



The following is ITVC's guide to college recruiting. If you have any questions that aren't answered in this guide or questions about specific programs or schools please contact the Club Director. ITVC coaches have contacts and know college coaches all around the country and at many different levels so be sure to use our coaches as resources in that regard. This guide discusses terms, rules, processes, and advice that will assist you with recruiting. We hope that it will be a valuable resource for you as you navigate the recruiting process.

### **TERMS & DEFINITIONS:**

**NCAA** - The NCAA, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, was established in 1906 and serves as the athletics governing body for more than 1,280 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations. The NCAA's membership includes:

- 326 active Division I members;
- 281 active Division II members; and
- 421 active Division III members.

One of the differences among the three divisions is that colleges and universities in Divisions I and II may offer athletic scholarships, while Division III colleges and universities may not.

**Clearinghouse** - The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse is an organization that works with the NCAA to determine a student's eligibility for athletics participation in his or her first year of college enrollment. Students who want to participate in college sports during their first year of enrollment in college must register with the clearinghouse and complete/submit all required forms including (1) NCAA Amateurism Certification, (2) Student Release Form (SRF), (3) ACT/SAT scores; and (4) HS Transcripts. The clearinghouse evaluates your academic record to determine if you are eligible to participate at a Division I or II college as a freshman student-athlete. Remember, meeting the NCAA academic rules does not guarantee your admission into a college. You must still apply for admission.

**Contact** - A contact occurs any time a college coach has any face-to-face contact with you or your parents off the college's campus and says more than hello. A contact also occurs if a college coach has any contact with you or your parents at your high school or any location where you are competing or practicing.

**Contact period** - During this time, a college coach may have in-person contact with you and/or your parents on or off the college's campus. The coach may also watch you play or visit your high school. You and your parents may visit a college campus and the coach may write and telephone you during this period.

**Basic Contact Rules** - The NCAA rulebook is thicker than a big city yellow pages and certainly more difficult to interpret. There are some strange rules like "...colleges cannot use multicolored paper in recruiting materials or provide business cards that are magnetic." Generally speaking, following some basic rules will keep you out of trouble. However, you do need to understand some specifics of person-to-person contact:

**Telephone Calls** - In all sports other than football and basketball, phone calls from faculty members and coaches can take place on or after the following dates:

NCAA D1 – College coaches can place 1 call in March of your junior year for any sport except football and not again until July 1st .

NCAA D2 – College coaches can place 1 call per week starting June 15th after completion of your junior year.

NCAA D3 – Unlike D1 and D2, there are no restrictions as to when a D3 coach can call a prospect in high school. The NCAA feels that smaller D3 schools do not have the time, money, or resources to abuse this privilege, which will often be true.

Finally, only three telephone calls to a PSA may be made during the month of July following their junior year in high school, with no more than one telephone call per week.

NOTE: In any grade, coaches may receive calls from students who are paying for the call at ANY TIME. However, if a message is left, the coach cannot return the call until the proper time.

**Dead period** - The college coach may not have any in-person contact with you or your parents at any time in the dead period. The coach may write and telephone you or your parents during this time.

**Evaluation** - An evaluation is an activity by a coach to evaluate your academic or athletic ability. This would include visiting your high school or watching you practice or compete.

**Evaluation period** - The college coach may watch you play or visit your high school, but cannot have any in-person conversations with you or your parents off the college's campus. You and your parents can visit a college campus during this period. A coach may write and telephone you or your parents during this time.

**Official visit** - Any visit to a college campus by you and your parents paid for by the college. You are allowed five official visits to different schools of your choice (provided the school has invited you). Official visits cannot exceed 48 hours. Choose your visits wisely as it would not make sense to take an official visit to a school that is 20 miles from your house when you could use that visit to check out a school a thousand miles from your house. What will be cheaper for you? Your coach can also attend your visit if your transportation is by automobile, but a college will not pay for your coach to fly out with you. Since schools have far more visits than spots on the team it's entirely possible that you fail to get an offer from a particular school after you go on an official visit. If the coach is expressing interest in you and you are interested, make sure they know. The college may pay the following expenses:

- Your transportation to and from the college;
- Room and meals (three per day) while you are visiting the college; and

- Reasonable entertainment expenses, including three complimentary admissions to a home athletics contest.
- Before a college may invite you on an official visit, you will have to provide the college with a copy of your high school transcript (Division I only) and SAT, ACT or PLAN score.

Division 2 – The same rules apply for official visits for D2 schools. Regardless of the division classification of the schools you visit, you are allowed five total official visits at the NCAA D1 and D2 level. As long as you only use five official visits, they can be broken up as you chose between D1 and D2 schools.

Division 3 - you are allowed the same expense paid official visit to a D3 school as to a D1 or D2 school. While you can only make one per school, you can visit as many schools as you would like, as the limit of 5 does not apply for D3 schools. Many D3 schools cannot offer paid official visits due to the expense of bringing a PSA to campus, so even though you could go on 20, the likelihood of many D3 schools paying your way to fly out to them is highly unlikely!

**Prospective student-athlete (PSA)** - You become a “prospective student-athlete” when:

- You start ninth-grade classes; or
- Before your ninth-grade year, a college gives you, your relatives or your friends any financial aid or other benefits that the college does not provide to students generally.

**Quiet period** - The college coach may not have any in-person contact with you or your parents off the college’s campus. The coach may not watch you play or visit your high school during this period. You and your parents may visit a college campus during this time. A coach may write or telephone you or your parents during this time.

**Unofficial visit** - Any visit by you and your parents to a college campus paid for by you or your parents. The only expense you may receive from the college is three complimentary admissions to a home athletics contest. You may make as many unofficial visits as you like and may take those visits at any time. The only time you cannot talk with a coach during an unofficial visit is during a dead period.

**NLI** - The NLI or National Letter of Intent is a legally binding document that a high school athlete signs with a school. It signifies the award of athletic scholarship money for one year. It is used at all NCAA D1 and some NCAA D2 institutions. You can only sign one with an NCAA school. It is not used at the D3 level. There is also a Junior College Letter of Intent and you are allowed to sign one JC NLI and one NCAA NLI if you so choose. Actual signing dates vary by sport.

**Redshirt** - A term used to describe a student-athlete who does not compete in athletic competition and is granted an extra year of eligibility. A red shirt may practice and travel with the team.

**FAFSA** - Free Application for Federal Student-Aid is the form you fill out that determines your EFC. Colleges use this to calculate and award financial aid.

**EFC** - Expected Family Contribution is the amount of money a college expects you to contribute to your education based on your FAFSA information. Your EFC is the same for the year it’s calculated

in regardless of what school you are applying to. If a college costs \$25,000 and your EFC is \$10,000, your need is \$15,000

**Early Decision** - Early Decision is a program that allows students to apply early to one school. In most cases, it is a binding decision. If accepted, a school expects you to attend. In other cases, it is not binding. Check the policy at each individual school. Early Decision is a signal to a school you really want to attend and will usually improve your chances of acceptance. You will lose your ability to compare financial aid packages however.

**Early Action** - Like Early Decision, Early Action is a program that allows students to apply early to a school. In this case, Early Action is not binding like early decision. More schools are switching to this program for admissions and getting away from binding early decision programs.

**Core Courses** - Core courses are courses such as math, English, science, history, social studies - that the Initial Eligibility uses to determine your eligibility at the D1 and D2 level.

## **5 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENT- ATHLETES**

(1) Understand who is responsible. Many families assume that their high school or club coach is responsible for their recruiting process. High school coaches are great people; they work really hard and usually don't earn much money. Often, they are teachers who have papers and tests to grade or work other jobs to make a living, and most of them have families to take care of as well. The recruiting process is ultimately your responsibility. You are responsible for researching and evaluating schools, contacting college coaches, visiting schools and making decisions along the way. Your high school or club coach can help you with the process by determining where your skills might fit in with different college levels and programs, writing recommendations, and even placing phone calls on your behalf to college coaches after you have initiated contact. Don't be the parent that says during your senior year, "I thought our coach would take care of the recruiting process for us."

(2) Be proactive. Now that you know the process is your responsibility, it's important to be proactive and research as many schools as possible. The recruiting and college selection process is not something that should sneak up on you senior year. Success in recruiting is about matching up your daughter's academic talents, athletic talents, and desires with a given college program. The families that come the closest to finding an athletic, academic, and social match are the ones who usually have the best success in the recruiting process. They have already done much of the work for the college coach, and the coach has confidence in recruiting a smart and talented athlete who wants to attend their school. There are over 1,100 NCAA colleges at the D1, D2, and D3 level, and 500+ Junior College and NAIA schools, most of which you have never heard of.

(3) Don't follow the herd. Many students put themselves in a position to fail by simply following the herd and applying to well-known popular schools. The problem is that everyone is applying to these schools and competition for admission is extremely difficult. Harvard annually receives over 20,000 applications and admits roughly 10% of applicants each year. Despite your academic record, Harvard is going to turn down over 18,000 students each year, some of them being incredibly smart and gifted students. Juniata, a small D3 school in Pennsylvania received just over 1,500 applications last year and accepted about 1,100 students or roughly 75%. Few have heard of Juniata because they are not Harvard and you won't find their basketball team on TV in March

Madness or their football team in a bowl game. Juniata recently appeared in the Unofficial Guide to the 320 Most Interesting Colleges, published by Kaplan Publishing, and their women's volleyball team won the 2004 D3 national championship. If your list of colleges includes only those well-known schools everyone has heard of, you will find competition for athletic spots and acceptance to be much more difficult.

(4) Be realistic. Here's a great quote, "A kid scores 20 points in basketball at the age of 8, his parents think he's the next Jordan, if a kid gets 100 on a math test, they don't think he's the next Albert Einstein." The love, time, money, and passion you have poured into your daughter's athletic career can often cloud your judgment of their potential for a college scholarship. Most parents' dream of athletic scholarships and all the money they will save and are not realistic about the chances of receiving athletic scholarship money. While your talents may garner some athletic scholarship money, after D1 football and basketball, there is very little scholarship money to go around. Most coaches, even at the D1 level, have a limited amount of money for their team that they divide up amongst 10-20 players (even more for some sports). There is far more money in the form of grants, merit aid, outside scholarships, institutional aid, and federal financial aid, than there is athletic scholarship money. You need to explore your options at all programs at all levels, and not focus your search solely on an athletic scholarship. You also need to seek out people (like your coaches) that can give you a realistic evaluation of your son or daughters ability and how it applies to different levels. Ultimately, only a college coach can determine whether or not you can play for them.

### **THE (RECRUITING) PROCESS:**

An athlete can either wait passively by the phone hoping that coaches will call or an athlete can take an active role in the recruiting process. Which will it be? Let's face it, it's easier to wait by the phone for the call. Unfortunately, this passive approach is also encouraged by the image that the NCAA would like you to have of sports recruiting: that all worthy athletes will be contacted by fine coaches from terrific colleges and get offered scholarships to compete. This image is a myth. There are plenty of reasons to avoid the effort. It's not "cool" to make the effort yourself. Suzie, Beth and Joan got called by a coach and they got scholarships. Waiting for the call is the way it's supposed to work. If I was a good enough athlete the calls would be coming... It is true that many top prospects will get called without making an effort. Was it from a coach they had chosen? Was it from a school they had especially wanted to attend? Not all calls are the ones that an athlete was wishing for. Even for athletes who are almost certain to get recruiting calls, it is worthwhile for them to let coaches know of their interests in a sports program and a school. You only go through the college sports recruiting process once. Things happen faster and faster during your recruiting year. There is little time to adjust and no time to start over. You will have an advantage over other recruits if you can plan your steps in advance.

The three most important things you need to know about college sports recruiting are: start early, start early and start early. But wait, isn't it the college coach's job to do the recruiting? Yes and no. Official recruiting generally starts after your junior year in high school, but there are important steps that you can take as early as your freshman year to increase your chances of success. The more you know about recruiting, eligibility and sports scholarships before your senior year the better prepared you will be for getting the offer you want from a school you want to attend.

The enterprising high school athlete can get a big head start on the recruiting process because students who start early have all the advantages. Students who start early and initiate contacts help themselves and help the coach. With only a couple of exceptions, coaches cannot initiate a contact until after the athlete's junior year in high school. However, an athlete can call a coach almost any time.

NCAA rules also define when and under what conditions a recruited athlete can visit at the school's expense, but parents and their student athletes can visit a school at any time at their own expense. On such a visit you can meet with school officials and coaches. The sooner the choices get narrowed down, the better off the athlete is when his official recruiting season starts. Student athletes and their parents need a practical and developed strategy to secure college sports scholarships. This process is designed primarily for talented athletes who aren't receiving (or perhaps aren't expecting to receive) the attention of large college athletic recruiters. It is intended to provide assistance to students interested in furthering their education, participating in athletics and at the same time receiving financial assistance or college scholarships.

This system is not for the highly acclaimed, "blue chip" student athlete who is already receiving letters, phone calls and visits from recruiting colleges. This is more for those talented athletes who believe they are blue chippers but who may be going unnoticed by college recruiters. It's for the good athlete who wants to continue playing sports while attending college and receive a scholarship or financial aid to help pay for her continuing education.

Athletes who don't reach that "national superstar" status many times get lost in the recruiting process unless they "market" themselves. Smaller, less competitive colleges frequently don't have the budget for high volume recruiting efforts. Unless they know that a talented student athlete exists who is interested in attending their school or university, they can't recruit them - expending their efforts on students in their local geographic areas. If you are interested in going to another part of the country for college it is very important to let the colleges in that area know. Otherwise they assume that they are more likely to find interested athletes from nearby areas.

### **GENERAL HINTS:**

Create Letters of Introduction and Resume. Always address letters to these coaches by name - envelopes addressed to "Head Volleyball Coach" may be tossed away.

Submit Video. It's the video age and because of strict rules on recruiting, a video is sometimes the best way for a college coach to compare players. You can either send a dvd or post a video online on a site like youtube for free. ITVC will host videos on the club website as well.

Receive Assistance From Your High School Coach. Most high school coaches are more than willing to help their students in the college recruitment process. But high schools have been the recipients of much criticism about their role in the recruiting and scholarship search. Of course we as parents all believe our own child is good enough to receive a scholarship. In reality, some are, many are not. The high school coach is first of all a teacher and a coach. As a coach, he or she doesn't have much time for writing letters, making videos, gathering academic and athletic statistics, checking on test scores, etc. The scholarship search is a very time consuming process. When you consider the time involved in the process, as well as the fact that the coach may have numerous students besides yourself who are trying to get noticed, it almost becomes prohibitive

from the coach's time standpoint. But the parent and/or student athlete can do much of the preliminary details and work. Then when a college becomes interested in a student athlete, it will contact the high school (and/or club) coach and he or she can carry on from there.

**Follow Through.** You will need to organize how and when to follow up on your contacts - to insure that the college has received your information and has you on their list of possible recruits. You must keep your name fresh in their minds.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) cautions, "Do your own homework to avoid scholarship rip-offs." For more information regarding scholarship scams and how to avoid them visit the Federal Trade Commission web site. The "full ride." In almost every high school there are senior athletes who get recruited by college coaches. It is pretty typical that the level of this recruitment and the size of the scholarship offers get exaggerated. What is a full ride? More than once you are likely to hear that some athlete received a "full ride" scholarship offer. Athletes and their parents are anxious for recognition and the gold standard for sports scholarships is the full ride. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear of anything from a semester's tuition to a full grant-in-aid referred to as "a full ride." Do not feel in competition with the offers received by other student athletes. Situations don't compare, sports don't compare, schools don't compare and you don't even know what someone else is calling a "full ride."

What constitutes a good scholarship offer varies widely with the college, the division that the college competes in, the sport, the talents of the individual athlete and even the athlete's gender. Rather than worrying about someone else's scholarship offer, you and your student athlete should be looking for the best college option for her. It may mean a full ride or a partial ride or it may mean the chance to attend a great school and have fun competing in college sports. The recruiting process is the chance to evaluate everything about a college offer. Judge the opportunity as a whole, not simply the dollar amount of the award.

It is the student's decision. Parent support starts with encouragement and it ends with supporting the student athlete's decision about which opportunity to accept. In the middle it will help to keep in mind that it is the student's talent, the student's hard work, the student's success and the student's life and not yours. The line between supporting the student and living through the student's success is one that can be hard to negotiate at times. Try to recognize when you cross that line and make an adjustment

### **DATES AND NUMBERS TO REMEMBER:**

Most Division I and II schools have up to 12 volleyball scholarships to give; these are generally spread over 4 years, so usually 3 per year are available. Division I schools can only offer "full ride" scholarships. Division II schools typically offer combination scholarships (athletic, academic, grant, etc.). Many Division II schools do not have a fully funded scholarship budget so they may be limited to 6-8 scholarships.

Division III schools have no athletic scholarships, but may fund part/whole educational expenses via grants, aid or academic/ citizenship scholarships.

Here are a few general rules:

Prior to September 1 of player's junior year: Coaches may not call or e-mail, but may send one college information package. Players may call college coaches. PLEASE DO THIS. Most recruiters would love that a player is showing the initiative to let the school know of their interest. Sometimes just letting the coach know of your interest, as well as continually letting him/her know which upcoming tournaments you will be playing in may make a big difference. Players may also take an unlimited number of unofficial visits. College coaches may also communicate interest through club or high school coaches.

September 1 of player's junior year: Coaches can send letters, information packages by mail and e-mail. Coaches can e-mail players directly; we recommend establishing one e-mail account that both parents and daughter can access. Players/parents can return e-mail and call the coaches with no limitations. ALWAYS respond ASAP to the coaches at programs you are definitely interested in. A lack of a timely response may inadvertently cross you off their list.

Organization is key, both with computer e-mails and hard copies. Set up folders or boxes to begin the selection process (maybe three boxes: one for definite interest, one for maybe interested, and one for no interest).

No in-person college coach-to-player or coach-to-parent contact, except on the college coach's campus. College coaches may continue to talk to club and high school coaches to relay interest or degree of interest. Unlimited, unofficial visits (paid by player/ parents) can be made at anytime. Player/parents can only speak with the coach in person while on the campus.

July 1 of player entering her senior year: College coaches can contact player by phone once per week. E-mail or mail contact still unlimited. Players may call coaches (unlimited). Coaches can contact players/parents in person (limit of 3 contacts during senior year).

First day of class of player's senior year, official visits begin. One official visit per college with a maximum of 5 official visits to Division I and II colleges.

First week of November of the player's senior year, NLI signing day for women's volleyball.

### **VIDEOS:**

Recruiting video is playing an increasingly important role for both families and college coaches today. Video allows college coaches to get an insight into your skills when you are not afforded the opportunity to play in front of a college coach in person. While nothing replaces performing in front of a college coach, a good video coupled with strong recommendations from qualified coaches that are familiar with your skills and ability can often be the deciding factor as to whether or not a college coach chooses to recruit you or chooses to pursue you further. In order to get the most out of your video, it's important to follow several rules when providing video:

(1) Keep the video short. College coaches do not have time to watch a 2-hour game tape. Most coaches want video between 5 and 15 minutes long and will often request full game tape after they have sampled your highlights first. You have to remember they are often receiving several hundred tapes a year and your tape has to be short and to the point.

(2) If sending a DVD, make sure the video is clearly labeled with your name, address, phone number, school name, graduation year, jersey number, jersey color, e-mail address and possibly your SAT/ACT scores, and GPA. You would be amazed that recruits are still sending video to coaches and the coach has no idea what player they are supposed to watch and there is often no contact info on the tape.

(3) Be realistic. While many coaches have recruited players off of video and recommendations, other coaches still need to see you play in person. Video is often the first step into getting a college coaches attention and getting them interested in making an effort to see you play in person. It doesn't happen for every athlete and every coach and there will be instances where a coach will not pursue you further even when you have provided them a compelling video. Remember, the coach is in contact with hundreds of recruits and if they do not feel you are a match or do not feel they have the ability to see you play in person, your recruiting process for that school may come to an end.

A recruiting video should be comprised of a number of sections (chapters) as follows: (1) an introduction of 30 sec to one minute where you introduce yourself and highlight what you can bring to the prospective college (include vital stats such as Grad Year, GPA, ACT/SAT scores, club name/coach, high school name/coach, etc; (2) a skills section on hitting (if you are a hitter); (3) a skills section on blocking; (4) a skills section on passing/defense; (5) a skills section on setting (if you are a setter); and (6) a brief (five to 10 minutes) portion of continuous game footage - preferably one of your better high school or club games. The entire length of the video should be less than 15 minutes. Other than DVD chapter/menu choices to allow the viewer to go directly to a specific section, music, graphics, transitions, and other digital enhancements are not necessary.

### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

Fortunately and unfortunately, women's club volleyball is highly organized. It is fortunate in that club volleyball exposes players to top competition and interested college coaches like no other sport. It's unfortunate in that it has driven the recruiting and selection process to a younger age. Some girls verbally commit to a college as early as their freshman year of high school. Don't be swayed by peer pressure, each player's selection process is different.

CAUTION: A relatively new tool college coaches use to get to know athletes is by searching websites such as "MySpace" or "FaceBook" for information. If you have one of these pages, make sure it presents you (your daughter) in an appropriate manner.

College is a highly competitive market. There is a lot of salesmanship that goes with college admission programs and coaches with their volleyball programs. With college tuition, room and board now approaching \$50,000 per year, it is big business! College coaching jobs often are made or broken by their recruiting prowess.

Each recruiting situation is different for each student athlete, even within the same family. Some athletes may have a "dream school" that wants them as a student athlete. Usually this ends up being a quick process, but what if they don't want you or they don't need your specific position (setter, middle blocker, etc) in that recruiting year?

There are only ten schools that have won NCAA DI National Championships (Nebraska, Washington, Stanford, Southern Cal, Penn State, Long Beach State, UCLA, Texas, Hawaii, and Pacific). These “dream schools” may be out of reach for most players. Other athletes may have no idea of what they want to study or where they want to go. This usually means a much longer evaluation and selection process.

College selection may be a quick, easy process or one that may take months. It can be frustrating, troublesome and annoying, but in the end, extremely rewarding. The most important thing is finding the correct “fit” for the player ... and that takes time, effort and preparation ... so be prepared to work hard during this selection process.

### **SPECIFIC MARKETING STEPS TO TAKE:**

Step #1. Create a player profile you can send out to schools that serves as a resume for your volleyball career thus far. Register on-line under Rich Kern and/or University Athlete (if desired). Both services (for a fee) can help you compile information on the volleyball schools and programs in the US.

Step #2. From spring of Sophomore year through fall of Junior year produce your skills/game video.

Step #3. Player Introspection. During your late Sophomore or early Junior years, players and parents should do an assessment about attending college. This assessment essentially becomes your selection criteria. Develop your own questions, but here are some starters:

What do you want out of college (3-5 things)? What is important to you about attending college? What are your professional goals? What is your possible profession? Does location matter? Climate? How far away from home? How big of school do you want to attend? Public or private? How important is playing volleyball? What about sitting on the bench? What ideas do you have about playing time at the college level?

Step #4. Do your homework. Research, research, research! Research the college, academic programs, the faculty, facilities, campus life, etc. Research the athletic department, volleyball program, coaching staff, conference, etc. Research the current team, how many scholarships available for your position in your graduating year? Are there a lot of transfers in? Transfers out? Redshirt possibility? Use all available resources: guidance counselors, college websites, school recruiting materials, team media guides, current students, current students’ parents, former students, club coaches.

Talk with your club coaches and Club Director about your list of schools (10-30). Get their feedback. See if they have contacts at the schools. USE THEIR EXPERIENCE.

CALL and talk with your prospective coach. Let him/her know of your interest. Give him/her info about your upcoming tournament locations. Send out introductory letters and video. The more you contact them and show your interest in their school the more likely they are to consider you.

Sign up for NCAA clearing house online. Schedule your ACT and/or SAT tests (national dates).

Step #5. Begin the filtering process to get the number of schools to a manageable level, usually five-ten. Unofficial visits are a great help. Unlimited in number, but they can be expensive for travel. College volleyball camps in the summer are another method of experiencing a school, its volleyball program and coaching staff. Being organized is essential ... it actually can get overwhelming to the point that you may confuse what coach said what. Some players/parents develop a matrix with different categories to help evaluate and directly compare different factors.

Checklists often help. Develop a list of questions to ask the coaching staff, administration, current players, other students, etc. Ask these questions during your phone calls, unofficial visits, etc. Apply your selection criteria to the data you have gathered. This is where it gets tough. What is most important: academic reputation, academic majors available, the volleyball program, playing time on the court, etc.?

Step #6. Make your decision; inform the coach with a verbal commitment to their program. Also inform the coaches of the programs you didn't choose. This is tough, but essential! You may have developed a close relationship with some of these coaches, but make this a short, to-the-point phone call. Be firm and don't linger ... they will soon move on to the next recruit on their list.

### **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:**

**RESEARCHING SCHOOLS** - The goal of the recruiting process is not simply to get recruited by colleges, but to recruit your own schools. You are as much a part of the process as the coach is. At the end of the day, finding a match is about answering YES to the following questions...

- (1) Can I be accepted to this school based on my academic record? – If you cannot get accepted, your recruiting process is over. It doesn't matter how good you are or how much the coach wants you. Most coaches won't even talk about athletics until they have qualified you academically!
- (2) Do I have the athletic skill to play for this school? – If you don't have the skills to play for a certain program, it doesn't matter how badly you want to go there, no one wants to get cut or sit on the bench and it's important to find programs that fit your athletic level so you have a chance to play.
- (3) Does the coach have the ability to evaluate my skill somehow? – If a coach cannot physically see you play through an actual game or through a video, they may have a difficult time feeling confident in your ability and might lean towards other recruits who they have seen perform in live competition.
- (4) Is this coach truly interested in having me play for their program? – Some coaches encourage kids to "try out" or "walk on." You need to know if a coach is interested in you as a person and as an athlete.
- (5) Can I afford to go to this school? – The national tuition average for private college is over \$19,000 a year and some are approaching \$50,000 per year. College is not cheap and despite your desires and the availability of financial aid, there will be some colleges you cannot afford to attend. This is a reality that needs to be accepted and you need to apply your energy to other schools that are more affordable. It's important to note that you should never dismiss any school because of cost until you have explored all your financial options with the coach and with the institution.

(6) Does this school offer academic programs I am interested in? – If you want to be an architect or an engineer, it's important to find schools that offer those programs. If you have no idea what you want to do, it's important to find schools that have a wide variety of programs that you can explore. You are going to school for an education and to enter the working world after college, so it's important to find school that offer academic programs you are truly interested in. Don't settle for less than what you want!

(7) Will I be happy and successful at this school? – This is a difficult question to answer until you actually arrive at school. Schools may look great on paper or in person and then after a semester you might not like the players on the team or some other aspect of the school. When visiting and evaluating colleges, we try to encourage families to ask as many questions as possible from coaches, players, other parents, students, teachers, and anyone else you can find. Only then will you get a sense of the school before you actually enroll and arrive. The national graduation rate for students who enroll in 4-year institutions is 60% from the institution they first enrolled in, so at some point, 40% of all college students transfer or drop out of the school they enrolled in. Much of that can be traced back to their decision-making before they enrolled. Wanting to participate in college athletics makes finding a match that much more difficult.

Here are some things to consider about each school you're interested in:

#### Academics

1. What is the school known for?
2. What is the school's national reputation?
3. Degree programs that interest me
4. Core education courses
5. Expected course load (in season, off season, summer)
6. Team Academic Advisor

#### Campus

1. Safety
2. Convenient layout
3. Facilities-library, dorms, cafeterias, etc
4. Amenities-activities, etc
5. Style, design

#### Location

1. How far?
2. Accessible to city
3. Surrounding community support

#### Program

1. History
2. National ranking
3. NCAA Playoff Births
4. Reputation
5. Conference
6. Training schedule (Include off season, summer school and summer workouts)

#### Staff

1. Head Coach
  - a. What are the coach's goals for the program?
  - b. What is the plan on how to achieve those goals?
  - c. How would the coach describe the style of play they train?
  - d. What is the coach's philosophy on practice and training?
  - e. How long has the coach been there?
  - f. How many years left on the Coach's contract?
  - g. What is the Coach's ideal job?
2. Assistants
3. Training/conditioning schedule (In season as well as spring and summer)
4. Players' impression

#### Team

1. Current teammates
2. Know anyone on the current team?
3. How do they travel?
4. What position are they recruiting me for?
  - a. What is the developmental plan for me?
  - b. What is the coach's assessment of my play?
    - i. Strengths
    - ii. Weaknesses
    - iii. What in my game will have to improve in order for me to make the adjustment to the collegiate game?
5. How many graduating from my position?
6. When does the coach see me playing regularly?
7. Will I be red-shirted my freshman year?
8. Are there many transfers-in? Transfers-out?

#### Scholarship

1. How many scholarships available for my year?
2. What does the scholarship cover?
3. Approximate monetary value
4. Medical insurance covered by school?

#### Facilities

1. Game location
2. Practice facilities
3. Training room
4. Weight room
5. Team Room
6. Living arrangements-live with team, in dorm, etc.

## Miscellaneous

1. Overall feel
2. Other people attending you know
3. Nearby support structure (relatives, etc.)

In conclusion, the college recruiting and selection process is challenging. The ultimate goal is for the player and parents to research and evaluate various colleges and their volleyball programs to determine the best match for the player's skills, desires and academic goals. Remember that volleyball should only be a means to help you achieve your collegiate and professional goals. Unfortunately very few club volleyball athletes go on to play professional volleyball so use the opportunities you have through volleyball to have a great college experience and get a degree that will help you in your professional life after volleyball.