

Don't Let the Recruiting Bus Leave You at the Station!

January 10th, 2012 - by Charlie Adams

This is a critical time of the year for recruiting, especially for 12th graders. As Athletic Director Walt Ballard says, "Seniors, the bus is leaving. Juniors, the bus is pulling up to the stop." Translated: *don't let it leave you behind.*

Earlier this week I was talking to the Dad of a very skilled 12th grade quarterback who had been a starter since 9th grade. A D2 national power had seen him through NCSA, and made a long trip to visit him in his home. The coaches of the D2 power said, "If you were 6'3" we wouldn't be here." What they meant was the D1 schools would be all over him, giving them no shot. This particular quarterback happens to be just over six foot. The D1 powers, in most cases, want taller kids. Drew Brees, who throws for about 1 million yards a game in the NFL now, didn't get much D1 attention at all because he was barely six foot tall in High School. Honey Badger of LSU had only one SEC offer because of his lack of height. Are the College Coaches always right in being stuck on certain heights, speeds and strength they want? No, *but it is the way it is*, as the fellow once said.



Charlie Adams speaks to families on the Recruiting Process

Whether families will have success in recruiting or not often comes down to if they get and accept a realistic evaluation of where their athlete is when it comes to the physical 'measureables' that College Coaches at various levels are adamant about when it comes to recruiting. As I always say here or when speaking, Chris Geesman coached at a midwest power Penn High for 30 years and said **when it came to recruiting and where a kid could realistically play at the College level, most kids were a level above where they really could play, and most parents were two levels above! This is why it is so important to see if you qualify to meet with a NCSA College Scout, so that you can thoroughly go over what College Coaches look for in your sport. Then, when you reach out to them, they want to hear from you.**

When I say 'if you qualify to talk with a Scout' I mean are you serious about all of this and do you understand the commitment it takes to be successfully recruited? **Being a College student-athlete is not for everyone, and recruiting can be hard work. As one top High School coach told me, 'A lot of kids just want the scholarship handed to them.'**

There are **so many families out there that are so far out of whack when it comes to realistic evaluations of their kids**, it borders on goofy. Many are dead set on D1, and are about as much a D1 athlete as I am going to replace Daniel Craig as the actor that plays James Bond . What irritates the heck out of me is that they don't understand all the other great options and scholarships out there at the various levels. **I am for D1 as much as anyone IF the athlete is the right fit for that level, but what happens is parents often lose sight of the fact that this is about finding a place where your child can get a quality education, play the sport they love, grow as a young person, develop a network of connections, and use sports to become a leader in life so that they can help others.**

This week it came out that Michael Jordan's son Jeff had left the University of Central Florida basketball program for personal reasons. Having observed the younger Jordan's recruiting story for years, my opinion is that he should have signed with a mid major D1 out of High School. Valparaiso University, for example, offered him. He chose to walk on at Illinois where his hustle impressed the coaches. He eventually earned a scholarship but didn't have the size and skills to get playing time at the rugged Big Ten level. He left for UCF, a little lower of a D1 school, and wasn't getting much playing time there either. A senior, he is pretty much done. I can't speak for him, but I would have signed with the mid level D1 program, played a ton, and made memories for life. It's not his fault he wasn't blessed with the God given physical attributes of his famous Dad.

For 12th graders, graduation is just about 4 months away. Deciding where you will be a College student-athlete is one of the biggest decisions of your life, and the last big one you will work with your parents on, in most cases.

As NCSA Scout Billy Porter says, there are two kinds of 12th grade recruits. There are LAST GASP seniors that fell through the cracks with not much going on now in recruiting and LEVERAGING seniors who have contacts and just want to make sure they have more options. [To Talk to a Scout at NCSA now to learn more about this](#)

For 10th and 9th graders, don't take the approach of "we'll start getting into the recruiting thing more in 11th grade." I host a weekly conference call of all of the NCSA speakers. This past week we had Billy Porter on, who is one of the NCSA Scouts that works with families. I asked him **what was the number one misconception families had on recruiting and without hesitation he answered, "Not starting the recruiting process early enough."**

It doesn't mean you are going to get recruited like crazy in 9th and 10th grade, but it is important to start the PROCESS at that point, and earlier if you project to be a top athlete. The process means a lot of things, including getting educated on recruiting (read Athletes Wanted by Chris Krause), starting to build an online profile, taking some unofficial visits so that when you are 11th and 12th graders you know what to do and have a much better chance of finding the right fit.

Recently I heard of a good, strong athlete who was one of the best in his Conference. He kept waiting to get recruited by what he thought would be high level College coaches. They thought

differently and didn't recruit him. Graduation came and went, and he is a freshman at a College and not playing his sport anymore. They tell me he is still in shock.

The recruiting process happens to you once. You don't get to go, "Well, I am 26 now and ready to do this...lets go!" The window opens, and it shuts!

As a society, we often tell kids, especially in elementary school that if they work hard and study hard good things will happen to them. *Not so fast, my friend,* as Lee Corso would say. The late, great Jim Valvano said, "*Just because you work hard doesn't guarantee you will be successful. But not working hard guarantees you won't be.*"

Just because you are a good High School or Club athlete who is smart doesn't guarantee you will be successful in being recruited. That sounds unfair, but unless you understand how to be properly evaluated and how to go about recruiting, you could end up terribly frustrated. When it comes to recruiting, it is important to know that this is all like a tripod. You have to be good athletically. You have to be good academically and in character. And the third part of the tripod is you have to be seen by College Coaches and have an understanding of how recruiting works. Having credible third party guidance in all of this from a Network like NCSA can be extremely helpful.

Besides speaking on recruiting, I have had a passion for speaking on motivation for years, primarily sports motivation. While getting ready to speak to companies, I have sat with many company leaders and learned a great deal of how things work out there in the real world. **Two words that are huge in 2012 and beyond are Networking and Marketing. You have to know how to market your child's academic and athletic credentials, and understand that Networking is so important today. As one Dad of a good High School swimmer told me, no matter how good your product is, you HAVE to market the product.** Does McDonalds rest on their laurels? No, they still market like crazy. The Dad happened to be one of the nation's leading Marketing experts. There is a link at the end of this article to a powerful story of a top High School athlete who came up short in recruiting because she did not know how to market herself. Her insights can be of great help to you. She said she was humble by nature and didn't feel right marketing herself, but there is nothing wrong with making College coaches aware of your credentials.

Many parents are getting 'advice' from all kinds of third parties. While some is darn good, there is also that Uncle who played in the 80's who doesn't understand how technology has impacted recruiting. There is the well meaning Athletic Director who says, "If you are good enough, the College Coaches will find you." On and on.

I am a strong believer that every family with an athlete capable of playing at the next level do an Evaluation with a NCSA Scout to get a better grip on where they are in recruiting. These Evaluations are hard hitting and can be life changing. **Many of you have worked hard to develop a young woman or man who has an impressive GPA, test scores, and athletic credentials. Sadly, many top Colleges with scholarship money don't know about them.**

Read more: [Don't Let the Recruiting Bus Leave You at the Station! | College Recruiting Blog - Athletic Scholarships Blog | NCSA](http://www.ncsasports.org/blog/2012/01/10/dont-let-the-recruiting-bus-leave-you-at-the-station/#ixzz1KWdKKT1) <http://www.ncsasports.org/blog/2012/01/10/dont-let-the-recruiting-bus-leave-you-at-the-station/#ixzz1KWdKKT1>