

HOW TO BE PROACTIVE WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION

The world revolves around networking, but I would never ever leave something that is important to me solely in the hands of others.

I always compare the recruiting process to a job search. We want to be sure we are leveraging our network. It's so important. It is very helpful if you can get a friend to get your resume on the desk of the company's vice president. But it is also important that you are personally reaching out and doing your part.

At the end of the day, it is your future at stake, so you need to take ownership of it.

If playing college athletics truly is important to you, then being proactive should not be a problem for you.

Being proactive can be a great way to separate yourself from the crowd. That is, if you do it correctly.

Your goals are with any and all communications:

- First, let coaches know you exist.
- Second, make it easy for them to see you in person.
- Third, build relationships.

The main goal of proactively communicating is to develop and grow our relationships. The better you can get to know the coaching staffs, the better prepared you'll be to make a decision about college. Everything is not always as it appears on the surface. As you get to know people, you may find out you like them more than expected. You may find out that you don't click. The better information you can gather up front, the better off you will be in the long run.

Being proactive means personally reaching out and engaging coaching staffs through a variety of different mediums.

A few of the ways you might engage coaching staffs would be through:

- E-mail
- Phone calls
- Texts
- In person
- Social media

I will briefly discuss each point on the following pages.

E-MAIL

Be sure to see the classes on “Cheat Sheet for E-mailing College Coaches” and “E-mail Hacks.”

E-mail will be the starting point for many relationships between prospects and coaches. It will be where you get a chance to introduce yourself and share pertinent information. And of course, one of the ways that you’ll be able to deliver your video to coaches.

E-mails should always be written by the prospect. It’s OK and recommended to have a parent or another adult proofread your e-mails but they should never write it. Adults do not write like teenagers, and coaches can tell.

E-mail is a place where you should never feel rushed to the point of making careless errors. Take your time. Be sure you’ve gotten the details and spelling correct: coaches names, school name, etc. There is no reason to mess this up.

Do not feel like you need to write your life story in one e-mail. In fact, you want to have more to share with coaches next time you communicate with them.

Remember that the recruiting process is like dating. You don’t want to run out of things to talk about on the first date.

PHONE CALLS

The majority of phone calls will be scheduled in advance. This is a good thing—it gives you time to prepare.

You should have time to do research on the program and the coach.

Try to relax. Be yourself. Be respectful.

Find a quiet place without distractions to have the conversation so that you can clearly hear them and vice versa.

I’d recommend having a notepad nearby in the event you need to take any notes. After the call ends, I highly recommend documenting the conversation by writing down what you spoke about. We’ll cover this more in the class on “Organization Strategy.”

The coach will lead the conversation. Let him. Follow his lead.

Like any normal conversation, there will be opportunities for both parties to speak. Be prepared to answer any questions. Also be prepared to ask some questions. It’s a good idea to have 3-5 questions or topics prepared ahead of time.

If you think it’s awkward to be talking to a coach, imagine how awkward it is for a coach to be talking to a kid that doesn’t open his mouth.

Running through a few mock calls is a great idea. We’ll do an entire class on that.

TEXTS

This is a pretty straight forward. Use text sparingly and only in response to a specific request. Do not be the kid that is blowing up a coach's phone late at night and/or for no particular reason.

If a coach texts you a question, answer. Engage appropriately. Maintain a high level of respect.

Sometimes a coach will ask that you keep them updated throughout a season or event. Do so. Again, follow his lead. Weekly may be right. Daily might be right. Gauge the situation case by case.

IN-PERSON

It goes without saying, firm handshake and eye contact are a must.

There are situations where they NCAA may prohibit certain types of contact. Please remember, those rules are for the coaches, not for the players. If you see a coach you've been communicating with, I'd much rather you be polite and say hello than snub them because you thought some rule applied to the situation.

If they can't talk to you in the moment, they will tell you. Please respect that.

If you're in a camp situation with potentially several coaches that you've never met, take advantage of the opportunity to introduce yourself and begin building a relationship.

Once again, have a few questions ready to go that you might be able to use in this situation. Don't let the opportunity sneak up on you. You know you're going to a camp. You know coaches will be there. Be prepared.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Simple rule: Assume everything you post can and will be seen by all coaches, no matter your privacy setting.

This is such a place of risk that I'm doing a full class on it. Be sure to watch it.

Remember what your goals are with any and all communications:

- First, let coaches know you exist.
- Second, make it easy for them to see you in person.
- Third, build relationships.

Each and every time you communicate with a coach you need to be considering those goals.