



LAVA/SMBC Athletes and Families,

For those of you who may be interested in pursuing athletics in college, we are here and ready to help! College sports provide the unique opportunity to compete at a high level while working toward a college degree that will lead to lifelong achievement. At LAVA, we aim to help you find the right fit to make sure your college experience shapes your leadership skills, personal development, and future success. No matter what career path you choose, your college degree will serve you far beyond your final competition.

Our goal is to equip you with information about the academic requirements to compete, but also inform you about what to expect when becoming a collegiate student-athlete. We are committed to supporting students across all divisions (NCAA/NAIA/NJCAA/CCCAA) on your road to success. We encourage you to take an active role in the process of preparing for college. About 1,800 schools in the U.S. offer tremendous academic and athletic programs that are each unique. It would be beneficial for you to work closely with your coaches, parents/guardians, high school counselors, and mentors as you make the transition to college.

We hope the information we provide helps inform you and your family about the recruiting process. If you have any questions, please reach out to our Recruiting Coordinator, Samantha Calisto, at scalisto.lava@gmail.com. We wish you the best of luck as you embark on this important journey, and we look forward to your future success!

We are here for you! Let's get started!

Sincerely,

Your LAVA family of staff and coaches

Scan this code to add Samantha Calisto, LAVA Recruiting Coordinator, to your phone:



RECRUITING DO'S and DON'TS



THE DO'S

MESSAGING:

ATHLETES should message programs and coaches directly, not their parents, club representative, or coach:

1. The athlete crafting an email specific to that college/university shows they have a more sincere interest in the program.
2. Coaches appreciate when athletes are willing to put in the legwork when it comes to recruiting, not when they have everything done for them.
3. Messaging a coach directly shows confidence and maturity. In college, coaches work with athletes directly, not parents! The earlier a relationship can develop between a coach and athlete, the better!
4. It stands out! Coaches get hundreds (yes, actually hundreds) of emails a day from mass email messages from recruiting services. Direct messages stand out from the crowd!
5. Follow-ups from coaches, directors, and recruiting coordinators are good; you should copy them on your emails and messages to coaches.

FILM:

What should be included in your film?

- The first 3 clips should be the best, most attention-grabbing. Coaches don't have time to watch film that doesn't make an impression right off the bat.
- Highlights should begin with skills that matter most to your position. Hitters show hitting highlights first, DS show serve receive first... Setters, make sure you include out-of-system plays, not just sets from a perfect pass.
- Serving matters the least; only include a few serving highlights toward the end. Make sure that the serve itself is tough; aces don't matter as much as the quality of the serve.
- Don't mix skills! Put each skill-specific highlight within its own category, not in random order.
- Highlight portions of a video should range between 2 and 4 minutes.
- At the end of your video, include full rallies that show your court presence, positioning, transitioning, cheering, etc. This portion can be anywhere from 2 to 4 minutes long. This is better than sending a full set or full match because it provides similar evaluation opportunities for coaches without too much of a time commitment. If the coach wants to watch you play a full match, they may request one via email.

THE DON'TS...

- Overly personal email addresses like ilovemystanley@email.com
- Don't include drill work in highlight videos, live matches only
- You don't need a fancy headshot, but your image should include your face so they can recognize you when they see you in person
- HUDL links make coaches watch ads, pro-tip - screen record hudl, and upload to YouTube or SportsRecruits.
- Don't beg for a spot on any team; it has to be a two-way fit. The program should want you as much as you want to play for the program. If not, it's okay, it's just not the right fit.
- Stats are not super important; they can vary based on who is taking stats, the strength of the opponent, etc. Only share stats if the coach requests them.
- You don't need music for a highlight video; the coaches mute them anyway.
- If you are pulled out of a match when a coach/scout is present, don't pout! Show what kind of teammate you are from the sideline and how you respond to adversity. Coaches care about character AS MUCH as they care about ability, if not more.
- When coaches are watching you, how you react to mistakes matters - negative body language, attitude, etc., on the court is the quickest way to get crossed off a prospective recruit list.

Frequently Asked Questions



What is a contact?

A contact occurs any time a college coach says more than hello during a face-to-face contact with a college-bound student-athlete or his or her parents off the college's campus.

What is a contact period?

During a contact period, a college coach may have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents, watch student-athletes compete and visit their high schools, and write or telephone the student-athletes AND/OR their parents.

What are recruiting calendars?

Recruiting calendars help promote the well-being of prospective student-athletes and coaches and ensure competitive equity by defining certain periods in which recruiting may or may not occur in a particular sport.

WHEN CAN DIVISION I COACHES CONTACT ATHLETES?

- Any time: Athletes can receive non-recruiting materials from college coaches, such as questionnaires, camp brochures, nonathletic institutional publications, and NCAA educational materials published by the NCAA.
- June 15 after sophomore year: Coaches can extend verbal scholarship offers, call athletes, and send athletes all forms of private electronic correspondence, including text messages, instant messages, direct messages, and emails, as well as all recruiting materials.
- August 1 before junior year: Athletes can begin taking official visits, and they can also arrange unofficial visits with a school's athletic department and meet with the coach while on campus. Coaches can begin conducting off-campus contact with athletes at their residence or school.

WHEN CAN DIVISION II COACHES CONTACT ATHLETES?

The NCAA Recruiting Rules for Division II schools are slightly more relaxed than those for Division I, and the rules are the same across all sports:

- Non-recruiting materials: Athletes can receive brochures for camps, questionnaires, NCAA materials, and non-athletic recruiting publications at any time.
- Private correspondence: Telephone calls, emails, texts, DM's at any time.
- Off-campus contact: Coaches can conduct face-to-face off-campus communications with athletes and/or their parents starting June 15 after an athlete's sophomore year.
- Unofficial visits: Athletes can take unofficial visits at any time.
- Official visits: Athletes may take official visits starting June 15 after an athlete's sophomore year.
- Scholarship offers: Coaches may extend verbal scholarship offers at any time.

WHEN CAN DIVISION III COACHES CONTACT ATHLETES?

DIII schools have the most relaxed NCAA recruiting rules of all the division levels. Similar to NCAA DII, they are the same for all sports:

- Recruiting materials: Athletes can receive recruiting materials at any time.
- Telephone calls: There is no limit on when college coaches can call athletes.
- Digital communications: There is no limit on when college coaches can contact athletes digitally.
- Off-campus contact: After the athlete's sophomore year, college coaches may begin to conduct off-campus communications.
- Official visits: Athletes can begin taking official visits after January 1 of their junior year.
- Unofficial visits: Athletes can make an unlimited number of unofficial visits at any time.

***The NAIA does not restrict when and how college coaches can contact recruits.** This allows coaches and athletes to communicate throughout their high school careers so they can talk to prospective coaches without worry.

***Insider Tip:** Athletes can always communicate with college coaches through their club or high school coach and send emails and texts to coaches. They will not get a direct response from coaches until their sport's contact period begins.

What is an evaluation period?

During an evaluation period, a college coach may watch college-bound student-athletes compete, visit their high schools, and write or telephone student-athletes or their parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents off the college's campus during an evaluation period.

What is a quiet period?

During a quiet period, a college coach may only have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents on the college's campus. A coach may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write or telephone college-bound student-athletes or their parents during this time.

What is a dead period?

During a dead period, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents, and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write and telephone student-athletes or their parents during a dead period.

Can coaches use Camps and Clinics to recruit athletes to their schools?

For the NCAA Divisions, recruits and college coaches are not allowed to have any recruiting conversations during camps before June 15 after the sophomore year of high school. Previously, there weren't any rules that prevented coaches from talking about recruiting underclassmen during camps. It had become standard practice for college coaches to extend verbal scholarship offers to top recruits during camps.

What is the difference between an official visit and an unofficial visit?

Any visit to a college campus by a college-bound student-athlete or his or her parents paid for by the college is an official visit. Visits paid for by college-bound student-athletes or their parents are unofficial visits. For NCAA Division I, recruits can start taking official visits starting August 1, before their junior year of high school. In the past, official visits weren't permitted until September 1 of the athlete's junior year of high school, so this rule is bumping them up!

What is a National Letter of Intent?

A National Letter of Intent is signed by a college-bound student-athlete when the student-athlete agrees to attend a Division I or II college or university for one academic year. Participating institutions agree to provide financial aid for one academic year to the student-athlete as long as the student-athlete is admitted to the school and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules. Other forms of financial aid do not guarantee the student-athlete financial aid.

The National Letter of Intent is voluntary and not required for a student-athlete to receive financial aid or participate in sports.

Signing a National Letter of Intent ends the recruiting process since participating schools are prohibited from recruiting student-athletes who have already signed letters with other participating schools.

A student-athlete who has signed a National Letter of Intent may request a release from his or her contract with the school. If a student-athlete signs a National Letter of Intent with one school but attends a different school, he or she will lose one full year of eligibility and must complete a full academic year at their new school before being eligible to compete.

NCAA Division I/II/III vs. NAIA vs. Junior College

NCAA Division I

- There are 334 Division I universities with volleyball programs.
- **NEW:** Roster limits - each team must adhere to a set roster limit based on the average team size over the past few seasons.
- **NEW:** No scholarship limits - Schools will be able to offer full or partial scholarships to all athletes, eliminating previous sport-specific limits.
- Impact on recruits - fewer walk-on opportunities in many sports, coaches must be selective about who gets a spot, possibly affecting incoming recruits.

NCAA Division II

- There are 298 Division II universities with volleyball programs.
- Division II member institutions have a pool of money for recruitment, as opposed to Division I, where they have specific scholarships for recruitment.
- You can receive a full scholarship at the Division II level, or you can receive a partial scholarship. The coaches can split the money however they see fit.
- There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division II school must not exceed.

NCAA Division III

- There are 437 Division III universities with volleyball programs. Most are small campuses with high academic requirements
- Division III athletics feature student-athletes who receive no financial aid related to their athletic ability.
- Scholarships may be provided by the institution based on academic merit, need, and other factors outside athletics.

NAIA

- There are 220 NAIA universities with volleyball programs. These schools tend to be smaller in size and frequently have a religious affiliation.
- Similar to NCAA Division II, NAIA member institutions have a pool of money for recruitment.
- Though rare, you can receive a full scholarship in the NAIA. More frequently seen is a partial scholarship. The coaches can split the money however they see fit.
- Athletes may also apply for academic/merit-based scholarships and need-based financial aid.

Junior College

- Junior colleges also vary in level and rules depending on location.
- The scholarship requirements are the same at the JC level as they are for four-year institutions.
- California Community Colleges are not able to offer financial aid. However, if you grew up in California, you may qualify for the “California Promise” and wouldn’t have to pay for any courses at any California Community College.
- The assumption that student-athletes who attend JUCOs are “bad students” or that they are “not good enough for a four-year school,” or “lack work ethic,” could not be further from the truth. Attending a JUCO is a smart decision for many, financially as well as academically. It can also be the best step for their athletic development.
- Many athletes who play for Junior Colleges move on to play at extremely high levels! Some examples include Aaron Rodgers, Jimmy Butler, Sheryl Swoopes, and Steve Timmons. In addition, several local volleyball standouts have transferred to Division I programs like Cal Poly, UC San Diego, CSU Fullerton, CSU Northridge, and CSU Bakersfield - and many other schools across divisions.

NCAA AMATEURISM RULES

The NCAA rules in this area are not easy to interpret. However, more than 95 percent of recruits will not have a problem meeting the NCAA requirements. For athletes who have a nontraditional athletic history, here are the main points to look out for concerning your eligibility.

- Receiving compensation that exceeds actual and necessary expenses – The NCAA does allow athletes to receive some compensation as amateur athletes, as long as the amounts do not exceed what are deemed actual and necessary expenses. Some athletes are asked to join travel teams in which their cost is covered by the team (this would be allowed). However, if an athlete is paid more than the travel costs, they could get into trouble.
- Receiving compensation for media appearances based on your athletic ability or fame – The obvious rule violation is being paid appearance fees, but this can also include things like athletes with large amounts of YouTube followers who are profiting from advertising dollars.
- Endorsing (expressly or implicitly) commercial products or services – This is one of the more difficult areas to interpret. If the athlete is being paid in any way to wear a specific brand or promote a product, it would be considered a violation.
- Accepting prize money beyond the actual/necessary expenses – It is not illegal for a potential NCAA athlete to have competed in a professional competition. However, if they are eligible to win prize money, it cannot exceed the amount of the necessary expenses. **There is an exception for tennis players, who are allowed to accept up to \$10,000/year and still maintain eligibility.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LEGALITY OF SOMETHING:

The NCAA does not provide guidance on what is and is not permissible. Informed Athlete, <https://informedathlete.com/>, run by Rick Allen, is one of the few sources where you can get a detailed review and explanation of your NCAA rules questions. Contact him if you have questions about any of the above points.

SportsRecruits

ALL LAVA and SMBC Athletes receive a PREMIUM SPORTS RECRUITS ACCOUNT as members of a LAVA/SMBC team (High School Ages Only). Athletes will automatically be added to their teams on SportsRecruits in September. For athletes who already have a SportsRecruits profile, your Premium Account will apply to your current profile.

WHAT IS SPORTS RECRUITS?

SportsRecruits empowers athletes to pursue their dreams by providing them with a suite of online tools to handle every facet of the college recruiting process. They have every DI, DII, and DIII college coach as a registered user, along with many NAIA and Junior Colleges. With over 100,000 members and founded by and staffed by former college athletes, SportsRecruits provides top-notch guidance when it comes to the college recruiting process.

SportsRecruits is the most useful recruiting resource site out there for student-athletes. Not only does it provide endless tools and support for the athlete, but it also gives LAVA Staff and Coaches the ability to keep tabs on where players are in the recruiting process!

WHY SPORTS RECRUITS?

The platform has the most useful interactive College Search tool of any program out there! You can search for a college or university by almost any category → Location, major, division, school size, cost, etc. The ability for LAVA Staff to support you through the process is also unmatched. Plus, it still provides you with all the tools that other major recruiting sites utilize → Video, messaging, etc.

More detailed information, helpful links, and resources can be found on our recruiting page of the LAVA Website:

WWW.LAVACADEMY.COM/RECRUITING/