

Guide to Athletic Recruiting: Making the Cut in College

By Matt Musico, Collegewise counselor



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So, you want to play a college sport...

For most young athletes, it's hard to picture life without also being an athlete. It's part of their identity. When someone asks, "How would you describe yourself to another person?" part of their answer will almost always include, "Well, I'm a [insert sport] player."

That's partially why many student-athletes aspire to keep participating at the next level. Not only do they love to play, but after years of playing, it *needs* to be a part of their daily routine in some way, shape, or form.

The business that is college athletics is very top-heavy in the context of national coverage—it's basically football, basketball, and then everything else. With that in mind, many students will focus on playing for some of the country's top athletic programs in their respective sport. While a select handful may actually reach that particular goal— about 2% of high school athletes [earn athletic scholarships](#) and fewer than 2% of those athletes end up going professional—it's important to realize that those student-athletes are the exception, not the rule.

In the world of college athletic recruiting, there are two types of athletes: blue-chip athletes and yellow-chip athletes.

Blue-Chip athletes are the ones we hear about via ESPN, Bleacher Report, 247 Sports, and Rivals. They're highly valued and recruited by college programs as the nation's top players. Since they're on the radar of so many coaches, they have the opportunity to commit to a school of their choice early while doing minimal work. The only thing blue-chip athletes need to be concerned with—

outside of how they're performing in their respective sport—is to follow the rules of recruitment and do what's asked of them.

We hear about these kinds of athletes a lot because of social media and the 24/7 nature of an online news cycle, but these student-athletes are in the minority.

Most athletes are considered yellow-chip. They're least a tier below everyone else (they're still good, but just not among the top in the nation). Yellow-chip athletes have to get involved in the process more and market themselves appropriately. Colleges and coaches likely won't be coming to them first, so it's important to do what's necessary to be seen.

Throughout this process, it's important to be honest with yourself. At what level do you really want to play at? Do objective talent evaluators think that's possible for you? Will you be able to handle the academic part of being a student-athlete? Most athletes want to play at the top level, but there are two things everyone needs to remember:

- There are many different types of athletic programs out there (depending on the sport you're looking for)
- It's helpful to have realistic expectations heading into the process.

[This interactive map](#) shows exactly how many NCAA member schools exist between Division I, Division II, and Division III. It doesn't take [NAIA schools](#) and [Junior College programs](#) into account, however. These maps will make it feel as if there are tons of options, and there are. However, the demand certainly outweighs the supply, in this instance.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of high school students who participate in sports across the country, yet only a fraction of them go on to play in college. According to the [NCAA website](#), there were more than 550,000 boys and another 430,000+ girls who played high school basketball in 2017. Of those groups, 3.4% of boys played college basketball, and that number went up slightly for girls (3.8%).

Does that mean that playing college sports is next to impossible? Not one bit—there are thousands of student-athletes (yellow-chips) who find a place to play for four years and love their experience. Just take a second to realize how large the talent pool is. High school sports are focused on a specific region or state. Even if you're a big fish in that particular pond, the actual pond is much bigger than anyone realizes. (As a former high school athlete, I didn't know that, so I'm offering the benefit of 20/20 hindsight!)

So if playing a sport of your choice at the next level is a serious goal, the following steps will be important to consider.

Basic Steps Student-Athletes Must Take

An Honest Academic Evaluation

Just about every athlete with aspirations of playing in college wants to be part of the best program possible. There are also a number of student-athletes who see their on-field/on-court/on-ice/etc. success as a vehicle to get into a more selective school than they would've if being recruited wasn't a factor.

Now, there is no right or wrong answer for the reason behind *why* you want to play a sport in college. As long as you've considered it enough—really weighed the pros and cons—then your reasons are ok. They just need to be genuine and sincere to you and nobody else.

As mentioned earlier, only a small percentage of high school athletes go on to play in college, and the percentage that end up at a top Division I school or at a highly-selective institution because of their sport is an *even smaller percentage*. Getting an honest evaluation early in the process will allow you to know what you're up against and what the chances are of making your specific dreams a reality.

We always talk about getting evaluated from an athletic standpoint, but you need to also evaluate yourself from an academic standpoint. After all, you're going to need to do some studying once you get to college.

First and foremost, it's important to control what you *can control*. That includes maintaining your grades every year while also maximizing your test scores. You may not be the best test-taker and eventually opt for test-optional colleges—and there's nothing wrong with that. This doesn't mean you should stop trying your best on the ACTs or SATs, though—especially since qualified student-athletes must comply with the [core GPA and standardized test score sliding scale](#) for Division I and II schools.

Course selection also matters, and not just for the NCAA Clearinghouse. You must meet certain requirements to be eligible for any athletic aid awarded to you and to practice in your initial year of

enrollment. Are you challenging yourself appropriately within your high school's curriculum, or are you mostly coasting through these four years prior to college?

Don't forget that college coaches don't work in the admissions office. Some have the ability to put in a good word or pull a few strings, but they're not the ones accepting you. Low grades, low test scores, and/or transcripts full of not-so-challenging classes makes it hard for coaches to support your application. They only have so much influence in any given recruitment cycle, so a coach wants to make sure they're not wasting what might be a limited resource for them.

If you're one of those student-athletes who would like to use sports as a way to get into a more selective school, you still have to show you can handle a more rigorous education. Keeping your grades up, maximizing your test scores, and continually challenging yourself sensibly through course selection are all ways to accomplish that. This shows a coach you have your "stuff" together and are serious about the challenge ahead.

Here's a little secret (that may not be so secret) about college coaches: many are inherently lazy when it comes to just about anything not related to their sport. So, make it as easy as possible for them to help in the admissions process. That's possible by doing all the "work" for them, which is basically everything that involves being a good student.

An Honest Athletic Evaluation

Just as your academic profile can dictate which colleges will accept you, the same holds true from an athletic point-of-view. As mentioned earlier, there are a limited number of spots for those with dreams of playing college sports, and the competition is fierce. There's no coasting on the field,

court, or ice: you have to work on different aspects of your game (technique, fitness, ability) on a **consistent basis**.

Your personal goals may depend on how much work you'll need to do on a daily basis. That's why it's crucial to get an honest and objective assessment from other coaches or adults with experience (whether it be your high school coach, club coach, or someone else) to find out what you must work on to reach that level.

It's not fair to ask a high school baseball player to be ready for Division I competition as a freshman or sophomore. But if they receive an honest assessment about their skills and where they need to improve, a concrete plan can be made to get to that point by the time coaches are looking for talent during his junior or senior year.

This idea of trajectory is important, especially for the non-elite college athletic programs (which is the majority of them). A coach who typically fills their recruiting class for the upcoming season months beforehand isn't going to get a freshman or sophomore to commit based upon what they project them to eventually be. They'll keep tabs on their progress and how they grow before taking that next step.

Athletics is a results-oriented endeavor. Coaches are judged on how they run their programs and how players matriculate through their respective universities, but they're also judged on their performance between the lines. They all want to win, and they want to make sure they land recruits that give them the best possible chance of doing so.

Of course, none of this will matter if the desire isn't there. This is where you can assess yourself by asking some simple questions, such as:

- How important is it for me to play a sport in college?
- Does it have to be at the varsity level, or can it be something different (club sports, intramural sports, etc.)?
- If the goal is to play Division I, am I ready for the schedule to take over my life and feel like a job at times?

It's vital to be honest with yourself. Again, there is no right or wrong answer, as long as you're telling yourself the truth. The recruiting process allows you to have control over a limited number of parts, and this is one of them.

Deciding Which Level Is Best

Before deciding which level of play you'd like to pursue in college, it's imperative to do plenty of research.

This involves a handful of steps. First is the most basic (and probably most obvious): visit the websites for the individual schools currently on your radar. Once you get there, check out the profiles of players on the roster to get an idea of how you compare, which will vary by sport. How basketball, football, lacrosse, baseball, and softball players go through this process will be different from athletes who participate in rowing, swimming, track, and other timed sports. Then, take a look at the roster from more of a macro perspective to see if there's a need at your particular position when you're expected to be a freshman.

There are unknown variables to keep in mind (a coach's preferences, potential transfers, etc.), but it allows you to set realistic expectations before even reaching out.

Also, make sure you know the scholarship rules and regulations for each division. Here's a quick breakdown to see the differences between each:

Division I

We've already established that playing Division I athletics is a huge time commitment both on- and off-the-field, but the number of scholarships awarded will vary by sport. How they're administered can also vary depending on the school, program, or even coach. This includes full-, half-, and partial-scholarships.

Division II

Division II is obviously a step below D-I, but it's still very competitive with the opportunity to earn financial aid for your athletic ability. Full scholarships do exist if you find the right school, but all scholarships at the D-II level are equivalency scholarships, which means the majority will be partial scholarships.

Division III

This level of play is still competitive and intercollegiate, but it's more for the love of the game and having the experience of being a student-athlete than anything else. D-III schools aren't allowed to offer athletic scholarships to recruits, and a coach's practice time is reduced. However, colleges can

make up for this lack of support through grants, merit scholarships, and other financial aid that may be available at any particular school.

NAIA

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics was founded in 1937 as a governing body of small athletics programs dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate sports. Many student-athletes may not have heard of the NAIA, but yearly participation includes more than 65,000 athletes who have earned \$600+ million in scholarships, along with having a shot at playing in national championships for 26 different sports.

The NAIA doesn't have a central database like the NCAA, so it's impossible to say how many athletes receive scholarships, but the vast majority of schools with this athletic designation award athletic aid to incoming recruits.

Make A List of Schools That Fit

Collegewise counselors make it a point to repeatedly mention to their students the importance of building a balanced college list. That holds true here throughout the athletic recruitment process, and it's probably even more important with that wrinkle thrown in.

Developing a list of colleges you love isn't going to look any different from what your typical list might look like if sports wasn't a factor. You should figure out what you prefer with regard to academic programs, location, size, distance from home, other extracurricular activities, and anything else that's important when you decide whether a college is worth applying to.

If you're interested in certain majors or academic programs, that's great. If you're unsure about what you'd like to study, that's OK, too—you're not alone. What you *can do* is think about what interests you academically and see what options each college has to offer. Also, see what kind of program they have in place for students who are undecided about their major—college is about exploring and using all the resources you have at your fingertips.

When it comes to athletics, don't put all of your eggs in one basket. If playing a sport is important to your college experience, don't apply to all Division I schools where the coaches haven't given you the time of day. Walking onto a Division I sport is very, very hard. And if you're one of the select few that earn a roster spot, playing time will likely be hard to come by.

Make sure your final college list has a combination of opportunities—schools from different divisions and coaches with whom you've been in contact. Above all else for these schools, make sure you like them—even if you don't actually end up playing soccer, basketball, or lacrosse.

Now, you might be thinking, "But I'm getting recruited to play, why would I need to worry about that?" I'm saying this now because things can change fast. Players transfer, athletic administrators change jobs, coaches get fired or find better opportunities, and injuries happen. If you attend a school solely because you love the soccer coach and they're gone by your sophomore year, you'll be stuck at a school you don't actually like (which is *Bad News Bears*).

Many people focus on the "what" aspect of forming college lists, but the "why" and "what if" for each of the schools on your list are just as important, if not more so.

Contacting Schools Early

When it comes to the athletic recruiting process, giving yourself more time is always better. If you have an idea of what you're looking for and want to start the process as soon as possible, it's OK to start researching and reaching out to schools as a freshman and sophomore.

It's certainly not too late as a junior—or even a senior, depending on the circumstances—but it's worth noting that the later you start this process, the more accelerated (i.e. more stressful) it'll feel. Getting on a coach's radar early before he/she sees other players they'd like to pursue for your position is never a bad thing. Being appropriately persistent is key—if you really want to play varsity sports in college, you need to keep putting the effort in.

The first step will be to officially get your name and information in their database. All you have to do is go to the school's website and fill out the prospective student-athlete questionnaire. These questionnaires are typically located on the school's official athletic website. If it's not on the athletics homepage, head to the page for the sport of your choice. For example, [here's a link](#) to all prospective student-athlete questionnaires available at Sacred Heart University.

If you can't find the prospective student-athlete questionnaire, ask your counselor for help. And if they can't find it either, contact that specific college's undergraduate admissions office and they'll point you in the right direction.

Not every field will be required, but fill out the form out as completely as possible: the more information you provide, the easier it is for them to get the data they need at the start of their recruitment process.

Another way to get on a coach's radar is to send them an email. This is an opportunity to share information about yourself, such as sending over an athletic resume (which we'll talk about later); a highlight video (which we'll also talk about later); and a personal message to explain why you're interested in attending their school and being a part of their athletic program. It's also a good opportunity to list any tournaments, camps, or showcases you plan on attending in the near future.

The #1 rule when it comes to contacting coaches via email is to **be brief**. While it's true in a number of cases, coaches like to think they're always busy. And, like most people, they don't like having their time wasted. Show that you respect their time by keeping your message short, sweet, and to-the-point with the facts they care about.

Here's an example that you can take and change however you'd like:

Hi Coach _____,

My name is [YOUR NAME]. I go to [INSERT HIGH SCHOOL] in [INSERT CITY AND STATE]. I'm a [INSERT POSITION] and I'm very interested in [INSERT COLLEGE]. I hope to get the opportunity to be evaluated by your staff.

I've attached my transcript and athletic resume. I've also included some of my basic information below:

- *Cumulative GPA*
- *ACT/SAT/PSAT score (If you don't have either score yet, share when you plan on taking the test)*

- *NCAA Clearinghouse ID*
- *Highlight Video*

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you in the future.

*Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]*

(That's it. See? That's not so bad!)

Recruiting rules will prevent coaches from initiating contact until your junior year. The process includes *many* rules and regulations, so it's good to be aware of what coaches can and can't do with regard to how they fill their respective rosters. To get an idea of what you should be expecting from coaches if they show interest in you, [check out this link](#).

Coaches don't have the opportunity to invite you to campus for an official visit prior to the start of your senior year, but in most cases, there isn't a restriction on making an unofficial visit to campus.

Scheduling Official and/or Unofficial Visits

Speaking of which, what's the difference between an official and unofficial visit? Glad you asked!

To put it simply, *official visits* are any trips to college campuses by a prospective student-athlete paid for by the college they're visiting. *Unofficial visits* are paid for by the prospective student-athlete (or their family).

Official visits allow college programs to pay for the transportation needed by a recruit to get to-and-from campus, their housing, and three meals per day for both the recruit and a parent. This also includes any tickets to a home sports event. Colleges can't offer to pay for anything when it comes to an unofficial visit, but they're able to reserve tickets to a home sports event.

Student-athletes can only make one official visit per school and five overall for Division I or II schools. Recruits don't have a limit on official visits at the Division III or NAIA level, but they can still only make one visit per school. The good thing about unofficial visits is that student-athletes can visit as many colleges as they'd like, and as many times as they'd like.

Whether you head to a college campus for an official or unofficial visit, that doesn't change how you evaluate the school when you're there—this needs to be treated like your typical college research. This means paying attention to what you like and don't like about the dorms, food, academic buildings, majors, advising programs, internship opportunities, and anything else that's important to you. Go to the bookstore, ask current students lots of questions, and try to research any unanswered questions following your visit.

You'll feel like a high school student on a college campus, and it's because that's exactly what you are, **but**, when you're not walking around with your parents or as part of an official tour, you'll look just like a college student. It's a tremendous opportunity to wander around campus alone to get a sense of what your student experience would be like. Now, you might scoff at this idea because it sounds a little weird, but because you're going to have to go on "real visits" sooner than you think, it's a great way to get some practice!

When you **do** go on an official tour through the admissions office or are paired with a current athlete for an official visit, it's their job to show you all the great things about a school. That's important, but it's also like putting on a show: the bright lights are on and they're attempting to make the best impression possible. So to get a real sense of what your college life will be like during the next four years, walk around on your own, and, well, act like a college student.

See if people hold doors open for you. Check out if students look happy. If you grab a bite to eat in the cafeteria, can you sit down with a random person to eat? If you walk into the dean's office, is it easy to set up a meeting?

Whether your experiences are positive or negative, they're good indicators of what your experience at that college/university will be.

Putting Yourself Out There

You already know that most high school athletes need to be proactive to find an athletic and academic home for college. But how exactly do you get yourself out there to be discovered?

In addition to attending the necessary camps/clinics/showcases to get a group of college coaches watching you play in-person, there are other things you can do from the comfort of your own couch.

The first thing to do involves developing a sport-focused resume. There are tons of templates available online, but all sports resumes should include certain information on it to make things

easy for coaches.

Here are the two “buckets” this information falls into:

Academic

- Your high school
- Current cumulative GPA
- Class rank (if your school ranks)
- PSAT/SAT or ACT scores (if available)
 - If you took the PSAT/SAT, be sure to list scores for both Critical Reading and Math sections
 - If you haven't taken either test yet, identify when you'll be taking it (if you don't know when that will be, this would qualify as the [perfect time to make a testing plan](#))
- Any academic awards or honors
- Your anticipated major of study (only if you know...it's OK if you don't!)

Information Regarding Your Sport

- The name and contact info for your high school and/or club coach
- Any information regarding your travel/club/AAU team
 - If you've played for more than one, list all of them
- Relevant personal details: position, date of birth, etc.
- Any awards you've won (individual and team)
- Relevant stats (if available)

- Names of any camps/clinics/showcases you've attended or plan to attend

The next thing to do: **make an updated highlight video** to send with your resume. Stats and information on a resume are great, but coaches won't even start to seriously consider you without seeing you actually play. They may prefer to do that in-person but having a highlight video to send is a great way for them to get an initial idea of your ability.

Your highlight video should be short—no more than five minutes—and it should demonstrate your skills: use game clips where you can be easily identified. Also, make sure each clip is showing something different: after seeing your mastery of one skill, they get the picture. If a coach wants to see it again, they can review that part of the video. There are companies out there that can help you put together a professional-looking highlight video, but it's also something you can do on your own...if it's done well.

In addition to getting added to a coach's recruitment database by filling out and submitting their student-athlete questionnaire, make sure you also register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#). Including your ID number in emails to coaches shows your initiative—it's nice when they ask you to register and you can say, "I'm already registered."

The NCAA Eligibility What?

The [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) (or Clearinghouse) certifies whether prospective college athletes are qualified to play sports at Division I or II colleges. This is done by having an athlete's academic record, standardized test scores, and amateur status reviewed to make sure it's in compliance with NCAA rules.

While it's suggested that student-athletes register with the Eligibility Center at the start of their junior year, there is no hard deadline as to when it needs to happen. However, in order to play and/or receive athletic aid for a DI or DII school, students must be cleared through the Eligibility Center first.

If you have additional questions, be sure to check out [these FAQs](#).

Track Everything

There's nothing worse than reaching out to a coach, getting a response, and then letting that response go without a reply because you haven't properly kept track of the work you've put into the athletic recruiting process. Don't worry, though—condensing all of the information you've received from coaches is simple...just make a handy-dandy spreadsheet.

We suggest using the following columns/categories on your athletic recruiting spreadsheets:

- College Name
- Division
- Coach Name & Info
- Points of Contact
- When initial email/profile was sent
- If they responded to you
- When you filled out the prospective student-athlete questionnaire
- When you sent a highlight video

- Official/unofficial visit & when

Once you have your spreadsheet organized, it'll be a lot easier to see where you stand with all of your schools. You can make it even easier by creating a color-coded system that immediately identifies which coaches responded, and you can group them together based on who has shown the most interest.

It would be an ideal scenario for a student-athlete to get recruited by a number of schools without having to keep track of this information, but it's rare. Even those blue-chip prospects who are getting recruited by the country's best athletic programs need to know who they've spoken to, what they talked about, and how it differs from other schools.

Take ownership of this process by staying organized. The level of control you have over all the information flying past you on a daily basis will be clear to see when you have conversations with coaches and visit colleges on your list.

Are There Other Options?

Even if things don't work out from a recruitment standpoint, you still might be interested in walking on to a particular program. There are actually a few different ways in which **walk-ons** are qualified within college athletics (the only common trait: there is no athletic aid awarded).

Preferred walk-ons are guaranteed a roster spot, and they'll receive the same kind of on-campus support that scholarship athletes do.

Recruited walk-ons aren't guaranteed a roster spot, and while they've had conversations with a coach, they're expected to try out for the team upon getting to campus.

Unrecruited walk-ons are the most well-known type of walk-ons—these athletes get to campus on their own, hear of an open tryout, and make the team. This last situation varies by school and program, but in many instances, college athletic programs don't hold open tryouts regularly, if at all.

The level of walk-on that you are will dictate whether this option is right for you or not. If you're an unrecruited walk-on, playing time will be especially hard to come by, but if you're able to break through and experience some success, it'll feel very sweet. However, it all comes down to what your priorities are and what's most important to you. There is no cut-and-paste answer for a student that wants to walk-on. If playing a varsity sport is of crucial importance—even if it means sitting on the bench most of the time—then it could be a fit for you. If it's not, then you may need to investigate other options.

What can students in these situations (or others not mentioned) do? There is always the option of intramural sports, but that can be a little too informal for an athlete who is competitive and used to playing organized sports.

That's where club sports become an option. It's the perfect mixture of varsity sports and intramural sports. These programs on various college campuses aren't NCAA-affiliated, meaning there are no

benefits with regard to earning any kind of scholarship, but it provides a competitive and intercollegiate athletic experience on a much less stressful level.

Being a club sport athlete allows the opportunity of actually having an off-season, which lets students pursue other interests if they so desire (because, remember, college is about pursuing passions and interests.)

For student-athletes trying to get an accurate comparison for the skill and competition level, club sports typically land somewhere between Division III and intramurals—combining this with the usual length of seasons, it's like competing for your high school. There are still leagues, conferences, divisions, intercollegiate competition, regional traveling, playoffs, championships, and all-star teams. However, practices are usually only 2-3 times per week (depending on the school and sport itself), with games taking place on the weekends.

So, yes, that means you can enjoy everything that comes with being a college athlete while not missing classes or tests and still having a life outside of sports. Club sports do some recruiting of prospective students, but it's not the same or nearly as official as it would be with a varsity coach. It's more participation-based and a vast majority of clubs don't have tryouts, so players on any particular team could range from being a top player on their high school squad to being a beginner.

This opens up a lot more opportunities for student-athletes. Do you want to attend a huge school like Penn State to play at the varsity level (but don't want to, or aren't good enough—according to the coach)? Well, then you're in luck, because they have their own [club sports department](#) on

campus. Are you attending an academically rigorous school, like New York University, and don't feel like varsity sports is a fit, even though they're a Division III institution? That's cool, because they have a [number of club sports](#), too.

Even if you head to the school of your choice and they don't have the club sport of you're looking for, most colleges and/or universities have a Student Life department that helps with the process of starting a club if there's enough interest on campus.

Making the most of—and taking charge of—your college experience is important, and that holds true in athletics. A lot of what goes into playing a varsity sport is out of your hands, but if you want to continue being an athlete bad enough, there's a way to make it happen.

Final Thoughts

The process of identifying and applying to colleges can be uniquely stressful, and that goes up a notch when you're also trying to get recruited to play a varsity sport. Keep an open and informed mind throughout the process, and it will help immensely.

Here are some tips to remember:

- **Coaches don't respond to inquiries for all different kinds of reasons.** They may not be looking for more recruits, they may be full at the position you play, or they just aren't looking for your style of play. That's OK! This entire process is subjective, so you have to be comfortable with who you are and what you do. Don't take it personally and move

on—wasting time on someone who doesn't want to bring you into their program is just taking time away from someone else who does.

- **College coaches aren't admissions counselors.**

They don't read your application and don't have control over your admissions decision. They may be able to guide you a bit through this experience, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be in regular contact with the admissions office or your dedicated counselor.

- **You won't get special treatment.**

Some college coaches do have pull within an admissions office to get a favorable decision for their recruits, but they can only stretch so far. You still need to put in the work in the classroom (both with your grades and standardized tests) while thoughtfully filling out and sending in your application.

- **Always follow up with coaches to show your appreciation and interest.**

It's just the right thing to do.

- **Take a break to reset your search/focus.**

If you get frustrated, which will probably happen at some point, revisit why you're doing this in the first place and what you want to accomplish.

- **Celebrate any positive steps and success along the way.**

It's going to be a lot of work and will be stressful at times, but it's also supposed to be fun.

At the outset, this process will seem daunting—after all, the number of collegiate roster spots available is much smaller than the number of high school student-athletes who'd like to continue playing. Despite that, there are still various options available if you want to pursue an athletic endeavor during your four years in college. Hopefully, this guide helped shine a light on the most common paths **and** worthy alternatives to make it happen—while also helping you feel confident about how to approach this experience.

As we mentioned, many parts of this process is out of your hands—similar to the admissions process. What you *do have* control over, however, is your athletic skill, academic ability, and how you communicate with coaches and administrators. Focus on what you **can control** and don't worry about the rest. It'll make your overall experience more enjoyable—beginning, middle, and end.

About the Author

[Matt Musico](#) served as former Associate Director of Admissions at Sacred Heart University, where he read over 4,000 applications and met with thousands of students. He's a seasoned sports writer and has been penning articles for news outlets like Bleacher Report and Yahoo! Sports for seven years. Matt is currently a college counselor in our Westport, CT office.

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