

## Misconceptions About The Recruiting Process

(Tim Nash)

For many high school student-athletes, the recruiting process can be mysterious and confusing. There are a lot of misconceptions about how to be recruited and what you, as a student-athlete, can do to help the process along.

Several of top college coaches in the country offer some sound advice. First of all, learn as much as you can about the schools you are interested in attending. Second, know how much scholarship money is available, and third, don't just sit by your phone and assume it will ring. Here are five common misconceptions student-athletes have about the recruiting process.

### Everybody Has 9.9 Scholarships Every Year

The NCAA allows a Division I men's soccer program 9.9 scholarships (women allowed 12.0). That does not mean that every year, a coach can give away 9.9 scholarships. In fact, unless it is a first-year program or if all the scholarship players decide to transfer at the same time, no coach will ever have his full allotment of scholarship money in any given year. "A lot of kids think that everybody is getting scholarships," says former Virginia coach and current D.C. United boss Bruce Arena.

"That's not the case. They have to look at where the program is and what their needs are." Adds Maryland coach Sasho Cirovski, "Really, we are lucky if we have three or four to give a year."

University of Massachusetts women's coach Jim Rudy says, "Sometimes, the kids and the parents think I'm kidding when I tell them we don't have 11 full rides."

One year, a coach may give three scholarships -- and some years they will be shared by four or five players. The next year, he may give two more. Coaches believe they are making the best use of their money if they spread the scholarships out equally between freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

### Division I Is Always The Best

"Some kids have don't have a good understanding of what Division I is," says Bruce Arena. "They might say 'I want to play Division I.' But I could recommend a good D-II or D-III school. There are some Division I programs that are no better than some Division II or III programs." Cirovski agrees. "A lot of people have a misconception about the level of play at some universities," says Cirovski who recruited and signed some of the best high school players in the country since taking over the Maryland program two years ago.

### All Programs Are The Same

Often, players will contact a college coach about attending their school and know nothing about the soccer team, the players, the coach or the style of play.

If you are a left midfielder, and the team has three sophomore left midfielders, chances are good that is not the school for you. If another school may have a graduating senior and a junior at your position, you are more likely to get playing time sooner.

"If you are interested in a particular school, I recommend going and watching that team play," Cirovski. "Watching one game will answer a lot of your questions."

Cirovski recommends that student-athletes make a list of five schools they are interested in and then find out as much as they can about each school.

### I Can't Call The Coach

The NCAA rules regarding recruiting are more difficult to understand than any foreign language class that you are required to take in school. There are rules regarding visits to a university, gifts from a coach, pickup games while you are on your recruiting visits and contact with the coach.

Many student-athletes are worried they will break the rules and somehow risk their college soccer career. However, as University of South Carolina coach Mark Berson points out, most of those rules pertain to the coach and not the player.

"A lot of kids don't think they are able to call a coach on the phone," he says. "They can call the coach any time they want."

Coaches are restricted as to when they can call a player. When the player is a junior, the coach can write him letters. When the player is a senior, the coach can return phone calls to him. But at any time, the player can call or write the coach.