



BASEBALL RECRUITING HANDBOOK

**YOUR GUIDE TO
COVERING ALL
YOUR BASES WHEN
IT COMES TO
FINDING YOUR BEST
COLLEGE FIT!**



Meet Head Coach & Founder **Mike Orchard**

Mike brings his wealth of knowledge in college baseball and college baseball recruiting to help lead the College Athlete Advantage team. He has personally mentored more than 400 athletes that have gone on to play at the collegiate level.

Mike has more than 16 years of coaching and recruiting experience, most notably as the Recruiting Coordinator and Pitching Coach at Central Arizona College (2009-2014), an annual Top 10, nationally-ranked contender in the NJCAA. During Mike's six years at Central Arizona, 24 pitchers went on to pitch at a four-year level, including 15 at the NCAA Division 1 level, as well as 12 pitchers being drafted in the Major League Baseball draft.

Along with coaching experience in the prestigious summer Cape Cod League, Mike was named to the All Decade Team as Manager of Mankato in the Northwoods Summer Collegiate League. During his six years (2009-2014) as Manager, Mankato won divisional titles four times and more than 100 of his players to date have gone on to play professional baseball. Having established himself as an experienced player evaluator, Mike also currently serves as an Associate Scout for the Arizona Diamondbacks, assisting with player evaluations.



OFFICIAL LINE-UP

What you get with this guide...

- 1 When Is The Best Time To Start The Recruiting Process?**
- 2 Tips For Freshmen And Sophomores Starting The Process**
- 3 Why Assessments Are Crucial**
- 4 Recruiting Timeline**
- 5 Timing Is Key**
- 6 Junior College Recruiting: How it Really Works**
- 7 Do High School Statistics Matter In College Recruiting?**
- 8 What Is The Role Of A High School Baseball Coach?**
- 9 10 Key Factors To Choosing A College**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Welcome to the College Athlete Advantage Recruiting Handbook, your essential guide to navigating the exciting and often complex world of college recruitment. Whether you are a high school student-athlete, a parent, or a coach, this handbook is designed to equip you with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed decisions about your collegiate athletic journey.

The recruitment process can be a pivotal moment in an athlete's career, offering opportunities for personal growth, academic advancement, and the chance to compete at a higher level. With the right approach, preparation, and understanding of the landscape, you can maximize your chances of finding the perfect fit for your athletic and academic goals.

In this handbook, we will cover a range of topics:

- Understanding the recruitment timeline
- The importance of building relationships with coaches
- The role of showcases and camps
- Navigating NCAA/NAIA/NJCAA eligibility requirements

We will also provide practical tips for:

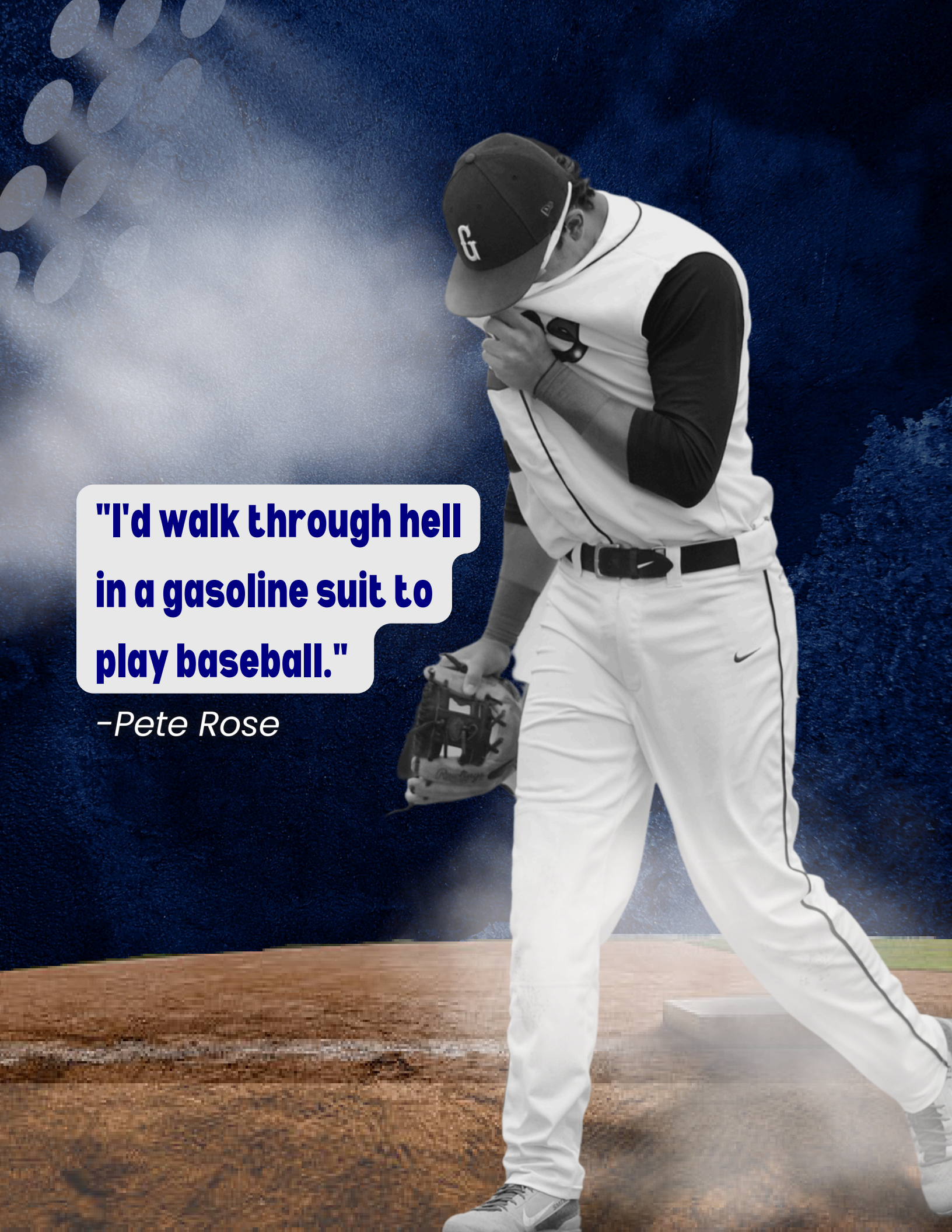
- Creating standout athletic profiles
- Utilizing social media effectively
- Preparing for college visits

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

As the landscape of college sports continues to evolve, it is crucial to stay informed about the latest trends and regulations. Our goal is to empower you with insights and strategies that will help you to stand out in a competitive environment while ensuring that you make the best choices for your future.

Whether you aspire to play at a Division I powerhouse, a Division III institution, or anywhere in between, this handbook will serve as your comprehensive resource throughout the recruiting process.

Let's embark on this journey together, turning your dreams into reality and setting the foundation for a successful college experience both on and off the field.

A black and white photograph of Pete Rose in a baseball uniform, wearing a cap with a 'G' logo, a white jersey with black sleeves, and white pants with a black belt. He is holding a baseball glove and looking down. The background is a dark blue wall with a pattern of light blue circles. The ground is brown dirt.

**"I'd walk through hell
in a gasoline suit to
play baseball."**

-Pete Rose



WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO START THE RECRUITING PROCESS?

We believe the right time to start the recruiting process falls under two key categories:



1

When your athlete is 100% certain they want to play college baseball.

This decision should come from the athlete's genuine passion and commitment to pursuing the sport beyond high school.

2

When a third party, such as College Athlete Advantage, provides an assessment affirming their skills to play at the collegiate level.

An objective evaluation helps determine whether the athlete is ready to compete at the next level.

Once these two factors are in place, it's time to develop a plan. Having a recruiting strategy doesn't mean immediately sending information to college coaches. Instead, it involves taking deliberate steps, such as:

- Conducting a thorough assessment of the athlete's abilities.
- Providing expert advice tailored to their goals.
- Creating a timeline to guide the recruiting process.



IS IT TOO EARLY?

Starting early and having a structured plan can provide peace of mind, as it ensures you're on the right path to success. Families who begin this process sooner often express gratitude for the head start, while those who delay sometimes wish they had acted earlier

We have never encountered a family who felt they started too soon, as long as the right steps were taken. A well-organized recruiting process reduces stress and builds confidence, ensuring families feel secure in their journey to finding the right college fit.

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

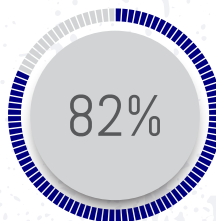
-Yogi Berra



DID YOU KNOW?



**1700 SCHOOLS
HAVE A BASEBALL
PROGRAM**

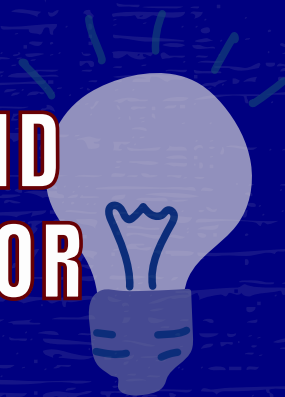


**82% OF OPPORTUNITIES
TO PLAY COLLEGE
BASEBALL ARE BELOW
THE D1 LEVEL**



**70% OF SCHOOLS
ARE EAST OF THE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

TIPS FOR FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES PREPARING FOR THE RECRUITING PROCESS



Even if you're not yet eligible to contact college coaches directly, here are actionable steps to start positioning yourself for a successful recruiting journey:

1 GET AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT

- **Detailed Evaluation:** Connect with CAA to assess your current skill level. Understanding your strengths and areas for improvement will help you set realistic goals and focus your efforts effectively.

2 EXCEL ACADEMICALLY

- **Prioritize Grades:** Strong academic performance often provides more financial aid opportunities than athletic scholarships. Good grades are also a key factor in college admissions.
- **Plan Ahead:** Take challenging courses and stay on top of your studies to show colleges you're serious both on and off the field.

3 UNDERSTAND YOUR PRIORITIES

- **Think Long-Term:** Reflect on what you want in a college, such as academics, campus life, coaching style, and athletic competition level. While your preferences may evolve, this early reflection will guide your future decisions.

4 BUILD PHYSICAL STRENGTH

- **Start Conditioning Early:** Engage in a strength and conditioning program tailored to your sport. Building a strong physical foundation will make you a more competitive athlete as you progress.
- **Stay Injury-Free:** Focus on proper technique and balance strength training with recovery to avoid overuse injuries.

5 JOIN A STRONG CLUB TEAM

- **Find the Right Fit:** Choose a club or team where you feel supported and challenged. A strong team culture and quality coaching are vital for your growth.
- **Maximize Opportunities:** Look for teams that prioritize development and provide ample playing time and exposure.

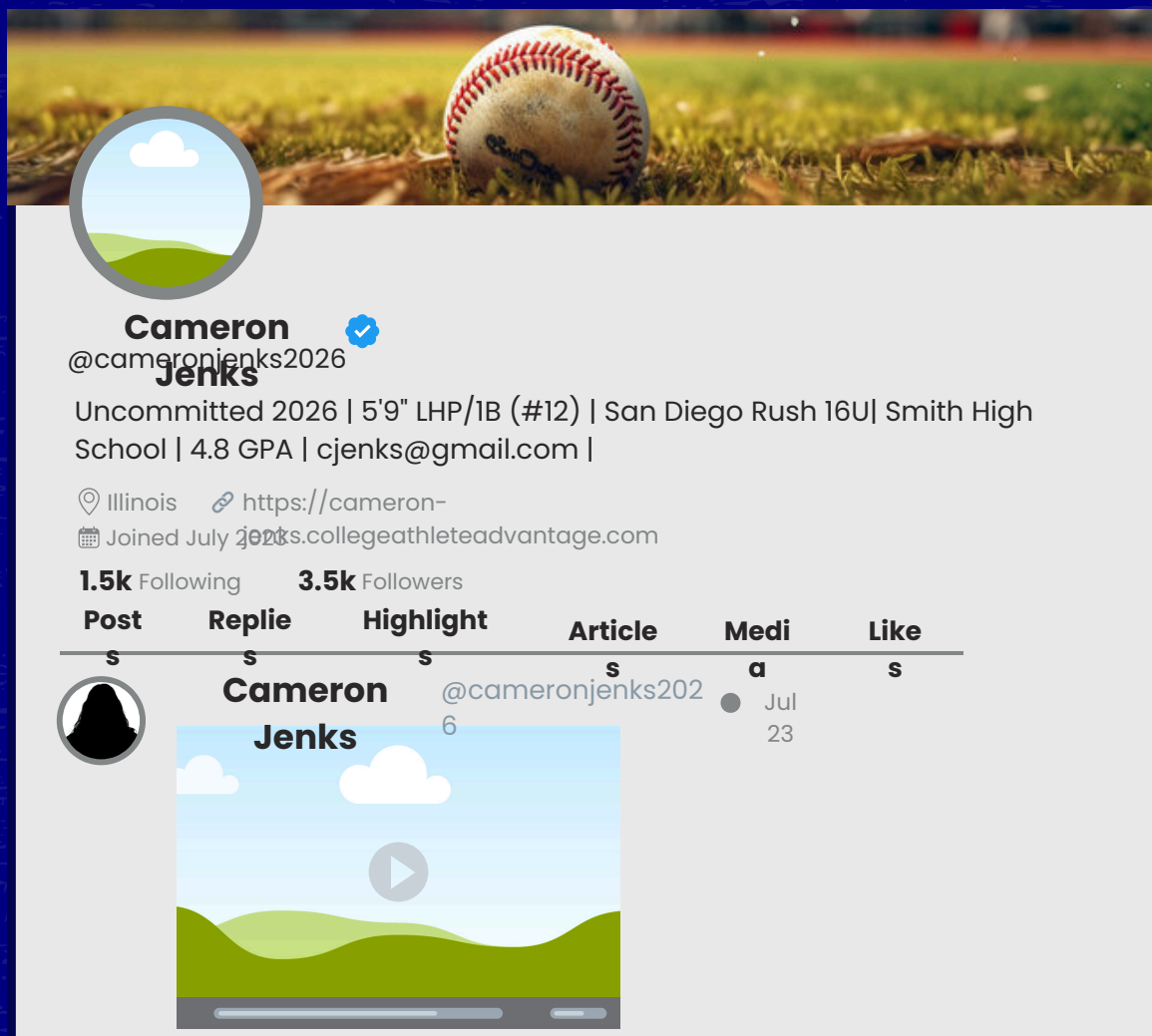
6 STRATEGIZE EVENTS & SHOWCASES

- **Choose Wisely:** Seek advice from CAA to identify camps, showcases, or tournaments that align with your goals.
- **Budget Time and Resources:** Focus on events where you're likely to gain meaningful exposure and development opportunities.



7 BUILD A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

- **Post Highlights:** Start an athlete-focused social media account and consistently share highlights, achievements, and significant milestones.
- **Engage with College Coaches:** A strong social media presence gives coaches a chance to follow your progress, even as an underclassman.



By starting early and focusing on these foundational steps, you can set yourself up for success in the college recruiting process while minimizing stress later on.

WHY ARE ASSESSMENTS CRUCIAL IN THE COLLEGE RECRUITING PROCESS?

In baseball, just like in life, knowing where you stand is essential before deciding where you want to go. Think of it as similar to a doctor's intake form or a car maintenance check-up—**an assessment provides a snapshot of your current position.**

At College Athlete Advantage, we believe that one of the most important steps a family can take early in the high school recruiting process is conducting an accurate assessment of a player's current skills and physical tools. This process helps in two critical ways:



ACCURATE POSITIONING IN THE RECRUITING LANDSCAPE

A thorough evaluation gives families a clear understanding of where their athlete stands compared to peers in their region and across the country. This insight is invaluable in identifying the level of play that best fits their son's current abilities and projecting the most likely path forward.



FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT FOR GROWTH

If the goal is to improve the player's recruiting stock, the assessment identifies specific areas for improvement. With this clarity, families and players can invest their time and energy into targeted development, ensuring progress in the right areas. Combined with expert coaching, this focused approach can significantly enhance a player's prospects.

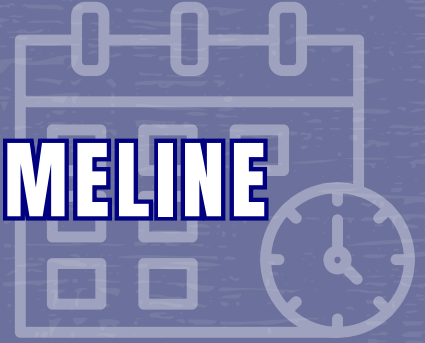
Having clarity on a player’s skill set and where they fit within the broader recruiting landscape helps families avoid unnecessary frustration. It ensures realistic expectations and a smoother journey through the recruiting process. While mismatches between players and programs can happen, we see less of this with College Athlete Advantage because of our commitment to accurate assessments and a collaborative understanding of where a player stands.

ESTIMATED PROBABILITY OF COMPETING IN ATHLETICS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES	478,451
NCAA STUDENT ATHLETES	38,849
DRAFTED NCAA STUDENT ATHLETES	444
PERCENTAGE HIGH SCHOOL TO NCAA	8.1%
*PERCENTAGE OF NCAA TO MAJOR PROFESSIONAL	5.1%

NOTE: INFORMATION OBTAINED BY THE NCAA BASED ON THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR
*percentage of NCAA student athletes moving on to major leagues is based on the 2023 draft

WHAT IS THE RECRUITING TIMELINE IN COLLEGE BASEBALL?



The recruiting process is still more of an art than a science. One of the key elements of this process is aligning a player's "hot recruiting time" with the period when schools at their level are actively seeking players. We believe most players have a recruiting window of 6 to 12 months during which they should be actively engaging with schools.



TOO EARLY

Starting the process prematurely can lead to burnout, making the experience feel more like a burden than an opportunity. The process drags on, and players may end up relieved just to finish it rather than excited about their final decision.

TOO LATE

Waiting too long risks missing opportunities, roster spots, or scholarships, especially with recent rule changes that have shifted timelines slightly.



RECRUITING TIMELINE BY LEVEL

POWER 5

- These players are at the top of the "recruiting food chain."
- Their process often begins as early as their sophomore year of high school.
- By August 1st of their junior year, many of these players already have offers and are scheduling official visits.

MID-LOW LEVEL DI

- These programs typically start reaching out slightly later.
- However, they're still making calls as soon as Division I coaches are allowed to contact players directly.

DIVISION II

- Timelines vary widely.
- Some programs start tracking players as early as junior year, while others focus more on the second semester of junior year.
- Summer before senior year is a critical period for Division II recruiting, with programs finalizing their lists and attending showcases.



RECRUITING TIMELINE BY LEVEL



DIVISION III, NAIA, JUCO

- Recruitment typically begins during the summer before senior year and continues into senior year.
- These timelines are influenced by program resources, geography, and individual coaching strategies.

TRANSFER PORTAL

The introduction of the transfer portal has significantly altered recruitment dynamics. With fewer barriers to transferring, college programs are increasingly favoring proven college players over high school recruits.

This shift...

- Squeezes out high school players. Younger, less experienced athletes often lose opportunities to older, more physically developed transfer players.
- Alters timelines: While some timelines have accelerated, others have been delayed, creating uncertainty for high school athletes.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Knowing your target level of play and understanding the associated recruiting timeline is critical. Engaging with the right schools at the right time dramatically increases your chances of finding the best fit, both athletically and academically.

SKILLS VIDEO *VS* GAME FOOTAGE

SKILLS VIDEO	GAME FOOTAGE
Closer View of Mechanics ✓	Game Situations ✓
Controlled Environment ✓	Proof of Performance ✓
Can Highlight Strengths ✓	Game-Speed Context ✓
Specific Expertise Needed ✗	Editing Challenges ✗
No Game-Speed Elements ✗	Angles and Distance ✗
Overperformance ✗	Background Distractions ✗
	Lack of Defensive Footage ✗

TIMING THE RECRUITING PROCESS IS KEY



Timing the recruiting process correctly is absolutely crucial. If a player starts promoting themselves to college coaches too early, burnout can become a real issue. They may experience fatigue throughout the process, and by the time they reach the final stages, they just want to "get it over with"—which is far from the goal.

On the other hand, starting too late can lead to missed opportunities. Scholarships and roster spots fill up quickly, and if a college coach finds out about a player too late, there may simply be no room left—even if they are interested.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING IN RECRUITING...

When information is sent to college coaches matters significantly because each division operates on a different recruiting timeline. Here's a general breakdown of the typical college baseball recruiting process:

Division I: Prospects are typically noticed as sophomores, invited to team camps, and begin receiving calls in August before their junior year. Official visits are often scheduled in September.

Division II: Recruiting usually picks up in the second half of a player's junior year and can extend into the summer before their senior year, depending on how proactive the Division II program is.

Division III, NAIA, and Junior College: These programs generally start recruiting later, often during the summer before senior year and into the senior season itself.

JUNIOR COLLEGE RECRUITING: HOW IT REALLY WORKS

The recruiting process for junior college players follows a predictable pattern each year:



FALL

(Top 3–5% Commit)

The top-tier JUCO players—those with standout performances, draft interest, or major recognition—commit early. These are typically players from all-star showcases, transfers from four-year programs, or high performers from the fall season.

SPRING

(Limited Exposure)

Four-year programs are focused on their own seasons, so exposure for JUCO players remains limited. Some local schools may come out to watch, but widespread recruiting doesn't pick up until later in the year.

MAY & JUNE

(Scramble Mode)

This is when most JUCO players start scrambling for opportunities. Junior college coaches vary in their level of involvement—some actively assist in the recruiting process, while others provide minimal help.

THE TRANSFER PORTAL EFFECT

With the rise of the transfer portal, many four-year schools are prioritizing transfers over JUCO players, making it even more challenging to secure offers.

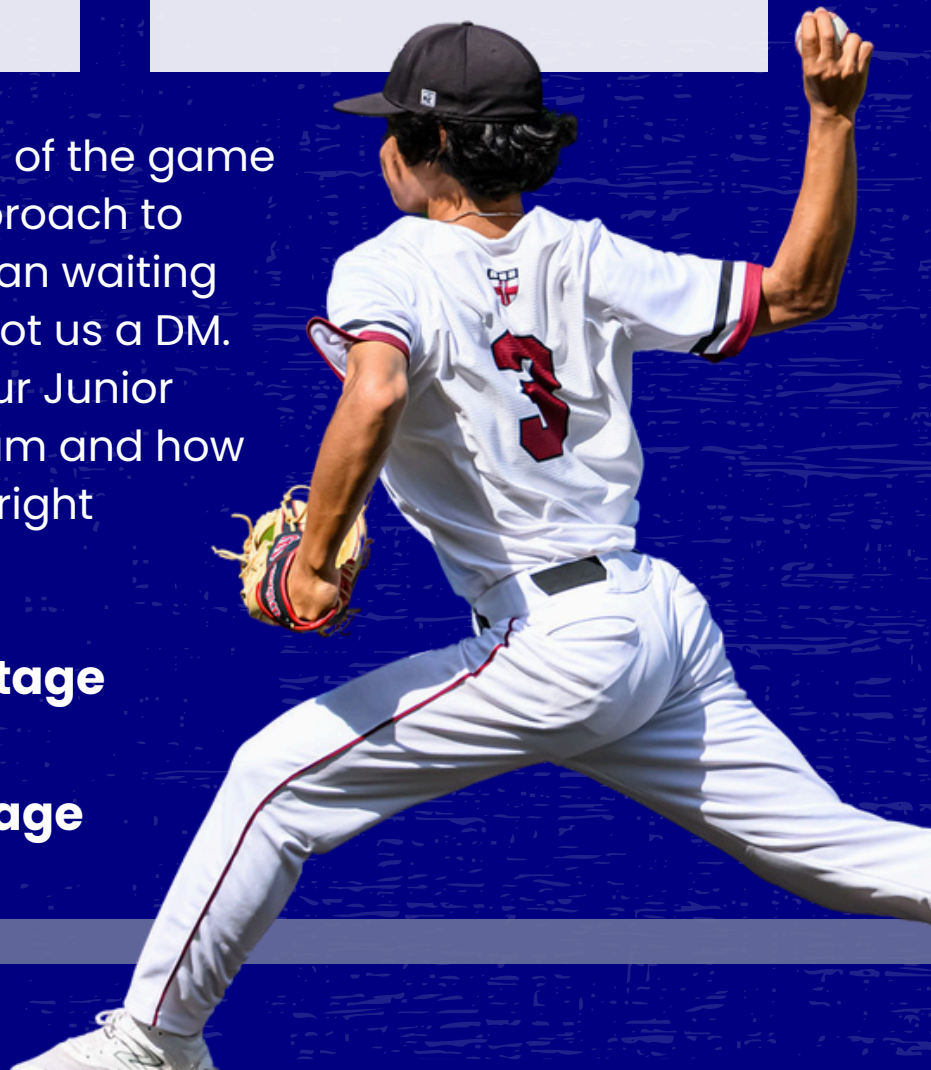
If you want to stay ahead of the game and take a proactive approach to your recruiting—rather than waiting until the last minute—shoot us a DM. We'd love to talk about our Junior College Recruiting Program and how we can help you find the right fit at the next level.



@The_CAAdvantage



@the_caadvantage



DO HIGH SCHOOL STATISTICS MATTER IN COLLEGE RECRUITING?

The short answer is **YES**. But stats are just one piece of the puzzle. They don't exist in a vacuum—context is everything.

HOW COLLEGE COACHES EVALUATE HIGH SCHOOL STATS



One of the **first things** a college coach looks at is whether a player competes at the varsity level—and at what age. Playing varsity as a freshman or sophomore can indicate high-level ability, while making varsity as a junior or senior is more common.

COACHES ALSO CONSIDER:

School size & competition level – A large public school typically faces tougher competition than a smaller school. Private schools can be a wildcard.

State competition level – A top player from a smaller state might not be equal to a top player from a larger, more competitive state.

WHICH STATS MATTER MOST?

Stats like batting average can be misleading since they depend on luck and defensive quality. Instead, college coaches focus on:

- **Slugging percentage:** Measures power and impact at the plate.
- **Walk-to-strikeout ratio:** Shows discipline and strike zone control.
- **Stolen bases:** Reflects speed and baserunning ability.

FOR PITCHERS, THE KEY STATS ARE:

- **Innings pitched:** Indicates workload and durability.
- **Strikeout-to-walk ratio:** Strikeouts show "stuff," walks reveal command.
- **Hits allowed per inning:** Gives some insight, but with more variability.

BEYOND STATS: THE FULL PICTURE

Stats matter, but performance history is crucial. Earning All-District, All-Region, or All-State honors adds credibility.

Additionally, video, scouting reports, and in-game evaluations help coaches assess how a player's skills translate to the next level.



THE BOTTOM LINE

High school stats do matter, but only as part of the overall evaluation. College coaches use them alongside video, competition level, and past accolades to make informed decisions.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL COACH IN RECRUITING?

In 2025, the role of the high school coach in a player's college baseball recruitment is generally limited. Unlike in the past, most high school coaches do not play a significant role in actively promoting their athletes to college programs.

With only a few players from each high school team moving on to play at the college level, high school coaches often don't have the time or resources to devote to the recruiting process. The exception is a small percentage of top-tier high school programs where coaches have strong college connections and are more involved in the process.

However, while high school coaches may not be primary recruiters, they still serve an important function in a player's recruitment. Many college coaches will reach out to high school coaches to gather insight into a player's character, work ethic, and behavior.

Unlike club coaches, who primarily see an athlete in a competitive baseball setting, high school coaches often have a broader perspective. They see the athlete in a school environment, possibly in the classroom, at practice, and in social settings, providing valuable information on the player's overall demeanor and attitude.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL COACH IN RECRUITING?

Though some high school coaches may actively assist in the recruiting process, the majority serve as advocates rather than direct facilitators. The recruiting process demands significant time and effort, making it difficult for most high school coaches to take on an extensive role.

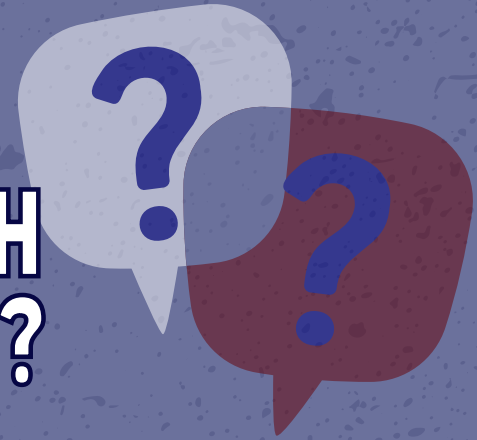
However, when college coaches inquire about a player, the impression left by the high school coach's feedback can influence recruiting decisions. College programs make decisions based on both what they see on the field and what they hear from those who interact with the player regularly. In this regard, a high school coach's input can shape a college coach's perception of an athlete and potentially impact recruitment opportunities.

"A baseball game is simply a nervous breakdown divided into nine innings."

– Earl Wilson



DOES YOUR CLUB COACH HELP WITH RECRUITING?



THESE ARE GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASSESS WHETHER YOUR CLUB COACH IS TRULY INVESTED IN HELPING WITH YOUR RECRUITING PROCESS.



How big is their personal network of college coaches, and how often do they communicate with them?

Do they proactively reach out to college coaches on your behalf, or do they wait for them to contact you?

Do they use technology, such as recruiting platforms or player profiles, to help facilitate the process?

How well do they understand the showcase and camp landscape, and which events do they recommend?

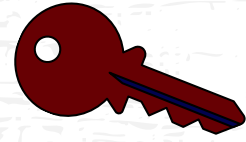
How quickly do they respond to college coaches who inquire about you?

How many athletes have they personally helped get recruited, and at what levels?

Do they take the time to understand your priorities and personal recruiting goals?

Are they available for one-on-one meetings to discuss your recruiting process in depth?

10 KEY FACTORS FOR CHOOSING A COLLEGE



ACADEMICS

Strength of the program, available majors, graduate school options, acceptance rate, and overall academic rigor. The importance of this factor varies for each athlete.



PLAYING TIME

How soon you expect to see the field. Are you willing to develop on the bench, or is immediate playing time a priority?



COST

Tuition, housing, cost of living, expected debt, and overall financial feasibility for your family.



COACH

Personal connection, level of interest in you, communication, and belief in your abilities.



LOCATION

Distance from home, climate, local activities, and proximity to family and friends.



DEVELOPMENT

Track record of player improvement, quality of training facilities, coaching staff, strength and conditioning programs, and overall player support.



FACILITIES

Quality and upkeep of athletic and academic buildings, training areas, dorms, and the overall campus environment.



LEVEL OF COMPETITIVENESS

NCAA Division (D1, D2, D3), NAIA, JUCO, and the strength of the program within each level.



WINNING CULTURE

Program's history of success, conference titles, playoff appearances, and commitment to excellence.



CAMPUS LIFE

Overall student experience, school spirit, social opportunities, extracurricular activities, and campus atmosphere.

This ranking system helps athletes evaluate schools based on their individual priorities. Have you considered having players create a weighted ranking or scoring system for these categories? That could provide them with a clear, data-driven way to compare schools and make the best decision for their future.