

RECRUITING READINESS GUIDE

Assess your readiness and learn more about the college recruiting process.



A Note to Athletes and Families

Recruiting isn't simply about getting noticed. It's about understanding who you are, what you want, and where you can thrive.

The recruiting process can be exciting, rewarding, and at times overwhelming. Between understanding timelines, communicating with coaches, evaluating opportunities, and making important decisions about the future, many athletes and families find themselves navigating unfamiliar territory without a clear roadmap.

This guide is designed to help student-athletes and those who support them assess their current readiness, better understand the recruiting process, and gain clarity on the next steps in their journey.

We'll begin with the Recruiting Readiness Assessment, which will help you evaluate key areas that impact the recruiting process, including self-awareness, academics, communication, leadership, resilience, and college readiness. As you move through the assessment, answer honestly and use the reflection prompts to think more deeply about your goals, strengths, and opportunities for growth.

After completing the assessment, you'll find additional insights on what coaches are really looking for, common recruiting mistakes, questions every athlete should be able to answer, and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions from athletes and families navigating the recruiting process.

You'll also find additional resources designed to help you navigate the recruiting process with greater clarity and confidence. For those seeking more personalized guidance, you'll learn about opportunities to continue the conversation and receive ongoing support throughout the journey.

There are no perfect scores. The purpose of this assessment is not to judge where you are today, but to help you understand where you want to go next.

Recruiting is one chapter of your journey. The confidence, leadership, communication skills, and self-awareness you develop along the way can impact a lifetime.

Let's begin.

The Recruiting Readiness Assessment

Self-Awareness:

- ☐ I can clearly describe my strengths as an athlete.
- ☐ I understand areas where I need improvement.
- ☐ I know what motivates me.
- ☐ I can explain the type of environment where I perform best.
- ☐ I understand what I am looking for in a college experience.
- ☐ I have goals beyond simply getting recruited.

Reflection: What type of athlete, teammate, and person do you want to become through this process?

Academics:

- ☐ I know my current GPA.
- ☐ I understand the academic expectations of schools I am interested in.
- ☐ I am taking appropriate courses.
- ☐ I have discussed academic goals with my family.
- ☐ I understand that academics can create recruiting opportunities.
- ☐ I recognize that athletics will eventually end, but education remains.

Reflection: What academic opportunities are important to me?

Recruiting Strategy:

- ☐ I understand recruiting timelines for my sport.
- ☐ I have identified potential schools.
- ☐ I know what division levels may be a fit.
- ☐ I understand the difference between dream schools and realistic opportunities.

- ☐ I have created a list of schools that interest me.
- ☐ I know what steps I should take over the next six months.

Reflection: If a coach called tomorrow, would I know why I want to attend their school?

Communication:

- ☐ I am comfortable emailing coaches.
- ☐ I know how to introduce myself professionally.
- ☐ I can communicate without relying on my parents.
- ☐ I respond to messages promptly.
- ☐ I can ask thoughtful questions.
- ☐ I feel confident speaking about my goals and experiences.

Reflection: If a coach called today, how confident would I feel leading the conversation?

Leadership:

- ☐ I hold myself accountable.
- ☐ I am dependable.
- ☐ I support teammates.
- ☐ I respond well to feedback.
- ☐ I remain coachable.
- ☐ I demonstrate leadership even without a title.
- ☐ I contribute positively to team culture.

Reflection: Would my current coach describe me as a leader? Why?

Resilience:

- ☐ I recover quickly from mistakes.
- ☐ I can handle setbacks without giving up.
- ☐ I manage pressure effectively.

- ☐ I maintain confidence during challenges.
- ☐ I understand that recruiting can involve rejection.
- ☐ I focus on what I can control.

Reflection: How do I typically respond when things don't go my way?

College Readiness:

- ☐ I understand the time commitment of college athletics.
- ☐ I can manage my schedule independently.
- ☐ I take ownership of responsibilities.
- ☐ I understand the expectations of collegiate athletes.
- ☐ I am prepared to live away from home.
- ☐ I understand that recruitment is only the beginning.

Reflection: What excites me most about competing at the next level?

Scoring:

- 35–42 Checks: Strong foundation and prepared to actively navigate the recruiting process.
- 25–34 Checks: On the right track, with opportunities to strengthen strategy, communication, or readiness.
- Below 25 Checks: Important gaps may exist. Developing a clear plan can help you move forward with confidence.

Reflection:

Recruiting is not simply about finding a school. It's about finding a place where you can grow, contribute, and thrive. The strongest recruits are often not just talented athletes - they are self-aware leaders who communicate effectively, embrace challenges, and understand who they are becoming.

What Coaches Are Really Looking For

Many athletes believe recruiting is primarily about talent.

Talent matters.

But coaches are often evaluating much more than athletic performance alone. They are looking for individuals who can contribute to their program, represent their institution, and positively impact team culture.

Qualities coaches often value include:

Character

How you conduct yourself on and off the field.

Coachability

Your willingness to receive feedback, learn, and grow.

Communication

Your ability to advocate for yourself and build relationships.

Leadership

The example you set through your actions, attitude, and consistency.

Academic Commitment

The habits and discipline required to succeed in the classroom.

Work Ethic

How you approach preparation, improvement, and adversity.

Self-Awareness

Understanding your strengths, areas for growth, and what you need to perform at your best.

A coach isn't simply recruiting an athlete.

They're recruiting a teammate, student, leader, and future contributor to their culture.

The Five Areas of Recruiting Readiness

Recruiting readiness extends beyond athletic performance. The following areas can significantly influence both the recruiting process and future success at the collegiate level.

Self-Awareness

Understanding who you are, what matters to you, and what you're looking for in your college experience. Athletes with strong self-awareness often make more informed and confident decisions throughout the recruiting process.

Communication

Learning to advocate for yourself through conversations, emails, visits, and relationship-building. Effective communication allows athletes to take ownership of their recruiting journey.

Leadership

Leadership isn't limited to captains or team leaders. It is reflected in daily habits, accountability, consistency, and how you show up when nobody is watching.

Resilience

Recruiting often includes uncertainty, setbacks, and challenges. Resilience helps athletes remain focused on what they can control while continuing to move forward.

College Readiness

Preparing for the responsibilities, expectations, and opportunities that come with collegiate athletics. Recruiting is only the beginning; readiness helps athletes thrive once they arrive.

Common Recruiting Mistakes

The recruiting process can be complex, and many athletes unintentionally make mistakes that create unnecessary challenges along the way.

Some of the most common include:

Waiting Too Long to Begin Communication

Many athletes delay reaching out because they feel they need everything figured out first. Building relationships often takes time.

Letting Parents Handle All Interactions

Parents can provide valuable support, but athletes should gradually take ownership of communication and decision-making.

Focusing Only on Dream Schools

It's important to pursue ambitious goals while also exploring a range of opportunities that align with academic, athletic, and personal priorities.

Chasing Prestige Instead of Fit

The "best" school is not always the right school. Finding an environment where you can grow, contribute, and thrive often matters more than a name or ranking.

Comparing Your Journey to Others

Every recruiting journey is different. Comparing timelines or opportunities can create unnecessary pressure and distraction.

Assuming Talent Alone Is Enough

Athletic ability matters, but coaches are often evaluating character, communication, coachability, leadership, and overall fit as well.

Questions Every Athlete Should Be Able To Answer

The recruiting process is not only about finding a college. It is also an opportunity to better understand yourself, your goals, and the environment where you are most likely to succeed.

Take a few moments to reflect on the following questions:

1. Why do I want to compete in college?
2. What am I looking for in a program?
3. What type of environment helps me succeed?
4. What do I want to study?
5. What kind of teammate do I want to be?

There are no perfect answers. The goal is simply to develop greater clarity, confidence, and self-awareness as you move through the recruiting process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my athlete need to be the best player on their team to be recruited?

No. While athletic ability matters, coaches often evaluate much more than statistics or accolades. Character, coachability, work ethic, communication, leadership, and academic performance can all influence recruiting opportunities. The goal is not simply to be the best athlete in the room - it's to become the athlete a coach wants in their program.

How involved should parents be?

Parents play an important role in supporting and guiding their athlete throughout the recruiting process. As athletes progress through high school, however, they should increasingly take ownership of communication, relationship-building, and decision-making. Learning to advocate for themselves is an important part of preparing for collegiate athletics and life beyond sport.

What if my athlete isn't hearing from coaches?

A lack of communication does not necessarily mean a lack of opportunity. Recruiting timelines vary significantly by sport, school, division, and individual program needs. Rather than focusing on what cannot be controlled, athletes should continue developing, communicating, and positioning themselves for opportunities.

What if my athlete doesn't know where they want to go?

That's completely normal. Recruiting is often a process of discovery. The goal is not simply finding a roster spot - it is finding an environment where an athlete can grow, contribute, and thrive academically, athletically, and personally.

Why is communication with coaches so important?

Communication is about more than expressing interest. It is an opportunity for athletes to advocate for themselves, build relationships, demonstrate maturity, and gain confidence in professional conversations. Learning to communicate effectively is a skill that extends far beyond the recruiting process.

What are coaches really looking for?

Coaches recruit more than athletes. They recruit future teammates, leaders, students, and contributors to their culture. Talent matters, but qualities such as coachability, accountability, resilience, leadership, and character often influence recruiting decisions as much as athletic performance.

What if my athlete experiences setbacks or rejection?

Setbacks are a normal part of both athletics and recruiting. Not every opportunity will work out, and not every coach will respond. Resilience, perspective, and a willingness to continue growing are often what separate athletes who thrive from those who become discouraged.

How can I help my athlete navigate the process without taking it over?

The most effective support often comes from asking questions, encouraging reflection, and helping athletes take ownership of decisions. Recruiting can be an opportunity for young people to develop confidence, independence, and self-advocacy - skills that will benefit them long after athletics.

What is the ultimate goal of recruiting?

The goal is not simply to get recruited.

The goal is to find a place where you can grow, contribute, compete, and thrive.

Recruiting is one chapter of an athlete's journey, but the leadership, confidence, communication skills, and self-awareness developed throughout the process can impact a lifetime.

What's Next?

Completing this assessment is a great first step.

Whether you feel confident in your current approach or recognize areas where you'd like additional support, remember that recruiting readiness is not about having all the answers today. It's about developing the awareness, confidence, communication skills, and plan needed to move forward with intention.

Every athlete's journey is different. Some are just beginning to explore collegiate athletics, while others are actively communicating with coaches and evaluating opportunities.

Wherever you are in the process, **aceto** offers coaching and development programs designed to help athletes navigate recruiting while building the skills needed to thrive at the next level.

Below are opportunities for athletes and families seeking additional guidance, support, and accountability throughout the recruiting process.

Recruiting Strategy Session

A focused 90-minute session designed to provide clarity, direction, and actionable next steps.

Together, we'll assess where you are in the recruiting process, identify opportunities and challenges, and develop a personalized roadmap based on your goals.

Includes:

- Recruiting readiness review
- Timeline assessment
- School-fit discussion
- Recruiting strategy recommendations
- Athlete and parent Q&A
- Personalized action plan

Ideal for athletes and families looking for clarity and a plan.

Recruiting Readiness Program

A structured coaching experience for athletes who want guidance, accountability, and confidence as they navigate the recruiting process.

Includes:

- Six coaching sessions
- Recruiting roadmap and action plan
- Coach communication guidance
- Email and outreach review
- School targeting strategy

- Campus visit preparation
- Leadership and confidence development
- Parent consultation session

Ideal for athletes actively preparing for or entering the recruiting process.

College Athlete Development Program

Comprehensive support for athletes pursuing collegiate athletics while developing the leadership, communication, and performance skills needed to thrive beyond recruitment.

Includes:

- Bi-weekly coaching sessions
- Ongoing recruiting strategy support
- Communication and outreach guidance
- Leadership development
- Decision-making support
- Campus visit and interview preparation
- Parent consultation sessions
- Email support between sessions

Ideal for athletes seeking a long-term partner throughout the recruiting journey and beyond.

A Final Thought

If you've made it this far, you've already taken a meaningful step.

I hope this guide provided valuable insight, encouraged meaningful reflection, and helped you better understand both the recruiting process and your own readiness to navigate it.

Whether you're looking for answers to a few questions, guidance navigating the recruiting process, or ongoing support as you prepare for the next level, the right support often begins with a conversation.

If you'd like to discuss your results or explore any of the opportunities outlined above, I'd love to connect.

[Schedule a Discovery Call](#)

I look forward to learning more about your goals and how I can help.

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