Profile Sheet

Prospect Player Profile																	
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Personal Information	
Home Address:	
Phone Number:	Cell: Home:
Email Address:	
Mother's Name:	
Father's Name:	

Academic Information	
High School:	
Graduation Year:	GPA: SAT: ACT:
HS Coach Name:	Contact Number:
Email:	NCAA Clearinghouse Registered: Yes No
Desired Major(s):	
Honors and AP Classes:	
Activities and Clubs:	

Athletic Details	
Height:	Weight: Dominant Hand: Vertical:
Position(s):	
Standing Reach:	Blocking Reach: Approach Reach:

Club Information	Club Location:
Club Team:	Coach's Contact Number:
Coach's Name:	
Email Address:	
Practice Location:	
Tournament Schedule:	

Awards and Honors

As part of Step 2 you can also go online and fill out the Prospects form on each colleges website. After doing so you would want to follow up with the letter, profile, and skills video.

Step 3: Making of Skills Video

The process of making a skills video can be intimidating. However it is actually quite simple. At TCA there are a couple of ways that we can help you in this process. First at your location you can have a TCA Coach come in and put you through the various skills. You should show the skills needed at your position. So for example if you were a setter you should show you setting, moving in from different rotations and from defense. You should also show defensive skills such as digging, blocking, emergency plays, etc... Each player should show serving. Couple these skills with game footage and you got yourself a video.

The second way TCA can help is by posting your video on our TCA Videos website. We have couple videos on there now. You can see them at www.tcavideos.com.

The Video Process:

Once you decide to make your video then you will need to schedule an appointment with TCA in order to shoot the skills portion. This could perhaps be done on an off weekend, off day, or prior to several practices. **Check with your TCA Director to see what you options may be.**

The video could take several days to complete. Consistency is the key. Once you have your skills portion you will need to add game footage. This can be done in one of two ways. First you can retrieve video that you or someone from your team shot. Give the film to the person editing your video. Secondly someone from TCA could come and shoot your game footage.

Cost of the Video:

The cost to make a video can range from \$200 to \$800. It all depends on what you feel that you need. I will say that all the fancy stuff is not needed. Most coaches will look at a video for a minute or two before moving on. Get the good stuff in early to help catch the coach's eye.

THE PROCESS CONTINUES

Okay, so now you have started making contact with schools. You have done so via online prospect forms and followed that up with a letter of interest accompanied by your player profile and recruiting video. SO NOW WHAT?

We have a few recommendations for this part of the process.

1. Get in the gym and get better

At this point your goal should be to get better. We recommend getting in the gym for lessons either small group or private sessions. **Contact your TCA Director for open time slots.** Work hard at all of your skills. Watch film and be a student of the game. This will help you be a smarter player on the court.

Every coach loves those kinds of players. Finally make sure you are in shape, working on you jumping ability, and develop increased speed and quickness.

2. Every so often follow up with a school

Following up with a school can be intimidating. You are a young high school player and you are speaking with a college coach. What do you say? What do you ask? Below are a few questions that could help you in getting started: (We don't recommend asking all questions in one phone call) Remember Be Yourself.

Questions for College Coach's

1. How large is the school, what is the undergraduate enrollment?
2. Is the school in a safe environment/community?
3. How big is the city that the school resides in?
4. Do students go home on the weekends or do they hang around?
5. What are the strongest degree programs offered and which are the best academic departments?
6. If you know what you want to study ask if the institution carries that particular major? Ex. I want to be a teacher. Does your school have an education program? What is its ranking compared to other schools?
7. Do most of the students live on or off campus? Where do most of the players on the team live?
8. What is the student housing like?
9. Are most of the player's roommates with one another?
10. Is the school on quarters, semesters, or trimesters?
11. What was the team's conference and overall record this past season?
12. How many players do you carry on your roster? Do all players travel? (Ask the second question if they carry a high number of players like 16 or more)
13. What training happens between seasons?
14. What time of day are the practices typically?
15. Do freshmen have study hall?
16. What are the training facilities like?
17. What style of play does your team play?
18. What are the goals for the team in the future?
19. How well does the team get along?
20. What is your coaching philosophy and demeanor in practice and matches?
21. What is the environment at your home matches? Expectations on match days?
22. How long have you coached at your school?
23. How many players at my position do you have on the roster?

Okay now that you have some questions lets move on to another way to work through the process.

3. Do your homework

What we mean by do your homework is that you need to check up on the school and the program. You also need to look at other schools and programs. Perhaps your dream is to play Division I. You may be that player, but what if you blow out a knee or maybe there is a small school out there that is just right for you. Look at all levels. This includes NCAA DI, DII, DIII as well as JUCO and

NAIA. DO YOUR HOMEWORK. When doing your homework here are few things to look for:

A. Check out the Roster. What year are the players at your position? What is the typical size of the player for your position? What offense or defense do they play? What kind of coach do they have? What are the philosophies of the program? These are just a few questions. Below is our Best Fit Principle Guide. This will help you decide or narrow down what you are looking for.

BEST-FIT PRINCIPLE

With over 1,012 institutions offering college-playing opportunities, we understand that identifying and choosing a college or university can be a difficult decision. There are many more factors than just volleyball to consider when going through the process. We advise players to look at nine different factors that take academics, athletics, and atmosphere into consideration when viewing potential college choices.

Athletic Program Priorities

1. Does the university support athletics?
2. Does the administration make an extra effort to promote athletics in the community?
3. Is there a school commitment to constantly improve resources and facilities to be amongst the top in the conference and/or the nation?

Athletic Support Staff

1. Does the school have athletes travel by bus or plane?
2. How much class will you miss?
3. Will tutors go on the road?
4. Are laptops provided?
5. Is study hall mandatory?
6. How are professors concerning makeup work?
7. Are there attendance policies?
8. What is the graduation rate amongst all athletes?
9. Is Summer School an option that the school will pay for?

Volleyball Program Background

1. How long has the staff been there?
2. Do they have a tendency to move around or stay put?
3. If they are a younger staff, how long before they move to a bigger job?
4. If they are struggling, potentially how long before they are fired?
5. If their skill allows, do younger players play quality minutes early?

Volleyball Roster

1. How many players return next year?
2. How many players are at my position(s)?
3. What are the recruiting tendencies of the staff?
4. Who are the players that are successful in their system?

5. Have they recruited any players in classes below mine?

Coaching Staff Approach

1. Does the staff yell and scream?
2. What is the demeanor of the coach during matches?
3. Do you want to play for a younger or a more established staff?
4. Does the gender of the coach matter?
5. Talk to a former or current player. Try to identify a player that was/is an impact player and one that spent/spends the majority of their time on the bench.

Placement Rate

1. Where have the graduates found jobs?
2. Are any prominent alumni based in your field of study?
3. What percentage of student athletes graduate?
4. Does the school have connections for possible summer internships?

Potential Major

1. Does the school have your intended major of study?
2. If not, is there a minor offered with a suitable major to replace it?
3. Will the required classes for your major interfere with possible practice times?
4. Is the academic department highly regarded in professional circles (i.e. Georgia – Terry school of Business & Journalism School or Georgia Tech Engineering School)
5. How many athletes are involved in the major that you are interested in?

School/Town Demographics

1. Do you want to attend a big (20,000 or more), medium (10,000 to 20,000), or a small (10,000 and under) school?
2. Do you want to attend a school where there are lots of affluent students, middle class students, or a combination of both?
3. How big is the campus? Is it a newer, more updated campus or a more traditional layout?
4. What are the living arrangements?
5. Do the athletes live together?
6. Are you allowed to live off-campus?

School Location

1. How far away would you prefer the school to be from your hometown?
2. Is geographic location (mountains/beach) a factor in your decision?
Would you prefer attending school in a small town that revolves around the school, a school in the suburbs, or a school in a major city?

All right we are almost through this part of the process. This next part is one of the most critical parts to the process.

4. Take care of yourself off the court

By this we mean make sure you are keeping up your grades in the classroom. Volleyball will certainly help your chances of getting in to an institution however your grades will also help determine which schools you are eligible for and which ones you are not. Another area of importance is to work on your character. Places that can potentially show your character would be facebook, player coach relationships, your attitude on the court, during ref assignments, or perhaps while on a recruiting visit at the school. Outside of your character and grades we also recommend taking care of your body. Time off is a good thing and you should periodically schedule in down time. This will allow your body needed rest or recovery. Also with any minor or major aches and pains you need to attend to these issues with treatment. Maybe it is simple of icing down after practice or training or perhaps you need to visit a Physical Therapist or Chiropractor. Whatever the case make sure you take of your body. Finally we recommend a healthy lifestyle. You need calories to keep up with your schedule. Make sure you are eating regularly and make sure you are eating healthy.

THE OFFERS ARE COMING, THE OFFERS ARE COMING!

If you are working in this part of the process then you have done your job well. This means you have done well in selling college coaches on the idea that you would be a great fit for their program. Now the tide turns and they begin selling you on why you should attend their school. This part of the process contains only a few steps, but they can be quite confusing and can change at any moment.

Parts to the Process to be aware of:

1. Levels of Interest from a School
2. The offer has been made, what do I do with it?

LEVELS OF INTEREST

In most situations you can tell what type of interest a college program has in you based on the level of contact they have with you. The levels are not fixed (every coach is different), but the basic idea is that the more personal contact and the amount of contact the coach has with you the more serious they are about wanting you in there program.

Three Levels of Interest:

1. You've been noticed
 - a. Mailed you a questionnaire to fill out and return
 - b. Mailed you a summer camp brochure/application
 - c. Put you on the school's general mailing list

2. They are interested (All of the above plus:)
 - a. Called and spoke with your club coach/club director
 - b. Emailing you occasionally
 - c. Come to see you play specifically
 - d. Mailed you a package with media guide, school information and other general goodies
 - e. Sending you regular mail directly from the Athletic Department
 - f. Invites you for an official or unofficial visit to the school

- 3 Committed (All of the above plus:)
 - a. Sends you text messages and/or instant message
 - b. Emails you on a consistent basis
 - c. Sets up regular phone calls for you to contact them
 - d. Makes every effort to see you play on several occasions
 - e. Talks with your coach's
 - f. Concretely offers you a scholarship

**These are not the only types of contacts and ways to identify the school's interest. As said above all programs are different.

*****Important Information To Read*****

While a school may be showing interest in you in one of the above ways it does not mean that your job is done and you can quit working. Remember that the interest this school is showing you is the very same interest they are showing some other player on the other side of the country. There has been no official offer made from the school to you at this point. While they are very interested make sure you keep working hard on the first parts of the process.

Another part to this side of the process is making sure you visit the school of choice. You may have looked at the school online, seen them play on TV, talked with the coach, but have you seen the campus and gotten a feel for the school. You can visit a school in one of two ways. First you can visit the school unofficially. The second way to visit the school is on an official visit. If you are on an official visit then the school is definitely interested in you and will most likely be or has made an offer to you.

OFFICIAL VISITS IN THE RECRUITING PROCESS

What is an official visit?

NCAA College/University official visits or recruiting trips are perhaps the best way for you to find out where you will best fit in, and where you want to attend school. The rules regarding official visits differ upon the school's division. For DI and DII official visits, the university can pay for your transportation and 48-hour stay.

The NCAA permits 5 official visits to DI and DII universities or schools after September 1st of your senior year.

- DIII does not offer athletic scholarships therefore they will most likely not offer any official visits.
- DII schools will rarely offer official visits to recruits. The funding simply does not allow that opportunity. Official visits to DII programs will be a school-by-school basis.
- These on campus visits are an opportunity to meet with the coach, the team, and the admissions/academic staff. The institution can pay for the athlete's airfare, accommodation, and one meal per day. They can also pay for one parent's accommodation but NOT their airfare. The visit usually takes place over a weekend and last up to but not exceeding 48 hours.
- If you are going to apply early, make sure you plan your trips as early as possible, to leave yourself enough time to make an informed decision.

The Visit

The best plan is to come in early Friday and maybe sit in on some classes (must be given permission to do so). This also allows you to see the not only the academic process in person, but also see what the school is like on a weekend. It is okay to inform the coach of your preferences of what you would like to see about the school and the program.

1. Talk to professors and seek out the learning environment and size of classes
2. Eat at the schools cafeteria
3. Talk to the team members:
 - a. How do you balance academics and athletics?
 - b. What is the coach really like during games and practices?
 - c. Have the players improved since they have come to the school?
4. Talk to the Coach
 - a. What are the GPA and SAT score averages of the team?
 - b. What is the graduation rate?
 - c. Check out all athletic facilities and ask about the atmosphere of the matches.
 - d. What is the coaching philosophy and what should I expect coming in the fall?
5. Can you see yourself at this institution in the fall?
6. Be yourself!!!!!!!!!!!!

Unofficial Visits

You maybe invited or on your own take an unofficial visit to a school that you are interested in. Do not be offended that they are not asking you to take an official visit. Some schools do not have the funding and prefer not to offer officials. Again it is a school-by-school basis. Unofficial visits can take place before your senior year. You can meet with coaches and players, but you are on your own dime for the weekend or days that you are on campus. This is a good idea to help narrow down choices and get a better feel about what you are looking for out of a school and volleyball program. During your unofficial visit a school may pay for one meal per day.

Okay so now the school is interested, you have made a visit, and the school now makes you an offer. A few questions come to mind. Do I have to accept it right away? How long do I have to accept the offer? Can they withdraw the offer? Below is some information to help you decipher the offer:

DECIPHERING THE OFFER

When you have been given an offer from a college or university it means that they have verbally told you that they are offering you an athletic scholarship that will be available after you graduate from high school. The timing of when this offer is made can vary greatly from one school to another and from one player to another. There is no uniform standard that applies to everyone; however, there are some general guidelines shown below to help decipher the offer given:

1. Are you the #1 Recruit in the country?
 - a. #1 recruits basically are given open-ended offers. They are players that everyone wants and will make big impacts immediately. Players like Alix Klineman, Sarah Pavin, and Megan Hodge come to mind.
2. Top Recruit
 - a. This is a player that would help a lot of programs. The number of these types of players is large enough that the timeline is shorter than you might think. However the offer can extend depending on the needs of the offering program.
3. The Average Recruit
 - a. This recruit is the average player and could lose the offer if another player accepts first. This means the school may have offered several players and it is on a first come first serve basis. This usually occurs late into the recruiting period.

Player Options

1. You can wait and see if other offers arrive
2. Verbally accept the offer.
 - a. No player can sign with a school until the November signing period of their senior year. All players that commit prior to the senior year are verbal commitments. There is also a second signing period in April.
 - b. A verbal commitment is not binding in either direction. The school almost never pulls out of a verbal commitment. The more common action is a player pulling out of a verbal to the college or university.
3. Written Commitment
 - a. Can only take place in your senior year on or after the November signing period.

Binding agreement as far as eligibility is concerned. If you decide not to attend the university that you have signed with you must sit out one year before you can play at a different institution.

THE END IS NEAR

Sometimes especially if you are a player that is looking at DIII, NAIA, or even DII the process can continue late into your senior year. So if you fit in this category don't panic. The following is a solid game plan for you:

1. Make phone calls to schools
 - a. Throw out a big net. A good mixture of levels, sizes, and locations.
2. Send or re-send videos. Perhaps an updated video.
3. Prior to playing in a tournament call schools in that area to let them know your schedule. Get them to come see you play.
 - a. After the tournament follow up with the coach to see what they are thinking
4. Utilize TCA Staff and even High School Coach to use contacts and for references

IMPORTANT ITEMS IN THE RECRUITING PROCESS

The NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

Every player must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. You can find further information on this through the NCAA Websites. The purpose for this part of the process is to make sure you are eligible to play at the institution you are going to attend. The Clearinghouse will need to see items such as SAT and ACT Scores, GPA, High School / College Credits earned, High School Transcripts.

Dos and Don'ts

Do: Go visit schools on your own dime. See the campus; see the team play, talk to the coach.

Don't: Accept any gifts such as meals, t-shirts, or anything else for that matter.

Do: Make phone calls to schools of interest

Don't: Talk to a coach when you see them at the gym. You cannot talk to a college coach outside of their campus.

Do: Encourage coaches to come watch you play, via phone call/e-mail. Also follow up with them if you happen to see them watching your court.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH YOU ARE PLAYING IN COLLEGE

Summer before Freshmen Year

Make sure that you train during the summer. Pre-season training in college can be really tough. You want to make sure you are lifting, running, working on endurance, and playing a lot of volleyball prior to stepping on campus for pre-season. I do not encourage you to attend camps. I do encourage you to work with a TCA Coach through the summer that will help you prepare for what you are about to begin.

Congratulations. You have reached your goal. Work hard and enjoy the process. Now set new goals and reach new heights. Good luck and Congratulations.

SAMPLE GAME PLAN

1. Create a Letter that you will send to prospective schools of interest
2. Fill out our Player Profile Sheet that you can attach to your letter and/or give out at tournaments
3. Make a skills video that includes game film. Post this on the TCA Website, perhaps You Tube, and send off to prospective schools.
4. Follow up each of the above steps with phone calls to college coaches.
5. Prior to each tournament call the schools that could potentially attend the tournament and ask them to come watch you play.
6. After the tournament follow up with them to see what they thought. It is a great thing to get feedback.
7. Keep training and keep working hard. Find ways to improve no matter how small or big of an improvement.
8. Do your homework and find your best fit.
9. Visit as many schools as you can or want to.
10. Evaluate yourself and get evaluated by coaches. This will help you figure out where you stand. This is a constant process that will help you shape your goals.
11. USE TCA CONTACTS. We are in 8 cities and growing. We can help you if you get us involved.
12. Register with NCAA Clearinghouse sometime early to mid Junior Year. DO NOT MESS AROUND WITH THIS PART.
13. Take care of your grades and physical health
14. Take your official visits. Even if you fall in love with one school. Go see the other schools.
15. Finally, STAY POSITIVE. When one door closes several others open. I have seen this happen time and time again.