

Track/Cross Country Recruiting Notes

- Create a priority list, what is most important to you (Academics, Size of school, Cost, Team environment, Coaching, Location)
- Have a sense of where your athletic and academic abilities place you. Most universities have their race standard on their website or start by using a website like [Runruit](#).
- Create a NCAA/NAIA account to start the process:
 - NCAA <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
 - NAIA <https://play.mynaia.org/>
- Prepare to be recruited
 - NCAA Facts <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/2/8/student-athletes-future.aspx>
 - NAIA Facts <https://www.naia.org/student-athletes/benefits/index>
 - Div I and II can provide athletic scholarships, Div III does not have athletic scholarships but does provide academic scholarships and grants
- Coaches use the NCSA database to find recruits.
 - Create a free account.
 - No need to pay for additional services. I have spoken to several college coaches and the paid services (specifically for XC/TF) are not going to increase your visibility.
- When can I start to contact coaches?
 - Starting June 15 after an athlete's sophomore year. Before this date, coaches can only send general materials like questionnaires and camp brochures. D2 and D3 schools have more flexible, earlier contact.
 - You are not behind if you start your recruiting process your junior year! For T&F and XC, most coaches are recruiting athletes in their junior year and doing official visits over the summer and fall of senior year. Some nationally ranked top recruits are starting earlier but in general this is the timing for most athletes.
 - In general, May is not good. It is a very busy time with their competition season. However, a good college coach finds a balance to recruit all year.
 - Contacting a 2nd and 3rd time is ok, if they have not responded. Being persistent does pay off but wait a few weeks in between emails.
- **Keep it simple when contacting college coaches.** They are busy people so want to keep it a clear and succinct email. Most schools have a recruiting form to fill out on their website. Do that first and then you can also email the coach. See additional documents with email examples.
 - Name and a little about yourself
 - Race PRs include Freshman & Sophomore years, show progression, for cross country you can note the course if you want but most coaches use track times for recruiting.
 - Intended major if you know
 - What interests you about the school and why you think it would be a good fit.
 - Can also include:
 - Accomplishments is a resume
 - Can include a short video of a race and/or you introducing yourself.
 - Test Scores and GPA
- If the coach gets back to you, then tell them your story. They will most likely ask for a follow up phone call to get to know you better. Be prepared with questions. Some question ideas are below.

- o Official (school paid) visits and unofficial (athlete paid) visits
 - o Div I and II, you may make an official visit after Sept 1st of your junior year.
 - o You can do unlimited official visits
- o Unofficial visits
 - o If you are planning to visit a school, reach out to the coach and tell them you are interested in meeting with them or someone on his/her staff.
- o National Letter of Intent (NLI)
 - o As of late 2024, the NCAA eliminated the National Letter of Intent (NLI) program. It is replaced by binding athletic financial aid agreements, but the concept of a binding commitment remains. The November-to-August signing window generally remains in place for NCAA Div I and II.
- o Don't overthink the process.
 - o Once you have it down to 3 schools. Go back to your list of priorities.
- o Social media can be a powerful recruiting tool if used properly.
 - o Athletes can create dedicated sports accounts, follow college coaches and teams they are interested in, and post race highlights and accomplishments. Keep it positive and appropriate!
 - o Social media for xc/track and field may not be as critical as other sports. For our sports, it really comes down to race times. However, it can give a coach a better sense of who you are and your work ethic if done properly, but I don't think it is a "must-have".
 - o Here is a good article to check out:
<https://www.ncsasports.org/recruiting/contacting-college-coaches/social-media>

Notes:

Questions for a coach and other things to consider:

- What type of athlete are you looking for? What qualities are most important?
- What is your approach to injured athletes? What resources are available to injured athletes?
- What time of day do athletes meet to workout? What if I have a class conflict?
- How would you describe the team culture?
- Are there athletes that have walked on that have moved up to varsity?
- Be humble during the meeting, show interest. Parents should attend meeting but the athlete should do most of the talking.
- A potential red flag for a program is the number of transfers or injuries. If you meet with a current athlete of the program, ask this question.
- Have athletes like you developed/excelled in the program you are looking at? You can find this info online. Find roster, read bios, HS PRs and their college PRs. Look for a handful of athletes, not just one.
- Good coaches are looking for the following: multisport athletes, lower mileage, room for development, an athlete that has improved over the years and the character of the athlete is #1.

Additional resources: Crimson Education - **How to Stand Out as an Individual Track & Field**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Is3exj1SYQI>