

NCSA 
**STATE OF
RECRUITING**

2019

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EXAMINING THE STATE OF COLLEGE ATHLETIC RECRUITING

Next College Student Athlete's 2019 NCSA State of Recruiting report examines the current college athletic recruiting landscape and identifies key trends impacting student-athletes, parents and coaches.

As the world's largest and most successful college athletic recruiting network, NCSA connects over 2 million college-bound student-athletes to more than 35,000 college coaches across 34 collegiate sports nationwide.

Founded in 2000 to help educate student-athletes and their families on the college athletic recruiting process, NCSA has almost 20 years of recruiting

expertise working with families, club, high school and college coaches to help hundreds of thousands of student-athletes find their right college fit.

By tapping into its extensive network and analyzing unique data, NCSA was able to collect current and detailed information about college athletic recruiting today.

The 2019 NCSA State of Recruiting report explores major themes in college athletic recruiting including athlete retention, regional recruiting trends, recruit desirability and parents' impact on the recruiting process.

METHODOLOGY

2019 NCSA State of Recruiting Report is based on data gathered through **two methods**:

- 1 A national survey administered to approximately 12,000 student-athletes, 7,500 parents, 1,000 club coaches, 1,100 high school coaches and 500 college coaches within NCSA's network between March 18, 2019 and April 2, 2019.

SURVEYED AUDIENCE INCLUDES:

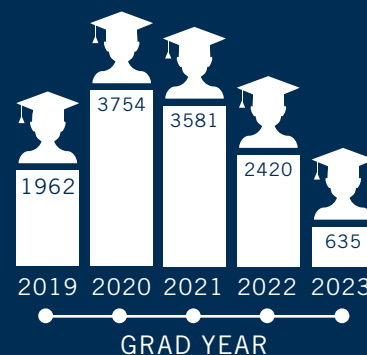


College coaches from all NCAA and NAIA divisions

Student-athletes, parents, high school, club and college coaches across

15+
SPORTS

Current Male & Female High School Athletes



2

COLLEGE ROSTER DATA FROM 1,400 SCHOOLS BETWEEN 2012-2017



365 Division 1 Schools
284 Division 2 Schools
472 Division 3 Schools
279 NAIA Schools



MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN CHOOSING A CLUB TEAM

PARENTS	ATHLETES	CLUB COACHES
1 Athletic Development	1 Athletic Development	1 Recruiting Track Record
2 Competition Level	2 Competition Level	2 Athletic Development
3 Location	3 Location	3 Cost
4 Recruiting Track Record	4 Cost	4 Location
5 Cost	5 Recruiting Track Record	5 Competition Level
6 Friends on the Team	6 Friends on the Team	6 Friends on the Team

**Ranked from most to least important*



HOW INVOLVED ARE HIGH SCHOOL AND CLUB COACHES IN AN ATHLETE'S RECRUITING PROCESS?

HIGH SCHOOL COACHES INVOLVEMENT

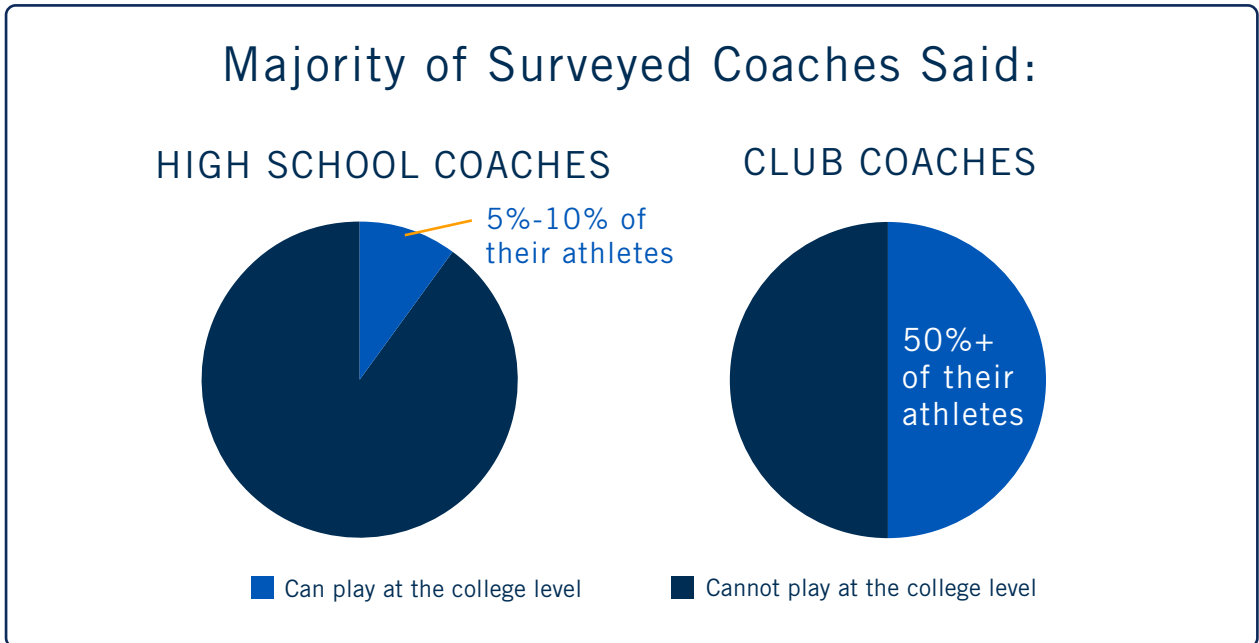
RANKED 0-10	HIGH SCHOOL COACHES	CLUB PARENTS	CLUB ATHLETES	COLLEGE COACHES
0	2.8%	24.1%	32.1%	1.9%
1	4.1%	22.2%	20%	5%
2	5.7%	10%	8.4%	5.6%
3	7%	8%	7.4%	9%
4	7.3%	5.2%	5.4%	8.1%
5	13.5%	10.6%	7.9%	18.2%
6	9.5%	4.5%	4.3%	11.2%
7	14.6%	4.6%	3.9%	15%
8	15%	4.4%	4.3%	13.2%
9	8.2%	1.7%	1.5%	4.8%
10	11.8%	4.1%	4.1%	7.5%

CLUB COACHES INVOLVEMENT

RANKED 0-10	CLUB COACHES	CLUB PARENTS	CLUB ATHLETES	COLLEGE COACHES
0	3.1%	11%	0%	0%
1	2.5%	10.6%	3%	0.9%
2	3%	7%	2.7%	0.9%
3	4.2%	7%	3.8%	2.3%
4	3.6%	5.2%	5%	3.4%
5	11.3%	12.3%	11.7%	11.5%
6	8.9%	7.3%	8%	9.1%
7	13.6%	8.8%	12.2%	18.5%
8	17.3%	12%	17%	24.5%
9	8.8%	6.4%	10.5%	17.2%
10	23.3%	11.7%	25.8%	11.2%



PERCENTAGE OF ATHLETES COACHES BELIEVE CAN PLAY IN COLLEGE



COLLEGE FIT MATTERS: NEARLY HALF OF CURRENT COLLEGE ATHLETES LEAVE THEIR TEAM ROSTER

NCSA analyzed the college roster data of over 1,400 schools across NCAA D1, D2, D3 and NAIA divisions between 2012 and 2017 and found that **over 45% of underclassmen athletes are not listed on their college roster the following year.**

of its athletes choose not to continue playing their sport through their senior year. And Ithaca College [said](#) its 2014 class maintained just a 46% retention rate for four-year athletes.



Over 45% of underclassmen athletes are not listed on their college roster the following year

Individual research at colleges and universities reaffirms this trend. In 2016, the Brown Daily Herald published a [report](#) stating that about 30%

When student-athletes choose to leave their team, they lose more than the comradery of their teammates. Athletes lose valuable academic support

COLLEGE FIT MATTERS CONTINUED...

and guidance. NCAA's 2016 GOALS Study of the Student-Athlete Experience reported more than two-thirds of student-athletes develop a close personal relationship with at least one faculty member, while more than 80% believe their coach cares whether they graduate. Without a built-in support system, athletes are more susceptible to dropping out.

[NCAA research](#) has consistently shown that student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student body. The NCAA estimates college graduation rates for student-athletes are 88% for D1, 71% for D2 and 87% for D3. However, NCAA numbers do not incorporate athletes who leave their college team in good academic standing. Alternatively, college graduation rates for non-student-athletes [is only 68%](#). This means staying on a college team is critical to increasing an athlete's likelihood of graduating.

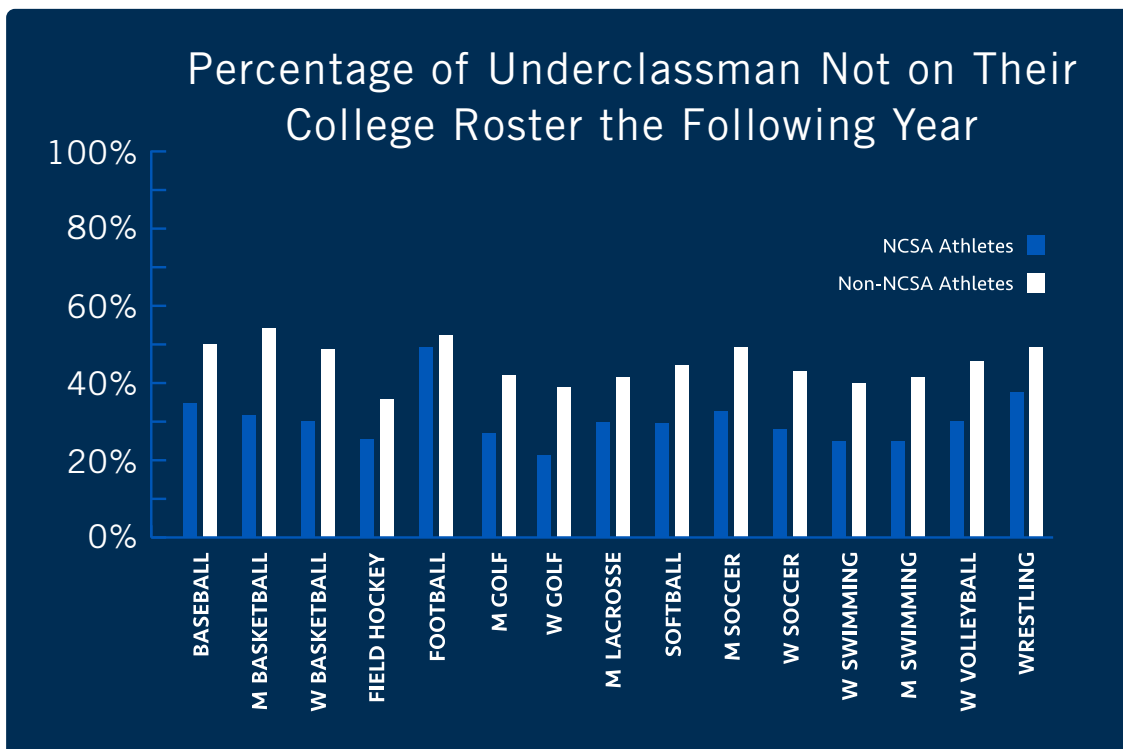
A number of factors can contribute to an athlete's decision to leave their college roster. While many assume transfers are the most common reason for an athlete to leave their team, NCAA research shows only 6.7% of student-athletes transfer (based on a [2018 report](#) of four-year college transfers on Division 2 teams). Additionally, [studies have shown](#)

students who transfer typically take longer to earn their degree and often incur additional tuition costs.

A [2013 study](#) of Division 2 student-athletes found that "relationships with the head coach, satisfaction with the athletic department, team success, personal reasons, academic concerns and player development" are common factors that lead to retention or withdrawal from athletic participation.

NCSA is committed to helping all student-athletes find their best college fit. We define fit as a student-athlete staying on their college team and getting their degree. When an athlete finds the right school, they are more likely to remain committed to their sport, continue their education and ultimately graduate with a degree.

Does college fit really matter? According to our research, it makes all the difference. NCSA compared student-athletes who find their school through NCSA to student-athletes who did not use NCSA and found that overall, **NCSA athletes are 18% more likely to stay on their team roster each year than non-NCSA athletes**. While results varied by sport, data showed NCSA athletes consistently stayed on their team roster longer than non-NCSA athletes.



**Data includes only schools with NCSA athletes on their rosters*



STUDENT-ATHLETES AND PARENTS AGREE: ACADEMICS MATTER MOST WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Our survey found that athletes and parents are on the same page when it comes to choosing the right college. When asked to rank the following factors when choosing a school—academics, coaching staff, scholarship amount, team performance/record, school location—athletes and parents both put academics first. Athletes and parents also agreed that coaching staff came next on the list of factors, followed by scholarship amount.





Studies have shown that athletes in different sports have prioritized different factors when choosing a college. A [report](#) on NCAA lacrosse players found that academic factors had the greatest influence when deciding what university to attend. Alternatively, a [report](#) on NCAA Division 2 track and field athletes found the most important factor involved in the college selection process was the opportunity to compete.

A 2011 [report](#) on college choice factors of NCAA football student athletes showed that over the last twenty years, multiple studies have drawn different conclusions about the most important factors that student-athletes considered when selecting a university to attend. While results have been inconsistent, the most influential factors have included scholarship, characteristics of the head coach, areas of study, quality of facilities, academic support services and a winning program.

Based on NCSA's survey results, parents and athletes consistently emphasize the importance of academics when searching for the right college. When asked what the biggest challenge is in college athletic recruiting today, over 100 athletes said it was “finding a good college that meets my academic and athletic needs.”

Most Important Factors When Choosing a College

FOR PARENTS

- 1  Academics
- 2  Coaching Staff
- 3  Scholarship Amount
- 4  School Location
- 5  Team Performance/Record

FOR ATHLETES

- 1  Academics
- 2  Coaching Staff
- 3  Scholarship Amount
- 4  Team Performance/Record
- 5  School Location

GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN COLLEGE RECRUITING: WHERE ARE THERE THE MOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES?

In order to identify the states with the most opportunities for collegiate athletes, NCSA compiled and analyzed the college rosters of 1,400 schools across NCAA D1, D2, D3 and NAIA divisions.

The [NCAA estimates](#) there are approximately 480,000 collegiate athletes across D1, D2 and D3. In addition, the NAIA reports roughly 65,000 athletes amongst its schools. NCSA's analysis of 1,400 NCAA and NAIA schools incorporates roughly 71% of all collegiate athletes found on team rosters in 2017.

Based on our data, NCSA found that Pennsylvania attracts the most college athletes overall, with 31,427 in 2017.

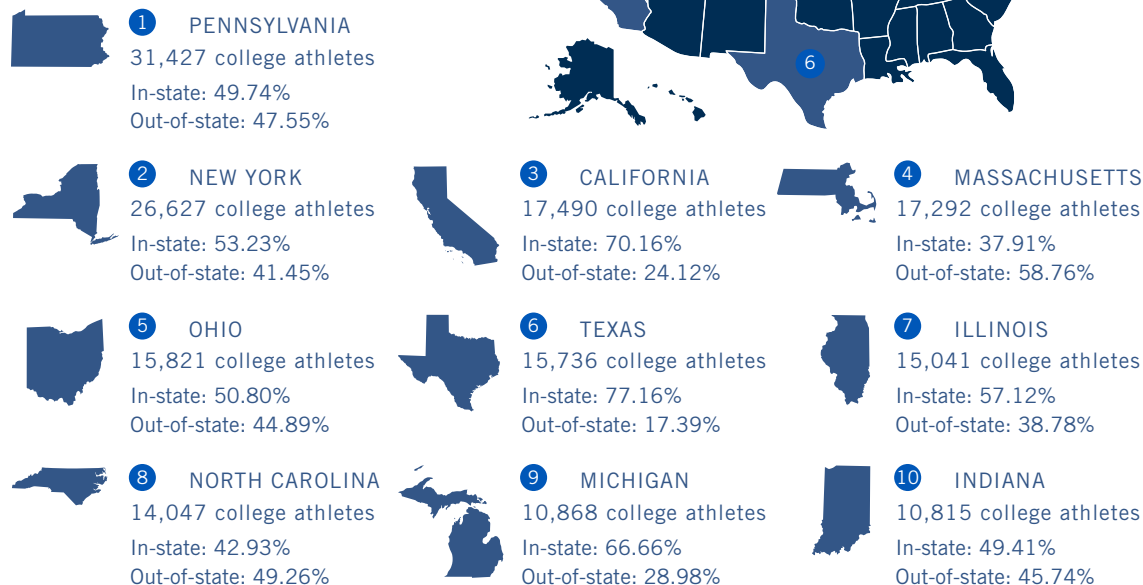
What attracts so many student-athletes to the Keystone State? Pennsylvania is home to a high number of schools: [45 public four-year institutions](#) and [129 private colleges](#). In fact, [Pennsylvania's 61 D3 schools](#) are second only to New York's 65 and [the largest portion of college student-athletes can be found competing at the D3 level](#). In total, Pennsylvania schools currently maintain [639 men's and women's varsity athletic programs](#): 92 D1

teams, 140 D2 teams, 390 D3 teams and 17 NAIA teams. What's more, this number of programs includes 17 men's and women's ice hockey teams. Many states don't have any college ice hockey programs, which gives Pennsylvania an edge in roster numbers.

A [2015 study](#) showed that, thanks to advances in technology and coach-to-athlete communication, more and more schools are recruiting outside state lines. [Technology in athletic recruitment](#) has allowed both athletes and coaches to gain exposure. Prior to the use of technology, "unless a top high school athlete in the state or region," the report states, "having coaches reach out to a prospect was rare."

So, exactly where do states recruit from? Our analysis of over 120,000 student-athletes on 2017 college rosters found that Texas had the highest percentage of in-state student-athletes, with 77% coming from within the Lone Star State. Athletes hoping to play out-of-state may have the best luck looking in Massachusetts, where nearly 59% of its college athletes were from outside of state lines.

Most Popular States that Athletes Choose to go to College:






COLLEGE COACHES VALUE A RECRUIT'S CHARACTER OVER ATHLETIC ABILITY

When it comes to college sports, our survey shows college coaches care more about an athlete's character than their skills and athleticism. When asked to rank the following qualities in an athlete—character, athletic ability, academics, location—surveyed coaches put character first, while athletic ability and academics tied for second.

today. Those interactions show a lot about the athlete's character.”

While college coaches have traditionally evaluated an athlete through his actions on the field, college programs are increasingly using Twitter, Instagram and other social media accounts to [evaluate a player's character](#).

 **35%** of college coaches say character is the most important factor in a recruit

While college coaches still care about athletic ability— they typically only reach out to athletes who meet their standards—our study underscores the importance of character and coachability. Even if a recruit has outstanding stats and grades, coaches want to make sure they clear the character test before making an offer.

“Greatest tool for [coaches] right now is social media as it allows us to get a glimpse of the individual's character,” said another surveyed college coach.

The results of 2018 [survey](#) by Verified Athletics showed that college coaches value athleticism and a strong highlight tape. However, the survey showed that leadership was the next highest rated attribute. College coaches said they prefer to take players that are captains of their high school team. In particular, D3 coaches put more emphasis on character qualities than college coaches in other divisions.

More and more college coaches have [shared](#) they've stopped recruiting an athlete because of his or her behavior on social media.

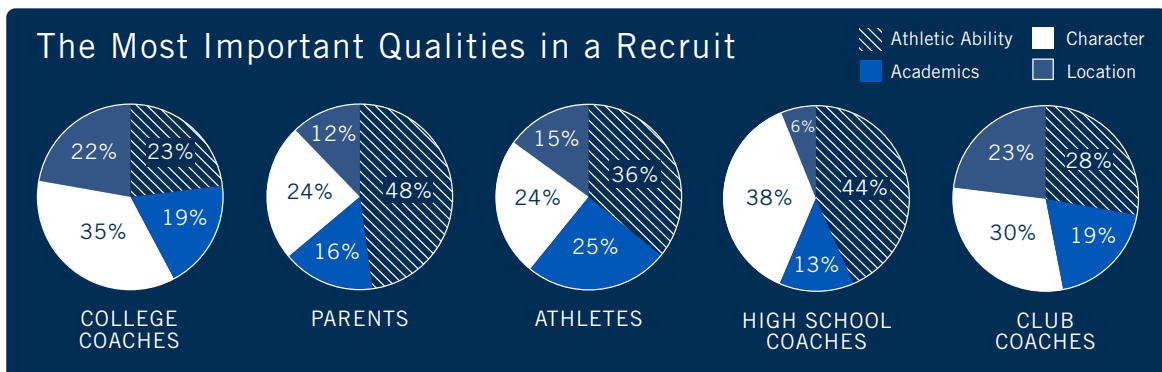
A [2006 report](#) asked college coaches how they define character and found that coaches defined character as a combination of moral and social values like hard work, respect and honesty.

"Never let a 140 character tweet cost you a \$140,000 scholarship," warned Brandon Chambers, an assistant men's basketball coach at Marymount (Virginia) University in a [tweet](#).

“I think watching athletes play and how they interact with their coaches, teammates and parents is the most valuable,” stated one college coach in NCSA's survey. “It was [important] 10 years ago, and it still is

When given the same survey, both athletes and parents ranked athletic ability as the most important quality. High school and club coach responses were a mix, with the majority of high school coaches ranking athletic ability and club coaches ranking character as most important.

While responses among audiences are mixed, NCSA's survey reaffirms the importance of character traits like leadership and integrity in student-athletes and shows that college coaches are looking at more than just their highlight video and transcript.





COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEGE COACHES: EMAIL IS THE MOST VALUABLE TOOL FOR ATHLETES

Communication Methods Used by Athletes During the Recruiting Process:



**Ranked from most to least used*



PARENTS ARE PART OF THE PACKAGE WHEN IT COMES TO RECRUITING

Across every sport, college coaches agree that parents can have a huge impact on an athlete's recruiting process. On a scale from 1 to 10, surveyed coaches ranked the impact of parents on an athlete's recruiting process as 8.

Coaches want to get to know an athlete's parents during camps and campus visits and may even observe parents in the stands to gauge their attitude. Supportive and encouraging parents can have a positive impact on an athlete's process, while negative sideline behavior and helicopter parenting can scare away coaches.

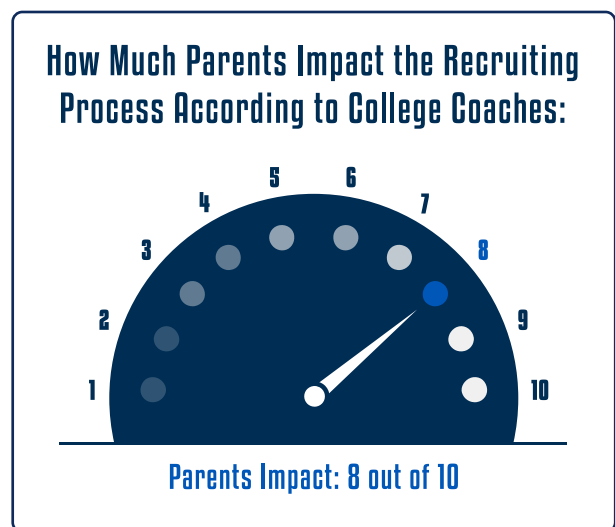
In 2014, the NCAA interviewed Division 1 coaches and administrators from Utah State University and Purdue University on perceptions of parent involvement in NCAA athletics and student-athletes. Their report found that "parent involvement is often seen as a vital asset to an athlete's participation in sport." Specifically, "positive parent involvement was a key factor in achieving desired student-athlete outcomes through participation in intercollegiate athletics."

While coaches and administrators interviewed for the report emphasized the importance of parental support and involvement throughout an athlete's career, "most also expressed concern that negative parental involvement is increasing in intercollegiate athletics, and importantly that it has the potential to inhibit student-athletes' positive developmental experiences."

"Helicopter parents" was one of the most common recruiting concerns from college coaches surveyed by NCSA. "Parental expectations and lack of

knowledge are really harmful to student-athletes success," said one coach.

Another [2015 study](#) confirmed the influence of parents on student-athlete children and stated "it [is] possible for parents to be too involved, and that overinvolved parents can be a detriment to their child's preparedness for college and their development."



In fact, a [2013 report by the National Institutes for Health \(NIH\)](#) found 30% of youth report negative actions of coaches and parents as their reason for quitting their sport.

As youth sports become more and more competitive, parents should use caution when engaging in the children's sports and realize their actions can directly impact the student-athletes future. [Our advice](#): focus on being your child's biggest cheerleader rather than their biggest critic.



COLLEGE ATHLETIC RECRUITING OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS: SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGED THE GAME

NCSA asked high school, club and college coaches how the recruiting process has changed over the last 10 years and what the most valuable recruiting tool

Additional analysis found that high school and club coaches regularly used the term “word of mouth,”



SOCIAL MEDIA

has been the biggest game changer in college athletic recruiting

was 10 years ago and what is it today. In a text analysis of over 2,500 responses, “social media” was the most common phrase use among all three audiences.

“Twitter and social media have changed the game,” wrote one high school coach.

However, sentiments around the impact of social media were mixed.

“Social media has been the biggest game changer, in both positive and negative ways,” shared a club coach surveyed by NCSA. “10 years ago, top athletes were the only ones with [recruiting] opportunities, now with the expansion of technology, kids at all levels can find the right fit for their college careers.”

“Social media and the internet [have] changed recruiting immensely,” said one college coach. “It is very helpful, and at the same time, opens up possibly too many options for the prospects.”

while college coaches used phrases like “phone calls,” “recruiting sites,” and “face to face.”

Coaches agreed that “word of mouth” recruiting was more valuable ten years ago. However, several still emphasized its importance.

“Word of mouth is still strong,” said a surveyed high school coach. “But players from all over the country now are able to showcase their abilities, place it on the internet and sell themselves versus scouting only.”

NCSA’s research found that while social media has impacted college athletic recruiting the most over the last ten years, coaches at all levels still heavily rely on phone calls, emails, recruiting services and even word of mouth and face to face interactions when considering an athlete.



GREATEST CHALLENGE IN COLLEGE ATHLETIC RECRUITING TODAY: ATHLETES, PARENTS AND COACHES WORRY ABOUT FINDING “THE RIGHT FIT”

When asked what the greatest challenge is in college athletic recruiting today, athletes, parents, high school, club and college coaches offered a variety of answers ranging from cost to complicated rules of the process. However, the theme of “right fit” was consistent throughout their responses.

College coaches said athletes often focus on “finding the best deal rather than the best fit.”

Coaches urged athletes not to focus on finding the biggest scholarship or playing for the best team, but rather look for a school where they would benefit both athletically and academically.

“It would be great to see, for example, if a college has a roster of prospects for a certain year, positions that are most likely filled and what [...] they might be searching for,” said one parent.

Athletes echoed the importance of finding a school that is mutually beneficial for the athlete and coach.

However, many athletes stated that they are overwhelmed by options and didn’t know how to begin the college athletic recruiting process or even how to find their right fit.

“There are so many choices in colleges that all the colleges seem to blend together,” said an athlete.



FINDING “THE RIGHT FIT” is the greatest challenge in college athletic recruiting today

“[The greatest challenge in recruiting is] helping players and parents realize that there is so much more out there than just a Division 1 school,” said a coach. “Too many people are more concerned about the image and their preconceived notion of what college athletics is. For the most part, people don’t realize how good the [sports] are that are being played at the D2, D3, NAIA, and NJCAA level.”

Parents also emphasized the importance of finding a school that fit their child’s athletic

and academic goals. Additionally, parents worried about finding a school that fulfills both the athlete’s and coach’s needs. Many parents said they struggle to understand what coaches are looking for.

“Since all the websites of each of the colleges have about the same information, it’s hard to see which ones offer the best experience.”

Our report found several areas of confusion amongst athletes, parents and coaches engaging in the recruiting process. With almost half of current college athletes are leaving their team rosters, it’s clear that there are mismatched expectations about recruiting.

NCSA’s holistic approach to recruiting addresses these issues early on, helping athletes identify the schools that best fit their individual needs, understand [what coaches want in a recruit](#) and allow student-athletes to [maintain control of their recruiting process](#) by limiting parental interference.

There are thousands of opportunities for student-athletes to compete in college athletics. No matter the sport or division, NCSA helps all athletes overcome the challenges of college athletic recruiting and find the right fit to be successful both on and off the field.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2019 NCSA State of Recruiting report explores major themes in college athletic recruiting including athlete retention, regional recruiting trends, recruit desirability and parents' impact on the recruiting process.

Report findings are based on the results of a national survey administered by NCSA to approx. 12,000 student-athletes, 7,500 parents, 1,000 club coaches, 1,100 high school coaches and 500 college coaches, as well as analysis of college roster data from 1,400 schools between 2012 and 2017 – including 365 Division 1, 284 Division 2, 472 Division 3 and 279 NAIA teams.



KEY FINDINGS

Nearly half of current college athletes are leaving their team roster.

NCSA analyzed the college roster data of over 1,400 schools across NCAA D1, D2, D3 and NAIA divisions between 2012 and 2017, and found that over 45% of underclassmen athletes are not listed on their college roster the following year. NCSA compared student-athletes who find their school through NCSA to student-athletes who did not use NCSA and found that, while results varied by sport, NCSA athletes consistently stayed on their team roster longer than non-NCSA athletes.

Texas colleges recruit predominantly in-state, while Massachusetts looks outside state lines

Our analysis of 2017 roster data found that Texas had the highest percentage of in-state student-athletes, with 77% coming from within the Lone Star State. Athletes hoping to play out-of-state may have the best luck looking in Massachusetts, where 59% of its college athletes were from outside of state lines.

College coaches value a recruit's character over athletic ability

When it comes to college sports, our survey shows college coaches care more about an athlete's character than their skills and athleticism. When asked to rank the following qualities—character, athletic ability, academics, location—surveyed coaches put character first, while athletic ability and academics tied for second.

Parents are part of the package when it comes to recruiting, according to college coaches

According to our survey, college coaches agreed that parents can have a huge impact on an athlete's recruiting process. On a scale from 1 to 10, coaches ranked the impact of parents on an athlete's recruiting process as 8. This suggests that college coaches notice parents when evaluating an athlete. While supportive and encouraging parents can have a positive impact on an athlete's process, sideline behavior and helicopter parenting can scare away coaches.

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