

An Interview with Coach Weil: Johns Hopkins Women's Soccer

at does it take to get recruited and noticed by top college soccer programs? SoccerRecruiting.com sat down with Leo Weil, Head Coach of the Johns Hopkins University Women's Soccer Team. This is what they discovered.

Could you briefly explain how you go about recruiting players?

We get players in a lot of different ways. First and foremost, we get a lot of unsolicited letters. We get a lot of people interested in the school who also want to play soccer. We also use recruiting services. What I usually do with those is anyone who is a good student, I'll send them a form letter to briefly tell them about our university and our program. The other way I get them is when I go to tournaments.

You say you go to tournaments. How would a player catch your eye?

Well, usually I'll go to a tournament to look at specific players that have already gotten into contact with me. Very rarely will I watch a player that I haven't heard from already. But if they are a good student, and absolutely stand out, I might drop them a letter. Sometimes, my assistants will also go to watch players.

How heavily do their opinions weigh in your decision to recruit a player?

I listen a lot to what they say, but it's hard to judge a player by watching them play soccer for half an hour. We have a checklist that we use, and we'll rate them on skills, leadership, etc. We can get a pretty good idea about whether they can play or not, but there's a lot more to players than their ability to play soccer. I also look at resume, what their club team experience is like, ODP experience, recommendations from coaches, etc. A lot of times, people send me videos.

What would you recommend a player put on a video?

We get a wide variety of videos. Some are professionally done, others are just home movie clips. Either way is fine. What I don't like is highlight reels. I like to see longer footage so I can see how they play. For goalies, I'd rather see a workout than clips of great saves. At the end of videos, I like to see players talking about themselves, telling me a little more about them. One of the mistakes that a lot of people make is they don't actually identify themselves, and we'll just see highlights, but I can't pick out who I'm supposed to be watching.

What would you have a player send you if they were interested in your school?

I like to see a cover letter, a 1-page resume outlining playing experience, and academic experience. I get profiles sometimes that only talk about soccer, but I think all coaches agree that they want to get both. I also like to get updates in how their season is going. I take the amount of interest they show into consideration when it comes time to decide who to sponsor.

What are some do's and don'ts of getting recruited?

The one thing that sends up a red flag to me is when I get contact from parents. I want to see independence, and when I only hear from parents, it's a bad sign. *Another thing is make sure that you send the right letter to the right person. I get letters addressed to me, but are actually intended for another coach. That definitely doesn't help!*

What advice would you give to a high school athlete who wants to play in college?

Don't wait too long to start showing interest in colleges. A lot of kids these days are pretty savvy, but I can't stress enough how important it is to start early. I had a player last year that was interested, but because she got in contact with me so late, I couldn't do anything to help her. If she had contacted me earlier, we might have been able to do something for her. Another thing to keep in mind is to make sure that they are comfortable with the university and its atmosphere. If you go to a school only for soccer, you're not going to be happy.