

4 Must Have's in Cover Letters to College Coaches

Every college coach is now recruiting online in one form or another. One of the best ways to introduce yourself to coaches and initiate the recruiting process is with a well written email containing your cover letter and athletic/academic resume. Here are some tips for writing a quality cover letter for coaches.

Be concise – Coaches don't have enough hours in the day. If you send them a full-page cover letter talking about your entire athletic, academic and community accomplishments they won't read it or look at anything else you send them. The entire cover letter should be two to three paragraphs and no more than half a page.

Cover the big three: 1. Who you are, 2. Athletics, 3. Academics – Coaches need to know your name and grad year immediately so they know whether or not they can respond to your email right away. Follow that information with a quick introduction of your measurables (height, weight & position) along with your academic information. List your GPA and if you have taken then SAT or ACT include that information as well. You will want to also include your single best athletic honor and academic honor. Don't list any more than one each, save that for your resume.

Triple check spelling and grammar – Coaches make quick opinions about athletes based on your writing, poor spelling shows laziness and a lack of attention detail. Don't think that because you used spell check on the computer it is correct. Take your cover letter and resume to your English teacher and have them quickly look it over.

Make it personal – As more and more athletes contact coaches through email you need to stand out. Coaches aren't responding to a generic letter unless you are an amazing athlete. If you take the time to write a personalized message to coaches, they will take time to respond to you. Go beyond just changing the name of the University in the email; include a couple sentences about their university and their programs most recent results.

Writing a Resume College Coaches Want to See

Fall is here and it's time for high school seniors to start considering their options for college. High school athletes looking to play in college must take the extra step of submitting resumes to college coaches who make decisions about scholarships. Use these tips to make your resume draw the attention of college coaches.

Keep it simple: A simple resume is the best resume no matter if you're sending it to college coaches or Bill Gates. Keep the length down to one or two pages. And when it comes to formatting, don't use fancy fonts, flourishes or other distractions. Your accomplishments should speak for themselves. Leave off the objective: And in the spirit of keeping it simple, leave out the objective statement, which is considered an outdated portion of resumes anyway. They are self-serving and don't really tell coaches anything they don't know about you already, which is that you want to play for their team. Instead, you could include a short personal statement about your approach to your sport or get right into the information college coaches want to know about you.

Use relevant information: As you consider the statistics and awards to include on a resume, examine your entire statistical profile to determine the most relevant information to include about yourself. What information says the most about the kind of player you are? What awards highlight your most significant accomplishments both in sports and academics? Include this information on your resume. College coaches can learn more about all your stats and awards once they select you for their team.

Academic focus: As a college athlete, you must maintain a minimum academic standard and college coaches want to know they won't have to worry about your academics. If you can carry yourself academically while proving yourself in your sport, you become that much more of an asset to the team. Include your GPA, your SAT or ACT scores, academic awards and any honors or advanced placement classes you may have taken. Include references: Provide your references up front on your resume so college coaches don't have to take the extra step to ask for them. You should include references who can speak both to your athletic capabilities, your academics and your integrity off the field. Make sure you have let your references know ahead of time that you used them on your resume so they can be prepared for a call from a coach.

Proofread, proofread, proofread: Before submitting your final resume to college coaches, make sure you have triple-checked every detail. Are addresses correct? Phone numbers or other contact information? Did you spell everything correctly? Read the resume several times yourself and then enlist the help of parents, friends or teachers to double-check it again for you. Nothing will sink your chances with any employer or coach faster than a resume with mistakes.

Include a photo: Finally, include a picture of yourself. Let college coaches put a face to the name on the resume. A photo adds a touch of humanity to an otherwise impersonal process. Photographs can also allow a college coach to get a first look at your physique.

7 Questions to Ask When Calling a Coach for the First Time

Are you ready to start calling college coaches?

Being recruited to a college sports team is a very big deal for the athletes as well as their supporting families involved. If you are engaged during the initial recruiting process, the communication between you and the coach is one of the most important factors during the recruiting process.

To help you prepare, write out your questions ahead of time. That way you can make sure you cover all your bases and can easily take notes. The more you communicate with a coach, the easier it will be for you to figure out if you are both on the same page. Is there a connection between you and the coach? Do you feel comfortable? Is this someone you could imagine playing for? These are the type of questions you want to keep in mind as you are building that coach/recruit relationship.

But what do you say when you are calling college coaches for the first time?

Here are some important questions to ask during the recruiting process:

What does it take to earn a scholarship with your program?

Knowing what it takes to earn a scholarship will help you with meeting the eligibility criteria. Many may not know it but a major cause in not winning a scholarship is simply because people don't meet the eligibility criteria. Did you know that missing an application deadline or not having a high enough GPA is an automatic disqualifier? There are millions of scholarships available and you don't have to be a rocket scientist, great writer or have a 4.0 GPA to get one. Sometimes all it takes in meeting the eligibility criteria is being persistent.

Can I meet with you if I make an unofficial visit?

This is an important question because these visits are vital for coaches. They don't want to burn any bridges with future recruits, so making an unofficial visit is common. Also, coaches don't know if you're going to blow up one day and sometimes half the battle is getting an athlete on campus.

Where do you typically evaluate your recruits?

This is helpful so you get an idea on when or where they scout for athletes at. Coaches view tapes but they also scout talent at camps, tournaments and showcases.

Do you have any camps, tournaments or showcases you recommend I attend?

This is the end goal when calling college coaches because your overall objective is to get evaluated. If they give you a recommendation, chances are they will be there.

How is your recruiting class looking for my graduation year?

This will help you evaluate your own abilities with respect to other top players in your recruiting class. There are hundreds of players who play at your level, so you have to distinct yourself from the rest. Calling college coaches can help with this because it shows your interest in their program. Taking time out of your day to make a phone call can be a major impact.

What is the best way to update you on my progress?

Make it as convenient as possible for the coach to evaluate you. The more they start seeing you as well as hearing about you, the greater your chances of being evaluated. You also want them to be updated on any special 5 recognitions, awards, etc.

What are good academic goals for your university?

This will help you stay on track with the university's eligibility criteria. Coaches care about grades so this shows that you care as well. It is also an excellent way for you to show your academic ability.

5 Things to Check on your Social Media

If you are a varsity high school athlete with aspirations of playing your sport at the collegiate level, and your performance in high school was noteworthy enough to attract college scouts, you need to prepare for the recruitment process. It is an exciting, heady experience that is designed to sell you on attending a specific college; replete with great coaching, national exposure, hopefully a national title, and a successful college career. In the past, recruiting procedures meant letters of interest mailed to athletes, phone calls, and a visit to campus by the recruit, all aimed at discovering whether or not the athlete and school were going to be a good fit.

That was 10 years ago. We live in a world of rapidly decreasing privacy; even the private citizen leading an ordinary life is an open book, but high-profile people like athletes, celebrities, politicians are under intense scrutiny. When millions of alumni dollars are at stake along with a coach's career, a school's reputation and NCAA eligibility, prospective student-athletes are subject to a thorough background check looking for past indiscretions that would be a potential source of embarrassment to the school, or worse, would result in athletic sanctions. With the proliferation of social media, and all the information and activities that are discussed on venues like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc, high school students need to assume that their accounts are going to be reviewed by colleges. Be aware that before contacting college coaches to enter the active recruiting process, you need to carefully examine and clean up your social media.

Here are the main points to consider before contacting college coaches:

- 1) Remove all references to restaurants, products or services before contacting college coaches.** You are an amateur athlete, not a professional, and your profile can't appear to be endorsing anyone or anything. However innocent it may seem, know that even the suggestion of endorsement can be spun to make it seem as though the reference is a paid endorsement.
- 2) Check out your friends and your photos.** Promptly remove anything that is in the slightest way lewd, suggestive, inappropriate or shows anything that can be construed as illegal before contacting college coaches. If you need guidance on determining what needs to be omitted, ask a trusted adult for help.
- 3) Clear your wall and Twitter feed.** Again, remove everything that does not present you as a good citizen before contacting college coaches. You don't have to be perfect, but you do have to be marketable, and for college, that means wholesome.
- 4) Unfriend or unfollow anyone who does not conform to the guideline laid down in #3.** If you need some help with figuring these criteria out, ask your high school coach for assistance. He or she should be able to review your social media and help you with judgment calls on whom to unfriend and/or unfollow.
- 5) Set your privacy settings fully private.** The greatest clean up in the world is useless if your privacy settings are not fully private; the issues that you just resolved will come creeping back. Be vigilant, militant, and practical about guarding your reputation. Remember, it only takes a second to destroy a good reputation built over a lifetime. Don't let it happen to you!

How to Set Up Your Email for the Recruiting Process

College coaches today are using email as their primary recruiting tool. If you are a dedicated high school athlete who wants to be considered a viable candidate in the competitive world of college recruiting, it is critical that you approach email communications in a professional, efficient manner. If you're unsure how to accomplish this, here are some tips:

Dedicate one email account entirely to recruiting. Many email providers such as Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo! offer free accounts, so there's no reason not to create a new account just for recruiting purposes. So do it! Having a separate account for recruiting ensures that you do not mix up your recruiting emails with other business or private matters, saving you the potential embarrassment of accidentally sending personal emails to the wrong recipient. It will also help you to never miss an important email from a coach. Save yourself time by creating templates for oft-used text blocks, like personal stats and biographical info.

Choose a good name. Email correspondence will be your first form of contact with many recruiters and may precede an in-person meeting by many weeks or even months. Because of this, it is imperative that you choose an email address that represents you well. In your personal life, you might be getting along just fine using screen names like "lildirtymoney" or "LaxBro15". But is that really the foot you want to put forward with college coaches? Instead, consider using some combination of your first and last name. Not only will it come across as more professional, it will help coaches recognize your name without having to memorize an additional alias.

Organization is key. Many email programs include a folder organization system. Use this to your advantage by creating a new folder for each program and coach. You may have contact with more than one coach per program, so it is advisable to create coach folders as sub-folders under the program folder. Creating a contact profile for each coach is not a bad idea, either – it will allow you to store other contact details such as office phone and cell phone numbers, all in one handy place.

Create a signature. Most email clients allow you to store a signature, which is a block of text added automatically to the end of every email. A signature is important because it includes all the information a coach needs to contact you. If this info is easily found in every email you send, coaches are much more likely to get in touch with you. Use this feature to your advantage. Signatures should include your full name, your high school and city, class graduation date, and current contact information. Make yourself as available as possible to coaches by including many ways to contact you: cell phone, home phone, and Skype name, for example. If any of this information changes, update your signature immediately.

Check your email daily. Remember that college coaches are in their offices every day, checking their emails almost continuously. Once they hit the "Send" button, they consider their message communicated, i.e. you, the recipient, have already read the message. In this vein, coaches will expect same-day responses from their recruits whenever possible. Replying to an email more than 3 days after it was sent casts you in a bad light, making you seem irresponsible and ambivalent. Prompt responses show enthusiasm and interest in the program. And remember, decisions are made in a matter of hours or sometimes even minutes, so it is important for you to keep your fingers on the pulse by checking your email at least once a day.

5 Point Recruiting Checklist for High School Seniors

As a high school senior, you should be in your final steps of the recruiting process. If you aren't actively talking with coaches it is critical you get started contacting coaches right away. For those recruits who have been talking with coaches going into your senior year it can be a very nerve-wracking time. By double checking the five points below you can be sure you finish off a successful recruiting process.

Confirm your academics – Your eligibility is calculated using your entire high school transcripts. Just because you have taken the SAT or ACT and have signed an offer doesn't mean you can slack off. It is also good practice to check with your counselor starting your senior year and confirm you are going to meet the core course requirements.

Get your updated video and resume out to coaches – You don't have all year to get your final evaluations from coaches. Make a new highlight tape and update your resume with your summer's achievements and get it out to coaches within the first few months of your senior year. It should be an easy process of loading your video to YouTube and sending them the updated link in your resume

Make visits to your top schools – Whether these are official or unofficial visits it is critical you get out and see the schools you are most interested in. While making unofficial visits can be expensive a good option is to follow the university and program on Facebook and YouTube. Often there are great videos tours of the campus and facilities where you can get a sense of what life is like as a student athlete even if you can't visit in person.

Double check application dates – One of the most heartbreaking ways to lose a scholarship is to simply miss the application deadline for the school you want to attend. Don't assume a coach can get you through admissions just because you are a prospective student athlete. Make sure you know every admission date for the programs you are interested in and get started on the admissions packet weeks in advance.

Recruiting doesn't end with a signed offer – If you are going into the spring of your senior year and have already signed an offer and know where you are going in is tempting to relax and maybe your grades drop a little and you are working out like you should be. Once you sign an offer you should carry yourself like a college athlete. Showing up to school out of shape or finishing off your senior year by letting your grades slip or maybe getting into a little trouble can set off some red flags for coaches. Finish off your senior year like you want to start your freshman year of college.

10 Things to Do on Your Official Visit

Going on an official visit is a great opportunity to see a school, meet the team and get a sense for what going to that school might be like. It's important you get to see not only the athletic facilities but also what life is like for a student. Here are some tips for making sure you get the most out of your official visit.

#1 Eat at the cafeteria on campus – You get a lot of perks as a student athlete, but one of the things you will have in common with all the students is where you eat on campus. Try the cafeteria and see if it is food you like.

#2 See the on campus and off campus housing – Most official visits include a tour of the on-campus dorms but make sure to go and see where athletes live once they move off campus. Also, think about how you will get back and forth from school and home.

#3 Go to the library and study hall – You probably won't spend as much time here as the rest of the students on campus but make sure and see the academic facilities. If a program has a good tutoring area it is a good sign, they support their athletes academically as well.

#4 Meet the training staff – Be sure to take time and meet the staff in the athletic department and training rooms. These people are critical to the success of a team and a happy athletic staff is the sign of a well-run athletic program.

#5 Schedule time to meet with an academic advisor – Showing the initiative and seeking to meet with an academic advisor on a visit can pay off in the long run. You may find out that the major you want to study won't actually work with your program. Better to find out now rather than after you have committed.

#6 Just hang out on campus – Take some time to just sit on campus and see how students utilize the campus. Are people out enjoying campus or is everyone just going to and from class. Having a campus where people enjoy spending time will make a big difference in how much fun you have over four years.

#7 Sit in on a class – Maybe the last thing you want to do on a visit is going to class but learning how classes are run and seeing what the classrooms are like will give you a better overall picture of what school it like.

#8 Go out with the team members – Take time and see what athletes do during their time off. Besides getting to know your potential teammates better you get to see what life is like when you aren't studying, practicing or competing.

#9 Don't be afraid to say no – It can be intimidating on a visit to speak up if you aren't comfortable but remember this is your recruiting process. You don't have to go a long with a team member or do something just to impress someone.

#10 Follow up with Thank you – Send thank you note to coaches and teammates who hosted you during your stay.

Source: AthNet-Get Recruited to Play College Sports- "Guide to Commutating with College Coaches"