



Common Mistakes made by Student Athletes

MISTAKE #1- TARGET SCHOOLS ABOVE YOUR ATHLETIC ABILITY

Student athletes and parents often believe their son or daughter is better than they actually are, and assume they will be recruited while they wait for their mailbox to fill up with scholarship offers or wait for phone calls from coaches. This is the number one mistake. You have to be proactive and market yourself the proper way. Very few athletes will ever play at the top tier programs in the country. These schools have the luxury of selecting from the top blue chip athletes and begin tracking them by their freshman year in high school. Parents and athletes do not always know how to evaluate athletic ability accurately. Success on your team or league does not mean you are ready to be a college athlete or capable of receiving a college scholarship or even competing at the college level. Playing in camps or tournaments out of your local area is a good way to measure yourself against the larger population of athletes. Overestimating your talent can leave you in the cold for a college career if you only target schools that are above your talent level. Many kids make this mistake and end up transferring, a lot just get cut and never play their sport again. And that's a shame.

MISTAKE #2- CONTACTS TOO FEW SCHOOLS

Just because you're interested in a school does not mean they're interested in you. If the school already has five athletes that play your position, do they need another one? Want to stay in your state so your family and friends can watch you play? How many others think the same way? Nothing limits your options more than just focusing on a small number of schools. The more schools that know about you, the more offers you will eventually receive. If you target a large number of schools you are more likely to have options to choose the best school for you.

MISTAKE #3- HAS A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

Many athletes feel confident that they are already being recruited because they've heard from a few coaches. This "contact" comes in the form of letters, emails, occasional phone calls and even an invitation to attend a camp so they can "get a better look at you." Unless you are getting weekly phone calls from coaches, you are not being seriously recruited. Parents and STUDENT athletes often see other athletes get recruited and assume the same thing will happen to them since "I am just as good as they are." Few people realize how college coaches evaluate players. The most successful high school players are not necessarily the most recruited college athletes. High School awards and statistics only tell part of the story. College coaches recruit based on physical attributes, skill, and potential.

MISTAKE #4- WAIT UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN

The earlier you start the process, the more success you will have. Your window of opportunity closes with every game you play. Families start the process too late and end up making a rushed decision. Start researching schools as early as possible and make first contact with college coaches early. Just get your name in their pipeline! Maybe you assume you will only play if someone recruits you? STUDENT athletes underestimate their ability, and they think they would not be capable of getting a scholarship and they don't even try to obtain a scholarship. You don't have to be the best player in your league or even on your team to get recruited. You have to try and in many cases have to ask for a scholarship. Scholarship talent

is usually noticed, but not always. Don't be shy about your ability, or about calling attention to it and your aspirations.

MISTAKE #5- EXPECT SOMEONE ELSE TO GET YOU RECRUITED

Although many athletes play for a high-profile high school or a travel team, families are on their own to figure out the best way to get recruited or land a scholarship. Do not just rely on your coaches, they have full time jobs, families and are volunteering their time to coach. Parents and STUDENT athletes often receive help and encouragement from people who know very little about the recruiting process and little about college athletics. Listen to the right people and do your own homework. Also, beware of any agendas someone else might have when giving you advice.

MISTAKE #6- NOT UNDERSTAND THE SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

As the emergence of camps, showcases and private instruction takes on a new and more important role, many families feel that they need a scholarship to justify the time and expense they have already put into athletics. Parents and STUDENT athletes often feel anything less than an athletic scholarship to a Division I program is unacceptable. Don't be foolish; remember you are going to college to receive a college degree and play the sport you love. Parents and STUDENT athletes also don't realize how rare a full scholarship is. Most scholarships issued to players are partial scholarships. Understand that often a grant and aid package from a school that doesn't offer athletic scholarships is more lucrative than one with athletic aid. The scholarship and financial aid process is complicated and in addition to athletic aid it involves academic aid, family need aid, leverage aid, and other types of aid. The more you understand how the process works, the more money you can save.