



Guide to College Lacrosse Recruiting for High School Coaches

Introduction: This comprehensive plan is designed to help high school boys' lacrosse coaches guide their players through the college recruiting process. It covers the key differences in recruiting for NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA programs, with step-by-step guidance, timelines, and practical tools. Use the year-by-year checklists, email and video templates, academic requirements, and lists of top programs to build a structured recruiting system that prepares each athlete for the next level. The focus is on ensuring players find a college that fits both their athletic ability and academic goals – remember that very few will play lacrosse professionally, so the college choice must make sense for life beyond lacrosse.

Overview of College Lacrosse Divisions

Before diving into the specific plans, it's important to understand the landscape of men's college lacrosse:

- **NCAA Division I (D1):** The highest level, with ~70–80 programs nationwide. These are highly competitive teams recruiting the top ~5% of high school players. D1 offers athletic scholarships (historically max 12.6 per team, though new rules may allow more) and has the strictest recruiting rules. Traditional D1 powerhouses include schools like Johns Hopkins, Syracuse, Duke, Virginia, Maryland, Cornell, North Carolina, and Denver – programs with multiple national titles and strong lacrosse history.
- **NCAA Division II (D2):** ~80–85 programs, competitive lacrosse often overlooked despite high quality. D2 also offers athletic scholarships (up to 10.8 per team) but usually fewer resources than D1. Top D2 programs (and multiple-time champions) include Adelphi University (NY) – the most NCAA D2 titles – as well as Le Moyne, Limestone, Mercyhurst, Tampa, and others. D2 recruiting rules are a bit more relaxed than D1.
- **NCAA Division III (D3):** Over 230 programs – the largest number of teams. D3 does *not* offer athletic scholarships, but most athletes receive some form of academic or need-based aid. Competition ranges widely; top D3 teams (Salisbury, Tufts, RIT, Middlebury, Hobart (historically), etc.) can be very strong. D3 emphasizes the balance of academics and athletics. Recruiting rules are the most relaxed in the NCAA, and the focus is often

on finding the right academic fit for the student-athlete.

- **NAIA:** A separate association with about 30–35 men’s lacrosse programs, often smaller schools. The NAIA now has its own championship (first official championship held in 2025) and allows athletic scholarships (no set limit by rule; scholarship budgets vary by school). NAIA recruiting is very flexible – coaches can contact prospects at any time in high school. Top NAIA teams include Keiser University (FL) – the 2025 NAIA champions – along with University of the Cumberlands (KY) (2025 runner-up), Reinhardt University (GA), and others that often compete for the title.

With this context in mind, below are detailed recruiting plans for each division, followed by general resources and timelines applicable to all.

NCAA Division I Recruiting Plan

Overall Recruiting Timeline & Philosophy (D1): Division I recruiting starts early and is highly competitive. The NCAA has instituted strict rules to prevent **coach-initiated contact until September 1 of a player’s junior year** of high school. However, preparation for D1 recruiting should begin much sooner. Players capable of D1 should be standouts on their high school team and high-level club teams by sophomore year. Coaches should help players realistically evaluate if they are D1-caliber (size, athleticism, skill, and drive) and also ensure they prioritize academics (D1 recruits must meet NCAA academic benchmarks – see Academic Requirements section below).

Step 1: Honest Self-Assessment and Goal Setting (D1) – Assist the player in evaluating his talent and physical potential against D1 standards. Not everyone will play at this level, and *chasing a “D1 or bust” dream can lead to sitting on the bench* instead of thriving at a slightly lower level. Encourage the athlete to compare himself to known D1 recruits (e.g. has he played against top players or attended elite camps?) and get input from unbiased observers (other coaches, scouts). If he has the tools for D1, proceed; if not, consider focusing on D2/D3 where he might have a better experience. The key is to target **appropriate schools where he can actually play**.

Step 2: Academic Preparation and NCAA Eligibility – D1 recruits must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center by junior year and meet specific academic criteria. Make sure the player is on track with **16 NCAA core courses and a minimum 2.3 GPA in those core classes**. Help him plan a schedule of approved courses (4 English, 3 math (Algebra 1+), 2 science, etc. – see Academic Requirements section) and **emphasize grades from freshman year onward** (since 10 core courses must be completed before senior year). It’s also wise for him to take the SAT/ACT by junior year – even though NCAA no longer mandates test scores, many colleges and scholarships still use them. Ensure he registers with the Eligibility Center (and pays the fee) if he hasn’t already.

Step 3: Early Exposure (Freshman/Sophomore Years) – Even though D1 coaches can't personally reach out yet, **players can initiate contact early**. Encourage the athlete to **research schools** as early as freshman and sophomore year and begin building a list of target D1 programs that fit his academic interests and preferences (size, location, majors, campus environment). At this stage, the player (with your guidance) should:

- **Fill out recruiting questionnaires** on each college's athletics website and get into their recruiting databases (many D1 programs have an online form; submit these as a sophomore).
- **Send introductory emails/letters to coaches** at the schools of interest (even though D1 coaches cannot reply with recruiting info before junior year, it *gets the player on their radar* as a proactive and interested prospect). An intro email can include basic info (class, position, club team, GPA) and express interest in the program – see template later in this guide. Coaches may only send back generic information or camp brochures before junior year, but they will remember the outreach.
- **Join a competitive club team** that attends major recruiting tournaments in the summer. D1 coaches do a lot of scouting at club tournaments and showcases (especially in traditional hotbeds). Being on the field at events where D1 coaches are present (even though they can't talk to the player yet) is crucial for exposure.
- **Attend elite camps or prospect days** after sophomore year. Even before official contact dates, players can go to college-run summer prospect camps where D1 coaches can evaluate them in person. This can significantly boost visibility (more on camps in later section).

Step 4: Build Recruiting Profiles & Video – By the summer after sophomore year, help the player assemble his **recruiting profile** and highlight video. Create an online profile (could be a personal website, NCSA or similar recruiting profile, and/or a simple PDF resume) that includes key stats, academics, and contact info. **Highlight video** is essential: make sure it's high-quality but **3–4 minutes at most**. For video, focus on varsity game footage or top club competition – show the athlete's best skills, and **ensure he is clearly identifiable** in each clip (use an arrow or spotlight and make sure jersey number is visible). The camera angle should be elevated (press-box view) to capture context of plays. Keep editing simple (college coaches don't need special effects or music; they want to see the play). As one experienced parent advises: **“get good video, keep it short and of good quality, and update your video each season”**. Post the video online (YouTube or Vimeo link) and include that link in all correspondence with coaches. *Tip*: also create a one-page athletic/academic resume that can be emailed as a PDF if needed, containing stats, awards, GPA, test scores, and coach contacts.

Step 5: September 1 of Junior Year – The Acceleration Point – **September 1 of junior year is when D1 coaches can start contacting players directly** via email, calls, texts, and social media messages. It's a big date in D1 recruiting. As that date approaches, the player should

have updated his profiles and video (as described above) and prepared a list of programs to reach out to immediately on Sept 1. When the date arrives, two things should happen:

- **Coaches may start reaching out** to players who have caught their attention. If your athlete has done well at showcases or been identified, he might receive incoming emails or calls. Prepare him to respond promptly and professionally. *Practice with him ahead of time* – do mock phone calls so he's comfortable talking to adult coaches. Encourage him to have a few talking points about the school ready, and a couple of questions to ask the coach to show engagement.
- **The player should reach out to programs on his target list** (especially if he hasn't heard from some that he cares about). This is the time to send a fresh email expressing interest, including his **fall schedule** (fall ball tournaments, etc.), a link to his highlights, and academic info. If he filled out the questionnaire and wrote before, he can reference that. Coaches are now allowed to reply and start a dialogue. A good approach is to ask if the coach could watch him at an upcoming event or if there's an opportunity to visit campus.

Step 6: Ongoing Communication and Follow-Up – Junior year is the heart of D1 recruiting. Guide your player to **stay organized** and persistent:

- Keep a **spreadsheet or tracking system** of all contacts: which schools have been contacted, which coaches responded, dates of communications, any feedback or next steps (like invites to visit). This helps the athlete manage multiple conversations and not overlook any.
- If a coach shows interest, the player should follow up regularly (every few weeks) with updates – e.g. "Our season just started, I had 3 goals in our opener," or "I've improved my SAT score to X," etc. **Following up is crucial**, but be mindful: one follow-up if there's no response is fine, but don't spam. As the Reddit guide notes, "it can't hurt to follow up at least once... but be reasonable and don't overdo it" – often *no response is the response*. If a coach goes silent, move on gracefully.
- **Email all relevant coaches on a staff**, not just the head coach. Often a recruiting coordinator or assistant handles initial scouting. It's recommended to CC the head coach and all assistant coaches in your emails. That way, you maximize the chance someone reads it, and they can internally delegate who replies.
- **Highlight video updates:** If the junior season (or summer after junior year) yields new great footage, create an updated highlight reel and send it out to coaches in the summer between junior and senior year. Many families make a junior-year highlights video and then a senior-year video. Let coaches know "Here is my updated 202x season video" – it keeps them engaged.

Step 7: Visits and Showcases – In D1, no **official visits** (visits paid or facilitated by the college) are permitted until the recruit's **senior year** (starting **August 1 before senior year**, per NCAA rules updated in many sports). Unofficial visits (player visits campus on his own expense) were also not allowed before Sept 1 junior year under new lacrosse rules, but after that date the athlete can visit. By junior year, if there is mutual interest, encourage the player to visit the campuses of his top schools (unofficially). Coaches can meet and talk with him on campus at this time. Many D1 programs host junior day events or invite recruits to fall games. **Off-campus contact** (e.g. meeting at the player's home or school) is restricted until junior year as well, but coaches might come watch the player's high school games or club tournaments (evaluation is allowed). In the summer after junior year, **official visits** can take place – D1 changed rules to allow official visits after August 1 before senior year (note: the Reddit guide's point #6 was written when official visits were only senior year; now athletes can take officials during senior fall). If a school invites the player for an official visit early senior year, that is a strong sign of serious recruiting intent.

Also, advise the player to be **selective with showcases**. By junior year, rather than large pay-to-play showcase events with 50 colleges present, it might be more effective to attend **individual college prospect days at schools he's truly interested in**. One parent's advice: *"You'll get more bang for your buck from individual college camps than those 50-college events."* If his top-choice school has a prospect day, go to it – it's a chance to play directly in front of that coaching staff and tour the school.

Step 8: Receiving and Managing Offers (D1) – If the player is fortunate enough to receive a verbal offer (scholarship or roster spot), help him and his family evaluate it in the context of his goals. Discuss the **scholarship details** (most D1 lacrosse offers are partial scholarships – full rides are rare). Also consider depth charts and how he fits the program. It's okay for the player to ask the coach questions about where they see him playing, what the next steps are (e.g. admissions application, signing an NLI, etc.). **National Signing Day:** Men's lacrosse uses the fall early signing period (November of senior year) for NLIs (National Letter of Intent) for scholarship offers. If your player will sign, ensure he meets all deadlines (and of course, continues to **uphold his academic and behavioral record** – offers can be rescinded for academic ineligibility or serious disciplinary issues).

For players not committed by early senior year, **don't panic**. D1 recruiting does wrap up early for many top programs, but there are always late openings and changes (injuries, roster changes, coaching changes). The player should continue reaching out to D1 schools that still have needs, but also **expand his range** to include D2 or strong D3 programs by senior year as a parallel plan. Many excellent players who could play D1 end up choosing D2/D3 for a better fit or if D1 offers didn't materialize – and that can be a great decision for them.

Step 9: Social Media and Public Image – D1 coaches *will* look at a recruit's social media. **Remind the athlete to clean up his Twitter/Instagram/TikTok** and keep it appropriate. A good rule from the guide: *don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother (or a coach) to read or see*. Simultaneously, the player can leverage social media to follow college team accounts and even subtly get noticed (some recruits follow and interact with a program's posts,

which is fine). Coaches sometimes follow recruits back on social media; if your player sees a new follower that is a college coach or program, that's a hint of interest – he should consider reaching out to that program directly.

Step 10: Coaches' Contact and Communication Skills – When D1 coaches start calling, prepare your player to **be professional and enthusiastic**. We already mentioned practice calls; additionally, have the player research each program beforehand so he can ask informed questions (“Coach, I noticed your team’s offense scored a lot in man-up – how do midfielders typically contribute in your scheme?” or “What are the next steps in your recruiting process for me?”). Being able to have a two-way conversation impresses coaches. Also, if a coach contacts your player from a school he’s not initially interested in, **encourage him not to dismiss them rudely**. Every call is practice and networking. As the Reddit poster noted, even if it’s not a top-choice school, talking to that coach can help the player become comfortable in these interactions – and who knows, he might discover a great opportunity he hadn’t considered.

Summary for D1: Start early with preparation (skills, academics, video), be ready to hit the ground running junior year when contact opens, and stay organized and proactive. Stress the importance of finding a *good college fit*, not just chasing the highest division. As one parent put it, *“lots of quality players get buried on D1 rosters... there are some quality D2 and D3 programs out there”*. Ultimately, the goal is to use lacrosse to get into a school where the athlete will thrive on and off the field.

NCAA Division II Recruiting Plan

Overall Recruiting Timeline & Philosophy (D2): Division II recruiting shares many similarities with D1, but the NCAA rules are a bit more permissive and the timeline can be slightly later on average. **D2 coaches are allowed to call and contact recruits earlier** – there is no specific junior-year start date for calls/emails in D2; coaches “are permitted to start calling athletes at any time”. Off-campus contact and official visits can begin **June 15 after the sophomore year**. In practice, many D2 programs will still focus on juniors and seniors (and even pick up late recruits in senior spring) because they often wait to see which prospects don’t go D1. D2 offers athletic scholarships but fewer per team (equivalency money that coaches split among players). The key for D2-bound players is to maintain D1-level work ethic, keep grades up (for eligibility and potential academic scholarships), and be open-minded – **some D2 schools have excellent lacrosse and strong academics** without the same name recognition.

Many of the **same steps from D1 apply to D2** – so rather than repeat everything, we will highlight where to adjust focus for Division II:

- **Self-Assessment:** Help the player decide if D2 is an appropriate level. D2 teams still look for skilled, athletic players, though the overall size/speed may be a notch below top D1. If your athlete is a late bloomer, slightly undersized, or just outside the D1 radar, D2 could be ideal. Reiterate honesty in ability – if he’s not getting D1 interest by mid-junior year, shifting focus to good D2 programs can be wise. There are outstanding D2 teams

(Adelphi, Limestone, Le Moyne, etc.) where he can have a big role. Many players find D2 to be a perfect competitive level that also gives a bit more balance with academics.

- **Academic Eligibility:** D2 also requires NCAA Eligibility Center registration (with a fee) and 16 core courses, but the GPA requirement is slightly lower (**2.2 core GPA**). Make sure the player registers and meets these requirements. He should graduate high school and get final amateurism clearance like D1. Again, standardized tests might not be mandated by NCAA, but check individual D2 colleges – some might require SAT/ACT for admission or merit aid.
- **Initial Outreach Timing:** Because D2 coaches *can* communicate earlier, your player could start getting responses as early as sophomore year if he contacts D2 schools. Realistically, top D2 programs may start identifying sophomores and juniors, but many D2 coaches focus on juniors (and even seniors). **We recommend players start outreach to D2 schools during sophomore year spring or summer.** Send introductory emails and fill recruiting forms for a range of D2 programs the player might like. Even if coaches can call anytime, many won't actually call a sophomore out of the blue, but your email might prompt them to put the athlete on a watch list or invite him to a prospect day.
- **Profiles & Video:** Same importance as D1 – create a strong highlight video and profile by end of sophomore year. D2 coaches, like D1, use video to evaluate prospects since their recruiting budgets may be smaller and they can't scout everywhere in person. Make sure the video link is in every email. Keep the video updated with junior season footage as needed.
- **Communication Differences:** D2 coaches have more freedom to respond, so don't be surprised if your player gets a personal reply or even a phone call from a D2 coach in sophomore summer or junior fall *if* they are interested. Emphasize professional communication at all times. Because D2 allows **unofficial visits at any time**, a coach might say, "If you're ever on campus, let me know." Take them up on those offers – visiting a campus early (junior year) can demonstrate interest. Also, **off-campus contact is allowed June 15 after sophomore year**, meaning a D2 coach could talk to the player at a summer tournament after that date. Ensure the player is aware: if a stranger introduces himself as a college coach in summer after 10th grade, it's within the rules for D2 (and D3/NAIA) – he should be polite and engage in conversation.
- **Tracking and Follow-Up:** Use the same spreadsheet system. One difference: because D2 can recruit later, keep D2 schools on the list even if you don't hear much junior year. Many D2 programs intensify recruiting in senior year to scoop up players who didn't sign D1 or who improved late. So a lack of junior-year response isn't necessarily a "no." It's good to send a *senior fall update* to D2 coaches if the player is still interested and not committed. Include senior fall highlights or early-season updates.

- **Showcases and Clubs:** D2 coaches attend many of the same showcases as D1. Being on a strong club team matters here too (some D2 coaches indeed care about club more than high school, since high school competition varies). Encourage players targeting D2 to attend prospect days at D2 schools or college-run clinics. Often, D2 schools have affordable prospect camps and those can lead directly to offers. For example, if a player does well at a D2's fall prospect day, they might invite him for an official visit or walk him over to Admissions.
- **Offers and Scholarships:** D2 scholarships (10.8 per team max) are usually divided. An offer might be "percentage of tuition" or a certain dollar amount. Also, many D2 schools are private and expensive, so coaches frequently combine athletic money with academic scholarships. **Push your players to get good grades and test scores** – at D2 schools, a strong student can earn large academic awards that, combined with a partial athletic scholarship, make a big financial difference. Some D2 programs may not be fully funded (they might only have a few scholarships to give), so they especially love players who help the team *and* raise the team GPA or academic profile.
- **Timeline for Decision:** D2 does have a National Letter of Intent system like D1. Many top D2 recruits will sign in November of senior year as well. However, plenty of D2 commitments occur later – through winter or spring of senior year – since coaches are often waiting on D1 transfers or late bloomers. If your player leans D2, he should aim to have offers/commitments by spring of senior year at the latest (so that he can make college plans and apply), but know that it's not uncommon for D2 coaches to add players as late as May or even summer after senior year in some cases. As a coach, you should keep in contact with college coaches on your player's behalf as needed – sometimes a quick call or email from a high school coach to a D2 coach can prompt a more thorough evaluation of the player.

Summary for D2: Division II recruiting requires much of the same hustle as D1. Start outreach early, focus on strong video and communication, and **use the looser contact rules to your advantage** – building relationships earlier if possible. Keep academic performance a priority to maximize options (since D2 schools can mix academic/athletic aid). And importantly, show genuine interest in the particular D2 school – these coaches know that recruits might view D2 as a "fallback," so if a player actually loves what their school offers (academically or location-wise), he should say so. That genuine interest can set him apart. Finally, remember quality of life: if a player chooses a D2 where he fits well, he'll likely get more playing time and enjoyment than being a reserve at a D1 – and there's a lot of excellent lacrosse to be played in D2.

NCAA Division III Recruiting Plan

Overall Recruiting Timeline & Philosophy (D3): Division III recruiting is focused on **academics and fit**, since no athletic scholarships are at stake. D3 coaches have the **fewest restrictions** on contact: they can communicate with players *at any time* (no junior-year waiting

period). In practice, though, D3 coaches generally start seriously recruiting players during their junior year and into senior year. D3 recruiting can run later – many D3 teams lock in recruits during senior fall or even later, often after seeing who might drop down from D1/D2 pursuits. A crucial aspect for D3 is the college's admission standards. Coaches can support a player's application, especially at elite academic D3 schools, but the student must have the grades and test scores to get admitted (or very close to the standards, with coach support making up the difference).

As a coach guiding a potential D3 recruit, emphasize the “**college choice**” aspect: since no one is on athletic scholarship, the player truly needs to love the school for what it offers beyond lacrosse (major, campus life, academics). Lacrosse is “the gravy,” as one parent said. The steps for D3 recruiting include many of the same tasks – with shifts in timing and priorities:

- **Self-Assessment:** Determine if the player's skill level and goals align with D3. D3 has a huge range of ability: top-tier D3 programs (e.g. Salisbury, Tufts, RIT) recruit players who could be low-end D1 talents, whereas lower-tier D3 teams may welcome almost any decent high school player. If your athlete loves the sport but also wants a rigorous academic school or a specific major, D3 might be perfect. Also, D3 is a great option for players who may not meet NCAA D1/D2 eligibility or simply don't want the intense year-round commitment of D1. **Be honest about level:** if the player isn't getting D1/D2 looks, pivot to D3 sooner rather than later so he can find the right spot. Countless stories exist of athletes finding joy and success on D3 teams after chasing D1 offers that never came.
- **Academic Focus & Eligibility: No NCAA Eligibility Center is required for D3** – the NCAA does not screen D3 academics. Each D3 college sets its own admission criteria. This means the player needs to **meet the admission requirements of the colleges he likes**. Research GPA and SAT/ACT averages for those schools. D3 coaches will often ask for an unofficial transcript and test scores early in the recruiting process; they use that to gauge if the player could get in. If your player has academic hurdles (low GPA), D3 might actually be *less* forgiving than D2 because the admissions office, not athletics, decides. On the flip side, a strong student might get a better overall aid package at a D3. Remind the player: even though he doesn't have to register with NCAA, **good grades are still crucial** for admissions and merit scholarships.
- **Timeline & Contact:** Since D3 coaches can call and email without restriction, a keen D3 coach might reach out to a sophomore or early-junior who stands out at a camp. It's not the norm to recruit that early, but it happens especially at academically elite schools (they identify prospects early to get them on admissions radar). For your planning:
 - **Sophomore year:** If the player is already sure he wants D3 (perhaps he's targeting NESAC or other high-academic schools), there's no harm in reaching out in sophomore year. He can fill out recruiting questionnaires and send intro emails to D3 coaches early – they *can reply* and start building a relationship even in 10th grade. Many might respond with an invite to their summer camp or ask for

updates when he's a junior.

- **Junior year:** This is typically when D3 recruiting heats up. The player should definitely be reaching out to a broad list of D3 programs during junior fall and winter. Attach the highlight video and academic info in those emails. The coach might arrange an **unofficial visit** – D3 coaches can meet and talk on campus anytime, and **official visits (paid) are allowed starting January 1 of junior year**. In D3, “official visit” just means the school can pay for some of the trip; it’s less common due to smaller budgets, but the athlete can visit campus at his own expense anytime. By junior spring or summer, many D3 coaches try to get strong prospects to visit campus, possibly do an overnight with the team, etc.
- **Senior year:** D3 coaches often finalize their recruits in the fall. Notably, at many D3 institutions (especially NESCACs, Centennial Conference, etc.), coaches use **Early Decision (ED)** admissions to lock in recruits. They will tell a recruit, “If you commit to us, you should apply ED to have the best chance of admission.” This usually happens by November of senior year (ED deadlines). As a coach, be prepared to counsel your player and his family on ED – it’s binding, and they should only do it for their first-choice school. If the player has multiple D3 interests, he might hold off until regular decision, but know that some roster spots (and coach support slots) fill in ED.
- **Communication & Follow-Through:** One advantage in D3 – coaches have more time to talk since they’re not restricted. Encourage your player to get on phone calls with D3 coaches, or meet them. It could be as simple as a coach saying, “We’ll be at XYZ tournament this summer, come chat with us at our tent after your game.” Those personal connections matter. Keep tracking contacts in a spreadsheet and **pay attention to the academic application process**. For each D3 school, note what the admissions requirements and timelines are (e.g., does the coach need the player to apply by a certain date? Do they do “likely letters” or pre-reads of transcripts in summer?). Many D3 coaches will ask recruits in summer before senior year to submit transcripts and test scores for an **Admissions pre-read** – the admissions office evaluates if the student would be admitted with coach support. Help your player comply promptly with these requests.
- **Highlight Video & Showcases:** The video guidelines remain the same. D3 coaches definitely use video; in fact, a far-away D3 school might solely recruit via video if their budget doesn’t allow travel. So ensure the highlight is polished. In terms of showcases, D3 coaches attend many multi-school showcases. There are also D3-specific events (for example, prospect days at D3 schools, or showcases geared to high-academic D3 coaches). If your player is academically strong, consider events like the **Showcase camps for high-academic schools** (sometimes called “Academic All-American” camps or similar) – dozens of D3 and some D1/Ivy coaches attend those to find scholar-athletes. Another tip: **the player’s high school and club coach networks are**

valuable. D3 coaches often rely on trusted high school coaches for recommendations. Don't hesitate to proactively call a D3 coach you know and pitch your player if you think it's a good fit – coaches appreciate the initiative and insight from a fellow coach.

- **Finding the Right Program:** Help the player research and target a *range* of D3 programs. There are 230+ teams – cast a wide net at first. Use criteria like academic majors, geographic location, size of school, and competitiveness of the team. For example, an aspiring engineer might focus on D3 schools with strong engineering programs (e.g., Stevens Tech, MIT (club only for men's), RIT, etc.), whereas someone who wants a small liberal arts environment might look at NESCAC or ODAC schools. Encourage him to consider the **roster and playing opportunity** too – maybe being a standout at a mid-level D3 is more appealing than scraping for minutes at a top-5 D3.
- **No Scholarships, But Aid:** Since D3 can't give athletic money, families often ask, "What's the benefit of being recruited then?" The answer: coach support in admissions (which can make the difference at selective schools) and often preferential packaging of financial aid. While the NCAA doesn't allow athletic awards, D3 colleges can offer academic merit scholarships or need-based aid. Athletes often receive robust aid if they are good students. As a coach, ensure your player fills out any needed financial aid forms (FAFSA, etc.) on time, and encourage him to ask the college coaches about merit scholarships – coaches can sometimes advocate for recruits to get better packages (though they can't call it "athletic"). It's also worth noting that some D3 universities (e.g., in the Liberty League or NESCAC) have huge endowments and can meet demonstrated financial need fully.

Summary for D3: Division III recruiting is **flexible and academics-driven**. Start building relationships early (no dead periods to worry about), keep pushing academics, and guide the player to a school where he'll be happy even if an injury ended his lacrosse career. D3 coaches, being free of many NCAA rules, tend to be very approachable and candid in recruiting. They will appreciate a well-prepared recruit who emails them with genuine interest and good questions. The timeline can be longer – many D3 commitments happen in senior year – so keep the player motivated and engaged through the end of high school. As long as he has a solid college chosen by spring of senior year, he's on track. D3 is about "the right fit": a balance of education and athletics. Remind families that a strong D3 program will still provide intense competition and possibly chances at a championship, given the powerhouse programs out there (Salisbury just won their 13th title in 2023; Tufts won in 2022 and 2025, etc.). It's four more years to play the sport he loves, while getting a degree that sets him up for life.

NAIA Recruiting Plan

Overall Recruiting Timeline & Philosophy (NAIA): The NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) is separate from the NCAA and has its own rules and eligibility center. NAIA lacrosse programs tend to recruit **later in the cycle** and often target players who may

have been overlooked by NCAA or who decide to transfer or decommit from NCAA schools. NAIA coaches have **no restrictions on contacting recruits** – they can reach out anytime, even freshman year, and similarly recruits can contact them anytime. In practice, most NAIA recruiting happens during junior and senior years, and often even in the late senior year or summer after graduation. As a coach, you might use NAIA options as a safety net for players who haven't found the right fit in the NCAA, or for those who prefer an NAIA school's environment. NAIA programs can offer athletic scholarships (technically no set limit, but effectively similar in scale to NCAA equivalency scholarships), and they place a strong emphasis on making sure athletes are a good **social and academic fit** for the school as well.

Key steps and considerations for NAIA recruiting:

- **Eligibility and Academics:** The NAIA has its own Eligibility Center (PlayNAIA) that students must register with if they plan to compete. The academic eligibility criteria for incoming freshmen in NAIA is straightforward: a student must **either** have a 2.3+ high school GPA **or** meet *two out of three* benchmarks: **2.0 GPA, 18 ACT (970 SAT), or top 50% class rank**. In short, if your player has at least a 2.3 GPA, he's automatically eligible; if below 2.3, he needs to hit two of the other marks. Ensure the player registers with the NAIA Eligibility Center (typically during junior or senior year) and sends in the required documents (transcripts, test scores). NAIA schools often have more modest academic entry requirements compared to NCAA D1 schools, but this varies – make sure the player at least meets the NAIA minimums and the particular college's standards.
- **Identifying NAIA Programs:** There are around 30 NAIA men's lacrosse teams, mostly clustered in certain regions (many in the South, Midwest, and West where NCAA lacrosse options are fewer). As a coach, familiarize yourself with these schools. Many are smaller private colleges. Examples of strong NAIA men's lacrosse programs include:
 - **Keiser University (Florida)** – NAIA national champions in 2023 and 2024 (National Invitational) and the inaugural official NAIA championship in 2025. They are a top program with scholarships and a rapidly growing profile.
 - **University of the Cumberlands (Kentucky)** – A regular contender (2025 runner-up in the championship).
 - **Reinhardt University (Georgia)** – Won multiple NAIA Invitational titles in late 2010s and remains a powerhouse.
 - Other notable programs: Indiana Tech, Lawrence Tech (MI), Benedictine College (KS), Concordia (MI), Ottawa University (KS), and Aquinas College (MI), among others. (The NAIA is expanding – for example, some former MCLA club teams are moving to NAIA varsity.)

- Provide your player with a list of NAIA schools and see if any match his academic interests or geographic preference. Sometimes NAIA schools offer unique opportunities (for instance, if he wants to study an uncommon major or play multiple sports – NAIA is more accommodating of two-sport athletes).
- **Contact and Outreach:** Because there are no contact rules, your player (or you, on his behalf) can call or email NAIA coaches at will. If you have a student not getting NCAA offers, it's perfectly fine to reach out to NAIA coaches in the winter or spring of senior year – many NAIA teams will still be recruiting then, looking for quality players who slipped through the cracks. The content of the outreach is similar: send a profile with academic info and highlight video. NAIA coaches, often having smaller recruiting staffs, greatly appreciate proactive recruits. They might respond quickly since they don't have bureaucratic hoops.
- **Campus Visits:** NAIA does not distinguish between official/unofficial visits like NCAA does – any visit can be arranged as needed. If a player is interested in an NAIA program, encourage him to visit the campus, meet the coach and team. Coaches will often coordinate overnight visits if you reach out. Some NAIA programs host prospect days too (though less frequently than NCAA).
- **Scholarships and Aid:** NAIA scholarships are competitive. There's technically no set scholarship cap, but in practice, budgets are limited. NAIA coaches may offer athletic scholarship money, and they often stack it with academic awards. For example, a coach might say, "We can offer you a \$10,000 athletic scholarship" (at a school with \$30k tuition) and then admissions might add academic grants if the player's grades are good. The total package can be attractive. It's important to note that NAIA schools vary widely in resources – some might have near NCAA-level funding, others have very little. Guide families to ask coaches about typical scholarship amounts and total cost of attendance. Also, NAIA schools are generally not bound by NLI, though they may use Letters of Intent specific to NAIA or just an enrollment deposit to secure a commitment.
- **Level of Play and Development:** NAIA lacrosse level ranges but generally is comparable to lower-tier NCAA D2 or D3. Many NAIA players could play D2 or D3 but chose NAIA for various reasons (perhaps scholarship or a specific school). As a coach, set proper expectations: the competition is serious, but the depth might be thinner. A talented recruit could potentially play earlier in his career at an NAIA (which could be a selling point). NAIA also has a lot of **international players and non-traditional students** (since eligibility rules can be a bit more flexible with age/transfer). So it can be a unique team environment. Emphasize the positives: smaller rosters on average (NAIA average roster ~23 vs. NCAA D1 ~45), so more personal attention and playing opportunities; and a strong community vibe.
- **Flexibility:** One advantage – NAIA athletes can transfer to NCAA later with fewer issues (the NCAA has started accepting that without sitting out, as long as academics are in

order). So if your player uses NAIA as a stepping stone (say he didn't have the grades for NCAA initially or wants to develop), he could play NAIA for a year or two and then transfer to an NCAA program. This isn't super common, but it's an option if the athlete excels.

Summary for NAIA: NAIA recruiting is all about **being proactive and open-minded**.

Encourage players to treat NAIA options not as an afterthought but as another pathway. Some NAIA schools might offer a better scholarship package or a more suitable academic program than an NCAA school. The timeline is forgiving – even by late senior year there is hope, which can be a relief for those who start the process late. As a high school coach, build contacts with NAIA coaches just as you do with NCAA coaches. They are usually very responsive since they don't get as many inquiries. Finally, stress to your player that whatever level it is – NCAA D1, D2, D3 or NAIA – what matters is finding a college where he can get a great education, continue playing lacrosse, and grow as a person. NAIA can absolutely fulfill those needs for the right student-athlete.

The sections above outline division-specific strategies. Next, we provide *timelines*, *checklists*, and *templates* that apply across all divisions to help organize the recruiting process from freshman year onward, create effective outreach materials, and ensure all key requirements are met.

Year-by-Year High School Recruiting Checklists

One of the most useful tools for a coach is a year-by-year checklist of what athletes should be doing to advance their college recruitment. Below are checklists for each year of high school (freshman through senior) to keep players on track. Keep in mind that exceptional recruits may accelerate some steps (e.g. a varsity freshman might start earlier contact), while late bloomers might do some steps later – but this is a general guideline.

Freshman Year (9th Grade)

- **Focus on Academics:** Establish good study habits and aim for the best GPA possible from day one. Remind players that *all* years count toward NCAA core GPA – a strong freshman year sets the foundation. Take appropriate core courses (English, math, science, etc.) and ensure they are courses that count toward NCAA eligibility (check with counselors).
- **Develop Fundamentals & Athletics:** This year is about improving skills and athleticism. Encourage multi-sport participation for overall athletic development (many college coaches like multi-sport athletes). On the lacrosse field, freshman should focus on

earning playing time (maybe JV or even varsity for top talents) and **honing basic skills**.

- **Club Team and Summer:** If the player is serious about college lacrosse, have him join a reputable club program that competes in summer tournaments. Freshman summer tournaments can provide early exposure (college coaches may watch 2027s, for example, to note names for the future).
- **Research and Enjoy the Sport:** Begin casually **watching college lacrosse** (on TV or in person if possible). It helps build IQ and also lets the player imagine the level of play. They can start thinking about what college might be like. If convenient, visit a local college's campus or attend a game as a fan.
- **Light Recruiting Prep:** It's early, but keen players can **start a list of dream or interesting colleges** with reasons (academic programs, location, lacrosse success). They can also create a simple one-page sports résumé and keep track of achievements (it will grow each year). No need to contact coaches yet, but some ambitious freshmen do fill out questionnaires or attend camps – that's optional. The NCAA rules don't allow D1 coaches to contact them, but **athletes can send an introduction now if they want**. Just temper expectations that responses will be limited. If nothing else, it's practice writing to coaches.

Sophomore Year (10th Grade)

- **Academic Progress:** Continue to excel in classes. **Review the NCAA core course requirements** this year – by now, a player should have perhaps 8 of the 16 core courses done or in progress. Adjust class schedules if needed to ensure the right courses by graduation. If the student is tracking for NCAA D1/D2, consider taking the PSAT and plan for SAT/ACT in junior year.
- **Varsity Play & Skill Showcase:** Many sophomores break into varsity roles. Athletes should work towards becoming impact players on the high school team. Sophomore spring is also when many players start compiling **game footage** for highlights. Remind them to get film (hire a videographer or have parents record games, especially if coaches aren't already).
- **Club and Camps:** After sophomore year, players should ramp up exposure:
 - Play summer tournaments with club; this is a critical evaluation period as college coaches begin tracking the Class of **2026 (for example)** the summer before junior year.
 - **June 15 after sophomore year** is when D2 coaches can initiate contact and when off-campus contact for D3 can begin. It's also when many college-run

prospect camps occur. Strongly encourage players to attend **prospect days** at a few colleges that match their level and interest. This gets them on coaches' radars.

- **Begin Outreach:** Sophomore spring or summer is a good time to **send introduction emails** to college coaches. By now, players have some HS experience and maybe a preliminary highlight video. They can email coaches of D2, D3, NAIA (who can respond) and D1 (who cannot respond yet, but will note it). Include graduation year (so coaches know what class they are), basic info, and that highlight link. Keep it short and respectful.
- **Recruiting Questionnaires:** Fill out **online recruiting questionnaires** on college athletic sites for any school of interest. This puts the player in their database (which coaches use to find names/contact info).
- **NCAA/NAIA Registration:** If a player is very serious D1/D2, he can create an NCAA Eligibility Center account (Certification Account) now, though it's fine to wait until junior year. NAIA-bound students might hold off registering until junior year. However, no harm in doing these early aside from the fees.
- **Evaluate Level:** By end of sophomore year, have a candid talk with the player and assess the recruiting traction so far. Did any D1 coaches notice him at summer events (even if they can't talk, sometimes club coaches get feedback)? Is he dominating at high school or just average? Use this to adjust target division levels. It's the time to stay realistic: as one recruiting guide says, "provide an honest assessment... not everyone will play at the next level". Find the right level by this point so junior year efforts are aimed correctly.

Junior Year (11th Grade)

This is the pivotal year for recruiting.

- **Fall (Junior Year Start):**
 - **Finalize School List:** By early junior year, players should have a well-researched list of target colleges in several categories: "reach" (top choice programs where it might be tough to get recruited), "match," and "safety" (including some where they are confident of admission and could play, like solid D3s or NAIA). Ensure a mix of division levels unless the player is clearly a top D1 prospect.
 - **Update Highlight Video:** Create a **junior year highlight** reel using sophomore spring and summer footage (and fall ball if available). Make sure it reflects current ability. This should be ready to share by September 1 (for D1 timing) or

earlier for D2/D3 outreach.

- **Initial Coach Contacts: September 1 of junior year** – for D1 prospects, mark this date. As described in the D1 plan, this is when communication can really take off. Athletes should email coaches (even if previously emailed as a sophomore) to reiterate interest and provide new info (like “here are my first two games’ highlights from this fall” or updated GPA). They should respond promptly to any incoming coach communications. For D2/D3, coaches may already be talking; keep the conversations moving.
 - **Schedule Unofficial Visits:** Try to visit some campuses in the fall or winter. If possible, arrange to meet coaches or watch a college fall scrimmage. Many juniors do unofficial visits on long weekends or over holiday breaks. A face-to-face meeting (even unofficial) can significantly boost a player’s recruiting stock.
- **Winter of Junior Year:**
 - **Register with Eligibility Centers:** If not done, **register with the NCAA Eligibility Center** (required for D1/D2). Also register with **NAIA PlayNAIA** if NAIA is an option. Submit transcripts and test scores as available.
 - **SAT/ACT Exams:** Take the SAT and/or ACT in the winter or spring of junior year. Even test-optional colleges might use scores for placement or merit aid, and a strong score can only help. If the first attempt isn’t great, plan for a retake in spring.
 - **Continued Outreach:** Over the winter, send a mid-year update to coaches: first semester grades (showing academic progress), any winter league or training improvements, and reaffirm interest. This is also a good time to ask coaches about their **recruiting timeline**: e.g., will they have spots open after summer, do they invite recruits to campus in spring, etc. It signals seriousness.
- **Spring (Junior Lacrosse Season):**
 - **Perform and Film:** Junior spring is often when players truly prove themselves. They should strive for All-Conference/All-State caliber seasons if possible. Ensure games are filmed – both for senior highlights and because some coaches might request full-game footage to evaluate off-ball play and consistency.
 - **Communicate with Coaches:** As the HS season progresses, have players send notable updates (e.g., “Coach, we won our rivalry game and I had 4 goals, here’s a highlight clip”). Also, coaches might start discussing where the player ranks on their list. D1 coaches could mention the possibility of an offer over the summer if things go well; D3 coaches might talk about admissions prereads. Prepare

players to answer questions like, “If we were to support your application, would you commit?” Make sure they are honest and not stringing along schools they wouldn’t attend.

- **Plan Summer Visits/Camps:** By late spring, arrange which prospect camps or **official visits** (for D2, since they can start after June 15) the player will do in the summer. Also block out time for showcases like Nike Blue Chip, Under Armour events, or others if he’s invited. If the player is uncommitted, the summer after junior year will be **the last big showcase window**.
- **Summer after Junior Year:**
 - **Peak Recruiting Showcase:** This summer is critical. Players should attend high-profile tournaments with their club and likely receive the most coach attention now. It’s also the time many **offers are made**: D1 programs fill remaining spots, D2 offers go out, D3 coaches line up their ED candidates.
 - **Official Visits:** D1 official visits can now happen (after August 1 before senior year), so some players will go on official visits in August. D2 official visits are allowed earlier (June/July after junior year), so take advantage if invited.
 - **Decision Point:** By end of summer, ideally the player has one or more offers or supported slots. Early in senior fall, he may commit verbally. As a coach, help him weigh choices: scholarship vs academics, location, coach rapport, etc. If no solid options yet, reassure him – there is still senior year, especially for D3/NAIA or walk-on opportunities. Formulate a plan to target new schools if needed (maybe ones that had late roster openings).

Senior Year (12th Grade)

- **Fall (Senior Year Start):**
 - **Finalize Applications:** This is application season. For any school the player is still pursuing, he must apply either Early or Regular decision. **If he has a firm commitment:** follow the college coach’s guidance – many will have athletes apply ED or EA (early action) to expedite admission. If he’s signing an NLI (for D1/D2 scholarship), coordinate that for November.
 - **Continued Recruiting if Uncommitted:** If the player is still uncommitted, senior fall is crunch time. **D1:** Most D1 spots are gone, but occasionally injuries/deferrals create an opening – your player can inquire with coaches of programs he had been in contact with to see if they still need anyone (especially if he’s improved dramatically as a senior). **D2/D3:** Many of these coaches are

wrapping up recruiting now. The player should attend any fall prospect days offered to seniors or do last unofficial visits. **NAIA/JUCO:** ramp up contact here as a fallback (they will be most open in spring, but start early).

- **Update Senior Highlights:** As early as mid-season, create a short highlight of senior play, especially if it's significantly better than junior year. Send this to any target schools immediately – it might tip the scales for a coach on the fence.
- **Team Leadership & Legacy:** Remind the player that being a senior leader on his HS team is also important. College coaches love captains and those who show leadership, so embracing that role (if applicable) and finishing high school career strongly (on and off field) is key.

- **Winter:**

- **Regular Decision Applications:** Ensure all applications are submitted by deadlines (typically Jan). Even if verbally committed, the player must get admitted. Continue to get good grades – admission offers are conditional on maintaining academic performance. Also, Eligibility Center will require a final transcript at year's end, so don't succumb to "senioritis."
- **Backup Plans:** Around winter, identify if any plans have fallen through. For instance, if a D1 school had interest but no scholarship, would the player walk on? If nothing has worked out, consider a post-grad year or junior college as options (not common in lacrosse but possible). However, with NAIA and hundreds of D3 teams, almost every determined player can find *somewhere* to play. You may need to help the student market himself to a wider range of schools at this stage – perhaps contacting teams that weren't originally on his list but could use an extra player.

- **Spring (Senior Season):**

- **Enjoy the Final High School Season:** Encourage the player to savor this time. It can actually help recruiting too – a stellar senior season might catch a late interest. There are cases of D3 or D2 coaches picking up a star senior in April who hadn't committed. So keep filming games and be ready to send full-game footage if requested.
- **Finalize Decisions:** By April, most college admissions come through. If the player was a supported recruit, he should ideally have an acceptance in hand (and likely already committed). If multiple acceptances, he must choose by May 1. Engage with the college coaches of the schools he got into to see if that spot is truly secure (if he wasn't a top recruit, some D3 programs have walk-on

tryouts, etc. – make sure he knows where he stands).

- **Signing and Celebrating:** If not already signed, D2 (and any late D1) NLI's can be signed in April (late signing period). Even D3/NAIA will often have celebratory signing events (symbolic, since no NLI). Celebrate your athlete's accomplishment in front of the team/school – it's a big deal and will motivate younger players.
- **Summer after Senior Year:**
 - **Prepare for College Lacrosse:** The work isn't over. Encourage the player to follow any summer workout packet from his college coach diligently. Also, finalize Eligibility Center tasks: send final transcripts to NCAA/NAIA to get the "Final Qualifier" certification.
 - **Transition:** Remind him that the coach who recruited him will now expect him to show up to campus in shape and ready. It's a transition, so maybe set up some shooting sessions or weight training over the summer to keep him sharp. But also let him enjoy a brief break – he earned it.

By following these year-by-year steps, you'll help each player stay on schedule. Adjust as needed for individual circumstances (e.g. a late-starting player might compress sophomore/junior steps into one year). The key is **organization and proactivity every year** – do not wait until senior year to start!

Academic Eligibility and Requirements by Division

Academic eligibility is a cornerstone of the recruiting process. Every coach should ensure their players meet the academic standards for their target divisions. Below is a breakdown of the requirements for NCAA Divisions I, II, III and NAIA:

- **NCAA Division I Academic Requirements:** To play D1 as a freshman, a student must:
 - Complete **16 NCAA-approved core courses** in high school (4 English, 3 math at Algebra 1 level or higher, 2 science (1 lab), 2 social science, 1 extra English/Math/Science, and 4 additional from either those or foreign language/religion/philosophy).
 - **10 of the core courses must be completed before senior year**, and 7 of those 10 must be in English, math, or science ("10/7" rule). Once senior year starts, those 10 are locked in.
 - Earn a minimum **core-course GPA of 2.3** on a 4.0 scale. NCAA uses a weighted scale for honors/AP, but generally 2.300 in core classes is the cut-off for

qualifiers.

- **SAT/ACT:** Currently, the NCAA does not require a test score for eligibility (they removed the mandate in 2020). However, many D1 colleges may still require or consider test scores for admission and merit aid. It's strongly recommended to have an SAT/ACT on record that meets your college's standards.
- Graduate high school and receive final amateurism certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- **Remember:** meeting the NCAA minimum (2.3 GPA) might not get a player into a highly selective university – he must also meet the school's admissions criteria if those are higher. Coaches can help to an extent, but academics matter greatly (most D1 lacrosse programs are at schools known for strong academics).

- **NCAA Division II Academic Requirements:**

- Also needs **16 core courses** (with a slightly different distribution: e.g., only 3 English and 2 math required, but 4 additional instead of 4 extra in any area).
- Minimum **core GPA of 2.2** is required for competition in D2.
- SAT/ACT not required by Eligibility Center, but certain D2 colleges might use them. (NCAA used to have a sliding scale for test scores and GPA; as of recent rules, if 2.2 GPA is met, no test is needed for NCAA. But <2.2 could be an academic redshirt situation if test is high – details can be found in NCAA materials if needed.)
- Must graduate high school and get amateurism certification, same process as D1.
- In short, D2 is a tad more lenient academically, but practically a recruit should aim for much higher than 2.2 to ensure college success and to attract coaches (who prefer players who can handle college coursework).

- **NCAA Division III Academic Requirements:**

- **No NCAA-imposed core course or GPA minimum** for D3. D3 schools set their own academic standards for admission. There is also no NCAA Eligibility Center registration required for D3 – though a student can create a free Profile on the NCAA site if unsure of division and later upgrade to certification if needed.
- Generally, if a player can get accepted to the D3 college, he can play (assuming he's an amateur). However, note that some D3 conferences (like NESCAC) have

their own guidelines for coaches on what academic credentials recruits should have (since they value academics strongly). Usually, D3 recruits at top academic schools need to have strong GPA and often test scores roughly in range of the student body (e.g., mid- to high-20s ACT or 1200+ SAT, depending on school).

- **Academic aid:** Over 80% of D3 athletes receive some form of non-athletic scholarship or aid – so good grades and scores can help land merit scholarships which make a D3 option affordable.
- As a coach, you need to know the academic competitiveness of various D3 schools and guide players realistically (e.g., a 2.5 GPA kid is not getting into an elite liberal arts college, but might get into a less selective D3).

- **NAIA Academic Requirements:**

- NAIA uses a simpler criterion for freshman eligibility: as mentioned, an entering freshman must **meet at least two of the following three**:
 1. **Test Score:** 18 ACT **or** 970 SAT (Evidence-Based Reading & Writing + Math).
 2. **High School GPA:** 2.0 out of 4.0 (overall).
 3. **Class Rank:** Graduate in the top 50% of high school class.
- *OR* if the student has a high school GPA ≥ 2.3 , that alone suffices (this is a relatively new tweak NAIA added to emphasize GPA).
- These are the NAIA eligibility thresholds; individual schools might have higher admission standards, so again check the specific college. But many NAIA schools are open-enrollment or have modest admission requirements, making NAIA a viable path for students who might not qualify NCAA initially.
- Students must register with the **NAIA Eligibility Center** (PlayNAIA) and send their test scores and transcripts. The NAIA will determine eligibility. Also, like NCAA, they must be an amateur (no professional contracts, etc., before college).
- NAIA also allows some leeway: for example, if a player doesn't meet the freshman criteria, he can become eligible by achieving certain college credit milestones (but that would be later – essentially a non-qualifier freshman can regain eligibility as a sophomore if he passes enough credits). As a coach, hopefully you won't need this, as you'll help your players qualify right away.

- **Junior College (NJCAA) Note:** While the question didn't explicitly ask, occasionally a student might go to a junior college (JuCo) for lacrosse. NJCAA eligibility simply requires a high school diploma or GED. If you have a student who can't meet NCAA/NAIA requirements, a JuCo for 1-2 years can be a path to then transfer to a four-year program. Some strong JuCo programs exist (mostly in New York for lacrosse). Keep this in mind if grades are an issue.

Summary of Academic Advice: Reinforce to players and parents that **good grades vastly expand recruiting options**. A lacrosse recruit with a 3.5 GPA and 28 ACT will find it much easier to be recruited (and to get admitted and possibly secure academic scholarship money) than one with a 2.5 GPA. For example, a coach might love a player but if the admissions office rejects the kid, there's nothing that can be done in D3 and limited help in D1/D2. Conversely, a high-achieving student may get interest from coaches at prestigious universities who need academic qualifiers. Always have athletes strive to **exceed the minimum requirements**, not just meet them. It not only safeguards eligibility but also shows coaches a student-athlete will handle the college workload. As the NCSA guide notes, "75% of student-athletes meet NCAA academic minimums" – so to stand out, be above average. Emphasize taking school seriously right from freshman year; it's tough to fix a low GPA later. Use the **NCAA core course worksheet** and tracking tools with your students to ensure they stay on target.

Finally, **monitor social and behavioral "eligibility" too** – no guide would be complete without noting that disciplinary issues or negative reputation can derail recruiting even if grades are fine. Impress upon your team the importance of good character, as coaches do weigh recommendations and conduct.

Contacting College Coaches: Email Templates and Communication Guidelines

Reaching out to college coaches is a critical skill in recruitment. High school coaches should teach their players **how to craft a proper introductory email and maintain communication**. Below is guidance on what to include, as well as a **template email** that players can customize for their outreach.

General Email Tips:

- The email should be **concise, informative, and personalized** to each school. Coaches receive tons of emails – a player needs to quickly show who he is and why he's interested in *their* program.
- **Subject Line:** Include key info like **Grad Year, Position, Name, and School**. For example:
 Subject: 2025 Attack – John Smith (Lincoln HS, NY) – Interest in

[College Name] Lacrosse

This helps a coach immediately see the class and position of the recruit.

- **Address Properly:** Start with “Dear Coach [Last Name],”. Use the head coach’s name or recruiting coordinator’s if known (and CC others). Double-check spelling of names and school.
- **Personalize the Intro:** In the first sentence or two, the player should mention *why* he’s interested in that college/program. Coaches can sense a generic form letter – a short authentic line makes a difference (e.g., “I’m very interested in [College] because I plan to study biology and I know your team has a great track record in the conference.”).
- **Key Player Info:** The body should then cover the player’s vital details in a few bullet-point style lines or a brief paragraph:
 - **Who:** Name, hometown, high school, club team.
 - **What:** Position(s), height/weight (especially if notable), and key lacrosse stats or honors (e.g., “All-State Honorable Mention, 60% faceoff win rate”).
 - **Academics:** GPA (unweighted or core), class rank if top percent, and test scores if available and strong. Academic honors can be mentioned if significant.
 - **Video/Profile Links:** A direct link to the highlight video (YouTube/Vimeo) and any online profile. Also mention if a full game film is available on request.
 - **Schedule/Upcoming Events:** List upcoming tournaments, showcases, or games *with dates and locations* if you want to invite the coach to watch. Or if not, mention you’d love to have them see you play and can send a schedule.
 - **Coach Contacts:** It’s helpful to include contact info for your high school and/or club coach. College coaches often reach out to those coaches to ask about a recruit. Provide name, position (e.g., “High School Coach”), phone, and email for each.
- **The Ask/Next Step:** Conclude with a polite request or next step. For instance: “I’d welcome the chance to talk with you about how I might fit into your program – I’ll be reaching out by phone next week” or “Would it be possible to set up a visit to campus?”.
- **Professional Closing:** Thank the coach for their time and use a proper sign-off (“Sincerely, John Smith”). Include the player’s own contact info below their name (phone number, email) so the coach can easily find it.

Avoid: Typos, overly long paragraphs (coaches skim), bragging without context, or having a parent write the email (coaches want to hear from the athlete). The tone should be confident but humble and eager.

Now, here is a **sample email template** that incorporates the above elements. Players should customize each section in **[brackets]** for their information and the specific school:

Subject: 2026 Midfielder – [Player Name], [High School] – Interest in [College Name] Lacrosse

Dear Coach [Last Name],

My name is [Player Name] and I am a junior (Class of 2026) midfielder at [High School] in [City, State]. I am very interested in [College Name] both for its [academic program or feature] and the opportunity to play for your lacrosse team.

****Athletics:****

- Position: [Primary Position] (Starter on varsity since sophomore year)
- Stats/Honors: [e.g. 30 goals, 20 assists as a junior; All-Conference selection]
- Club Team: [Club Name] – Summer 2024 schedule includes [Tournament A on Date, Tournament B on Date].

****Academics:****

- GPA: [Unweighted GPA]. SAT: [Score] (if taken).
- Intended Major: [If known, e.g. Business/Economics].
- Academic Honors: [e.g. National Honor Society, AP Scholar] (if relevant).

****Video:****

- Highlight Video: [YouTube link] (3:30 mins, from summer 2024 and junior season)
- Full Game Film: Available upon request (I can provide a link).

****References:****

- High School Coach: [Name], [Email], [Phone].
- Club Coach: [Name], [Email], [Phone].

I recently filled out the recruiting questionnaire on your website as well:contentReference[oaicite:143]{index=143}. I will also be at [College's] prospect day on [Date] (if planning a visit/prospect camp) and would love to meet you there.

Thank you very much for your time. [College Name] is one of my top choices, and I'm excited about the possibility of being part of your program. I would be grateful for any feedback you have on my video or game. I'll also give you a call next week to follow up.

Sincerely,

[Player Name]
[High School, Club Team]
DOB: [MM/DD/YYYY]
Phone: [Player cell number]
Email: [Player email]

This template is just a starting point. The player must adjust the tone and content to fit his personality and the school. For example, if emailing an academically rigorous school, highlighting a high test score or academic achievement in the first lines might grab attention (since those coaches think “can he get in?” first). If the player attended one of the college’s camps, he should mention that (“I really enjoyed Coach Smith’s session at your camp last summer, which confirmed my interest in your program.”).

Follow-Up Emails: If a coach doesn’t respond in a couple of weeks, it’s appropriate for the player to send a **polite follow-up**. As suggested in the Reddit guide, he can briefly restate who he is and that he’s still very interested, and maybe share one new update (like a new achievement or upcoming game). Something like, “Coach, I wanted to reach out again and express my continued interest in [College]. I’ve recently updated my highlight reel with clips from our playoff run – link here. I know you have a busy season, but I would be excited to learn where I might stand as a candidate for your 2026 class. Thank you again for your time.” If still no response, that’s likely a sign of low interest – the player can perhaps try one final time after a major milestone (e.g., state championship or improved test score) but should also move on to other schools. As noted earlier, not every coach will reply; that is normal.

Phone Calls: Coaches might call once it’s allowed, but players can also call coaches (and leave voicemails) at any time. Encourage your players to practice a short intro for calls. When leaving a voicemail: “Hello Coach, this is [Name], a 2025 defenseman from [HS] in Illinois. I’m calling to let you know I’m very interested in [College] and I recently sent you an email with my schedule. I’ll try again later, but you can reach me at 555-1234. Thank you.” Keep it under 20 seconds.

Social Media Contact: Increasingly, coaches may follow or direct message players on Twitter/Instagram once it’s permissible (Sept 1 junior year for D1). Athletes should keep communications professional on those platforms as well – use proper grammar, and don’t say anything in DMs you wouldn’t in an email. It’s fine to use the medium the coach uses (many prefer texting or WhatsApp once a relationship is established, for quick logistical chats).

Communication Log: Advise players to log every email/letter they send and any response. They should also save coaches’ contact info. When a coach responds, they might provide their **cell number** and invite the player to text/call – that’s golden, make sure the player notes it and actually follows up. Also, if a coach gives specific feedback (“work on your left hand” or “I need

to see you in a faster league”), take it seriously and implement it, then later update the coach on progress.

In summary, **effective communication is about clarity, brevity, and respect**. An organized, well-composed email can be a coach’s first impression of a player – it can position the athlete as mature and serious. As a high school coach, you can help by reviewing your players’ emails (catching errors or tone issues) before they send, providing honest references when college coaches inquire, and even by reaching out yourself. College coaches appreciate when high school coaches are involved appropriately. However, let the student-athlete drive the process – colleges want to see the player’s own initiative and ownership of his recruitment.

Creating Effective Highlight Videos

A highlight video is often the make-or-break first evaluation tool in recruiting. College coaches will typically spend only a couple of minutes on an initial watch to decide if a prospect is worth following up on. Here’s how to ensure your players’ highlight videos are impactful:

- **Length and Structure:** Ideal length is about **3–4 minutes**. Coaches are too busy to watch a 10-minute reel. Put the athlete’s **best plays in the first 30 seconds**. Grab attention early with a few impressive clips. It’s okay if the very first clip is your absolute best play of the year. After that, you can show more variety.
- **Clarity – Identify the Player:** This is crucial – coaches won’t hunt in the video to figure out which player is you. Use a simple highlighting technique at the start of each clip: a bright **arrow, circle, or spotlight** on the player for a second or two. Alternatively, freeze the frame and highlight, then resume play. Ensure the player’s jersey number is visible – mention in the title/frame “#12 in white” if needed.
- **Quality of Footage:** Use **game footage against strong competition** (varsity games, top club tournaments). Footage should be reasonably high resolution and **shot from an elevated angle** – sideline parent phone videos where you can’t see spacing are not ideal. If your school can film from the press box or use Hi-Pod cameras, that’s great. Steady footage is important (tripod if possible).
- **Content of Clips:** Showcase a **range of skills**. For an offensive player: include clips of scoring, dodging, feeding, off-ball movement, and riding (defense). For a defensive player: show on-ball stops, takeaways, off-ball positioning, ground ball pickups, and clears. For goalies: show a variety of saves (close, outside shots), as well as outlet passes. Specialists like face-off midfielders should show clamp wins, wing play, and some offense/defense if they stay on. Coaches look for **lacrosse IQ** plays too – a smart assist, a hustle play, or a proper slide on defense demonstrates understanding of the game.

- **Context:** Show enough of each play to appreciate its development. Don't trim the clip so much that the coach can't tell how it unfolded. Typically 5-10 seconds per clip is fine, but ensure it includes the lead-up (e.g., if it's a goal, show the dodge or ball movement before the shot). A wide-angle that shows multiple players is good to have – avoid super zoom where only one player is seen.
- **No fluff:** Avoid slow-motion replays, fancy transitions, or music with inappropriate lyrics. Music in highlight tapes is optional; if used, keep it instrumental or clean. Many coaches mute videos anyway. Definitely **do not include** things like weightlifting footage or 1v0 tricks. If you want to show speed, better to show a game situation where you outrun someone than a 40-yard dash video.
- **Title/Intro Frame:** At the very start, have a title card with the player's name, graduation year, position, high school/club, height/weight, and academic info (GPA/test scores) – basically a quick profile. Also include contact info (player and coach emails/phones) on this frame or at the end. That way, if the video gets shared around a coaching staff, they always have the info handy.
- **Update regularly:** As one parent advised, update the video for each new season. So a recruit might have a sophomore video, a junior video, and then a final senior highlights or specific clips to send. Always label them with season ("Spring 2024 Highlights") so coaches know how recent it is. By senior year, coaches want to see the most up-to-date abilities.
- **Hosting the Video:** YouTube or Vimeo are the standard. Ensure the video is **unlisted or public** (not private), so coaches can view without a login. Double-check the link works before emailing. It's wise to include the link URL in text (not just a hyperlink) in case coaches print the email.
- **Full Game Footage:** Have at least one or two full game videos available (uploaded unlisted on YouTube, for instance). Coaches often will ask for a full game after liking the highlights, to further evaluate consistency and off-ball play. Make sure the player is highlighted or easy to spot (maybe note jersey color/number in description). As a coach, you might coordinate with your team videographer to have a library of games for this purpose.

By creating a strong highlight video, your player maximizes his chance of catching a coach's eye from afar. Remember, coaches might be watching dozens of videos – the ones that stand out are those with clear quality, obvious identification of the recruit, and sequences that display **both athletic ability and smart lacrosse decisions**. You, as a high school coach, can assist by helping select which plays truly show the player's strengths. Sometimes players pick only plays where they score; you might notice a great assist or defensive slide that a college coach would value. Include those!

Also, remind players that highlight videos are not only for field players. Goalies, FOGOs, LSMs – all need them. Tailor it: a face-off specialist's video might show a series of face-off wins in a row (cut quickly between them for a montage), whereas a goalie's might show save after save. In all cases, keep it concise. A good rule: **leave them wanting more** – the goal of a highlight reel is to interest the coach enough to either request a full game or reach out to the player.

Top College Programs in Each Division

It's helpful for a coach to be aware of colleges with strong men's lacrosse programs across divisions, both to guide players' aspirations and to identify where they might fit. Below is a list (not exhaustive) of notable programs in each division. "Strong" can mean historically successful, consistently high-ranking, or known for quality coaching and player development. Keep in mind that the landscape can change year to year, but these are traditionally solid:

- **NCAA Division I: Powerhouse Programs** – The elite of D1 often dominate championships and rankings:
 - **University of Virginia (VA)** – Multiple NCAA titles in recent years, top-tier ACC program.
 - **Duke University (NC)** – Perennial ACC power, known for championship runs (e.g., 2010, 2013, 2014 champs).
 - **Johns Hopkins University (MD)** – Historic program with 44 NCAA tournament appearances and multiple titles; strong academics plus lacrosse.
 - **Syracuse University (NY)** – 10x NCAA champion (though last in 2009), legendary program with fast-paced style.
 - **University of Maryland (MD)** – A Big Ten powerhouse, recent champion (went undefeated in 2022).
 - **Cornell University (NY)** – Ivy League contender, has made championship weekend often (runner-up 2022, champion in 2023).
 - **University of Notre Dame (IN)** – Consistently top-10, finally broke through with NCAA title in 2023.
 - **Yale University (CT)** – Ivy League with national title in 2018, strong recent decade.
 - **Penn State University (PA)** – Has risen to prominence with recent Final Four appearances.

- **Georgetown University (DC)** – Big East champion multiple years, strong program.
- *(Others to note: North Carolina (NC), Denver (CO) – first western team to win NCAA in 2015, Army West Point (NY) – excellent program, Princeton (NJ) – historic Ivy champ, etc.)*
- These programs recruit the best of the best nationally. But many other D1 programs are “strong” in the sense of highly competitive: **Loyola Maryland, Brown, Rutgers, Ohio State, Richmond, Villanova**, etc., all have had ranked seasons. Also, emerging D1 programs (newer teams like Utah, Marquette, etc.) can be great fits for certain players and are building their own legacies.
- **NCAA Division II: Top Programs** – D2 might not get the same spotlight, but the upper echelon teams are very competitive:
 - **Adelphi University (NY)** – The most decorated D2 program with 9 national titles (including 2024). Strong lacrosse tradition.
 - **Limestone University (SC)** – A southern D2 power, multiple-time champion (5 titles, mostly 2000s and 2010s).
 - **Le Moyne College (NY)** – Consistently in the championship mix; known for stifling defense and multiple titles.
 - **Merrimack College (MA)** – Won back-to-back D2 titles in 2018 and 2019, though note Merrimack moved up to D1 recently.
 - **Tampa University (FL)** – An ascending program, won the D2 championship in 2022 (first Sunshine State team to do so).
 - **Mercyhurst University (PA)** – Regular contender, D2 champion in 2011, often Final Four.
 - **Wingate University (NC)** – Has become a top-10 fixture in D2 polls in recent years.
 - **Lenoir-Rhyne University (NC)** – Won the 2023 D2 championship (their first), showing new teams can rise.
 - **Seton Hill University (PA)** – A strong program in the G-MAC conference.

- **Saint Anselm College (NH)** – Up-and-coming NE10 conference team, making tournament appearances.
- *(Others: Mercy College (NY) – 2023 runner-up, Bentley (MA), Rollins (FL), Queens (NC – moved to D1 in 2023), etc.)*
- D2 has a balance of traditional Northeast powers and growing southern programs. When guiding a player, consider the conference competition too: NE-10 (Northeast 10) and SAC (South Atlantic) conferences are among the toughest in D2.
- **NCAA Division III: Top Programs** – D3 is very deep (over 240 teams), but a number of programs distinguish themselves nationally:
 - **Salisbury University (MD)** – The gold standard of D3; 13 national titles (most recently 2023) under Coach Jim Berkman. A D3 dynasty nicknamed the “Sea Gulls.”
 - **Tufts University (MA)** – A NESCAC power that brought a fast-paced style; 5 titles (2010, 2014, 2015, 2022, 2025). Elite academics + top lacrosse.
 - **RIT – Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)** – Back-to-back champions in 2021 and 2022, and a finalist caliber team yearly. Known for a high-octane offense.
 - **Middlebury College (VT)** – Won titles in early 2000s, a NESCAC perennial contender with 3 championships historically.
 - **Hobart College (NY)** – *Historical* D3 juggernaut with 13 titles (mostly in the 70s/80s). (Note: Hobart now plays D1, but their legacy in D3 is huge.)
 - **Cabrini University (PA)** – Won the 2019 championship, breaking through for the Philly-area program.
 - **Wesleyan University (CT)** – NESCAC team that won its first title in 2018, strong program.
 - **Denison University (OH)** – A top Midwest D3 program, often reaching quarterfinals, known for consistent excellence.
 - **Gettysburg College (PA)** – A Centennial Conference power, multiple championship weekend appearances (no title yet, but close).

- **Washington & Lee University (VA)** – Top program in the South (ODAC conference), regularly ranked.
- **York College (PA), Amherst (MA), Ithaca (NY), St. Lawrence (NY), Union (NY)** – all are examples of programs that have been in the top 10 in recent years.
- And many others: D3 has clusters of strong conferences – e.g., the NESCAC (Tufts, Middlebury, Amherst, Wesleyan, Bowdoin), Centennial (Gettysburg, Dickinson, Ursinus), ODAC (W&L, Lynchburg), Liberty League (RIT, Union, Ithaca), etc. As a coach, if a player targets D3, understanding these conference reputations can help match them to the right competitive level.
- **NAIA: Top Programs** – Since NAIA lacrosse is newer, the hierarchy is evolving, but a few teams have made a mark:
 - **Keiser University (FL)** – The dominant NAIA program in recent years, champions of 2023 and 2024 NAIA Invitational and 2025 NAIA Championship. Located in West Palm Beach, attracts talent from the Southeast and beyond.
 - **Reinhardt University (GA)** – Won the NAIA National Invitational multiple times (2017-2019) and always a contender. A strong southern program.
 - **University of the Cumberlands (KY)** – Consistently top 5 NAIA, reached the championship game in 2025 (OT loss).
 - **Concordia University Ann Arbor (MI)** – A rising program in the Midwest, made deep tournament runs.
 - **Indiana Institute of Technology (Indiana Tech)** – Regularly ranked high, with a potent offense.
 - **Lawrence Technological University (MI)** – Another Michigan-based strong NAIA team.
 - **Ottawa University (KS)** – Has emerged in the plains region, well-coached and competitive.
 - **Benedictine College (KS)** – Past NAIA finalist (2016), solid program.
 - **Saint Ambrose University (IA)** and **Madonna University (MI)** – among others that have had Top-10 rankings.
 - NAIA will continue to grow as more schools add lacrosse (and there's talk some NAIA programs might transition to NCAA D2 over time). For now, these listed

ones are the cream of NAIA.

When discussing “strong” programs with your players, it’s important to contextualize: The “best” program for a student might not be the famous championship team, but rather the one where he fits academically, athletically, and socially. For instance, a player could choose a mid-tier D1 like **High Point University (NC)** or **Jacksonville University (FL)** – both have made noise nationally in recent years – because he likes the school environment, over a powerhouse where he might sit on the bench. Or a student might favor **an Ivy League or NESCAC D3** because of the academics, even though the lacrosse is also top-notch.

Encourage players to watch college games of these top programs (many games are on ESPN+ or YouTube). Seeing the level of play helps them understand what “strong program” means and can inspire them to work toward that level.

Finally, compile a resource for your athletes: maybe a spreadsheet of colleges with basic info (division, conference, location, lacrosse ranking, etc.). The Reddit guide’s author even created such spreadsheets for D1, D2, D3 programs – you can do similarly or purchase those resources. Knowing the landscape of 400+ collegiate teams means there are opportunities almost everywhere in the country. Part of your role is to help players discover the less obvious options too (maybe a D3 in the Midwest that they hadn’t heard of but offers exactly what they want to study).

Additional Tips and Insights

To conclude, here are some extra pearls of wisdom gathered from experienced parents, coaches, and the lacrosse community (including the Reddit thread):

- **“Academics First, Lacrosse Second”:** Almost every expert stresses this. Choose a college for the education and fit *first*, and lacrosse second. An education is forever; an athletic career is fleeting. Players should never compromise on the school quality or their desired major just to be on a certain team. As a coach, you can reinforce that the goal is to use lacrosse to get into a great school and have a great four-year experience – not the other way around.
- **Be Realistic and Open-Minded:** It’s great to have stretch goals, but also encourage players to **embrace all levels**. A common refrain: *“Don’t chase the D1 label just for ego.”* There are phenomenal D2 and D3 programs where a player can shine and be truly happy. Similarly, NAIA and JuCo can be smart paths for certain situations. The more open a player is to different possibilities, the higher the chance of finding a perfect match.
- **Organize and Don’t Procrastinate:** The recruitment process can be overwhelming. That’s why the earlier sections on timelines, checklists, and tracking are so critical. Start

early and keep records. A well-organized recruit (who responds to coach emails promptly, meets deadlines, etc.) makes a positive impression on college coaches.

- **Use Your Resources & Network:** As a high school coach, you often have connections or at least the ability to network. Use them to help your players. This could mean calling up a college coach you met at a clinic to put in a word for a player, or reaching out to alumni from your program who played in college to ask for guidance. Additionally, leverage platforms like NCSA, ConnectLAX, or even social media to get your players exposure – but be wary of any paid services that over-promise. Often your own efforts combined with the player's will be sufficient.
- **Club Team Importance:** It was mentioned but to re-emphasize: **club lacrosse is very influential** in recruiting now. One parent noted some coaches care more about club performance than high school. This is mainly due to the club circuit consolidating talent at big tournaments. If possible, help your players get on reputable clubs (or start a competitive summer program if none exists locally). However, not every family can afford travel teams – in such cases, as a coach you might need to proactively reach out to colleges with film and recommendations to make up the difference.
- **Prospect Days vs. Recruiting Showcases:** The feedback from many is that attending a **prospect day at a specific college** can be more impactful than large showcases. At a prospect day, the staff of that college is coaching and watching the player all day, and usually roster spots are on the line. In contrast, at huge showcase events, a player might only get a few glances unless he's already on a coach's list. Advise players to pick a handful of schools they really like and go to those prospect camps (especially summer after sophomore or junior year). Use big showcases more for those not yet on the radar or to get general exposure.
- **Scholarship Reality:** Lacrosse scholarships (in NCAA) are almost always partial. Only 12.6 per D1 team and 10.8 per D2 team spread over perhaps 40 men means full rides are rare. Many recruits get 10%, 20%, maybe 50% if they're a blue-chip. It's important families understand the finances. Sometimes a D3 or NAIA school might end up cheaper through academic aid than a partial D1 offer. Also, as of 2025, NCAA rules might expand scholarships (D1 could offer up to 48 if school budgets allow) – but that will vary by institution. So counsel families not to choose a school *just* for a slightly bigger athletic scholarship; consider the whole package.
- **Parents' Role:** Educate the parents of your athletes about the process. Parents can be allies but also can inadvertently hurt a recruitment by being too pushy or communicating poorly with coaches. Encourage parents to let the *player* take initiative, but also to be supportive by driving them to visits, helping send emails on time (without writing it for them), and being realistic about finances and academics. A unified message from player and parent (and high school coach) that academics are valued and that the player is

coachable and of high character will resonate with college coaches.

- **Handling Offers and Commitments:** When an offer comes, celebrate, but also approach it thoughtfully. Players should not commit on the spot unless 100% sure. They can thank the coach, discuss with family and you, and maybe ask for a week or two to decide (be aware some coaches put time limits). Never advise a player to commit if he's unsure or just to "have something" – decommitting later is frowned upon. On the flip side, once a player verbally commits, he should stop pursuing other options and uphold that commitment. And of course, once an NLI is signed or acceptance letter received, honor it.
- **Coping with Rejection or Silence:** Not hearing back or getting cut from a coach's list is tough on a teenager. Provide perspective: it's not personal; coaches are balancing many factors (team needs, admissions limits, etc.). Encourage the player to use it as motivation to improve and prove people wrong, but also to move forward positively. There is a place for everyone to play – persistence is key. As the Reddit author said, sometimes coaches "ghost" suddenly; it happened to many of us, and it's part of the journey. Focus on the ones who show interest.
- **Practice Interviews/Calls:** We mentioned practice phone calls; similarly, if a player is visiting a school, maybe do a mock interview with you or a counselor. Some colleges (especially high academic D3s) might have admissions interviews or the coach might have an extended conversation to gauge personality. Being able to speak about themselves, their goals, and answer questions like "What can you bring to our team?" or "What are you looking for in a college?" will help them stand out.
- **Use Senior Year Well:** If a player is still uncommitted entering senior year, reassure him that great outcomes are still very possible. We often see senior breakout seasons that lead to late offers or roster spots. Encourage him to play like he still has something to earn (because he does). Sometimes the *last* guy added to a college roster ends up being a star because he had that chip on his shoulder.

In sum, building a **recruitment system** within your high school program involves educating players early, keeping them on track academically and athletically, providing them with resources (templates, checklists, contacts), and fostering a mindset of **proactivity and resilience**. By breaking it down by division and timeline, you can demystify the process for families. Whether a student's path leads to a Division I powerhouse or a small NAIA school, your guidance can make the difference in turning an overwhelming process into a rewarding journey that culminates in the right collegiate home for each player.

Good luck to you and your players in the recruiting process – and enjoy the ride! There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing a student-athlete achieve the dream of playing college lacrosse at a school they love. With this plan and resources, you're well-equipped to coach them not just on the field, but through one of the most important decisions of their young lives.

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