

## What Is A "Reference"

A "reference" is a person that can speak on your behalf. Most college coaches ask you to list references so that they can talk to someone about your playing ability and personality.

Choosing strong references can make a big difference in impressing a college coach. So it is important to think through your choices. It is also important to make sure that your references are properly informed and prepared to talk about you as a player, student, and importantly a young adult.

There are three things to think about when choosing a reference:

- How well can this person talk about me on a personal level
- How recently has this person seen me play
- How will this person's soccer opinion be respected by a college coach

Each of these aspects is important to think about. The best reference possible is someone who is your current coach, who has coached at a high level of competition (possibly an ODP coach), and who has spent enough time with you to speak to your personality and the type of person that you are. The longer it has been since the coach has seen you play, the less effective they will be as a reference. The less the coach will be able to speak about you personally, the less effective they will be as a reference.

A list of potential reference choices include:

- Your club, select, or ODP coach
- Your high school coach if you play for a highly respected high school that frequently sends players to college
- A counselor at a nationally recognized camp or a college coach you know personally and has seen you play

Once you have chosen your references, it is important to follow the following steps:

- Make sure to ask these people if you can use them as references, and tell them you really appreciate their help.
  - Inform these people of your current athletic and academic activities.
  - Send them a copy of your soccer resume, and continue to give them updates of your progress.
  - Tell them about which colleges you are thinking of attending and which are your top three to five choices.
  - If there are any topics that you want that person to discuss, tell them - even give them a few sentences that you would like them to say if called by a college coach. Often people will say exactly what you tell them to say.
- Be sure to thank them for all of their trouble.

## What Should I Do When a Coach Calls?

When a coach calls, your job is to keep the coach interested and see what you can do to help your chances. Coaches will often call for a number of reasons: promote their program, see how interested you are in their school, get a sense of you as a person, learn about your athletic career, coordinate a recruiting trip, etc. They may even ask for a verbal commitment.

You should be prepared for all of these conversations. The first piece of advice is to be honest. But, given that you tell the truth, there are better ways to talk to coaches to keep their interest.

If you are interested in their school, you should tell the coach that their school is on a short list of schools that you are looking into. If the list is actually very short, tell them so.

Be able to talk about why their school is of particular interest to you and fits your needs academically, athletically, and personally. For example: the school could be a good match because of the geography, size, temperature, academic programs available, clubs available, etc. Mentioning these things will give the coach confidence that you are seriously interested in going to their school. By doing your research, you present yourself very well.

Also, you have probably never had to talk about yourself before - - - this may be your first time. People are often uncomfortable talking about themselves, so you may want to practice with your parents, coach, or a guidance counselor. This practice will be very beneficial and make you more relaxed when talking to a coach.

Lastly, see if there is anything you can do to make the coach's life easier. Does he need you to send him something: a copy of your transcript, a schedule, etc. Also make sure that you are on schedule with the school's application procedure.

And to end all this advice - - relax - - & have fun. See if the person you are talking to is someone you would like to listen to for the next years. And remember, these coaches are here to sell you on their school. They should be the nervous ones!