

Atlantic Valley Volleyball Club's Recruiting Time Line

Freshman (9th grade)

Relax and enjoy the game! Not that you should ignore the aspects of recruiting, but at this stage it is important to play the game and not worry about college. That said, a parent should take the time to learn about the process (CBound offers information through its online guide) and ask questions. As a player, you can think a bit about any schools that are obviously candidates. Often these are schools that are near your home, schools where you have siblings who attend, or the schools where a parent attended. For these schools you should make contact. Send an e-mail to the coaches on this short list. In doing so you will establish a relationship with a small set of coaches. This will also give you practice in communicating with coaches. Keep in mind that the coaches cannot contact you. All communication (other than a letter about camp or request for you to complete an information form) will have to come from you.

For all recruiting actions, be persistent yet patient. One of the most difficult aspects of the recruiting process is the unknown. With persistence you will end up with a comfortable situation and decision. Patience will eliminate some of the stress associated with the ups and downs that go with the fluidity of the recruiting process.

- q Settle into the high school environment. Get to work developing good classroom and home study habits. Learn to manage your time.
- q Work hard on the high school team. Try to stay after with the coach to learn new skills or perfect basics.
- q Play the best and most competitive spring/summer volleyball that is available to you. Play with the best teams, at the best tournaments, against the best competition possible.
- q Attend a comprehensive college summer camp.

Sophomore (10th grade)

This is the time for you to start thinking about schools in which you may have an interest. Create a list of schools, which will be your 'working' list. This list should have any school that you might consider attending or has expressed an interest in you. Establish a relationship with coaches through e-mail and phone calls. Keep in mind that the coaches cannot initiate contact with you. However, you or your parents may contact the coaches. E-mail the coaches to express your interest, and to give them your playing schedule. Plan to start a routine communication with the coaches (every few weeks) to update them on your team. Keep in mind that this will often be a one-way communication, as coaches cannot respond to your e-mails. Obviously, if you make a call, you will have the opportunity for a direct communication. However, coaches cannot return your calls, so you will have to keep trying if you get a voicemail. Leaving a brief message can also serve to take care of your marketing efforts.

- q Continue to "hit the books" hard. You've probably heard it before, but it is very true. Your athletic ability means nothing if you can't do the class work! If you can't qualify for college academically, your talent and efforts will be wasted.
- q Meet with your high school guidance counselor -- tell him/her of your desire to play college volleyball. **You want to be "on track" with the NCAA required core courses.**
- q Play as much club volleyball as possible ... the more you play, the more experience that you will get...and the more you should improve.
- q Attend as many college summer camps as you can afford. This gives you a chance to learn new techniques, see different coaching styles and see many campuses. You will begin to find what things are important to you in a future school.
- q **Send out your first contact letters – include your club schedule and your junior year high school schedule. College coaches are not permitted to write back yet except to notify you they received**

your letter and to invite you to their summer camp. But you will get your name out in front of the coaches you want to play for.

- q Plan Visits! Before your senior year, all of these visits are "unofficial." This means that the college cannot pay for any part of the visit. These are done on your own. Call the coach asking to meet with them, an academic advisor, and a professor in the major you care to pursue. Ask if you can attend a practice or match and meet the team afterwards. You will be starting to narrow down your college choices, so be thorough on this visit. You may be asked to make a decision before you will be allowed by the NCAA to take an official visit!

Junior (11th grade)

Set the foundation for your season with strong communication to the coaches you have been in contact with. Reiterate your interest and provide them with your season schedule. Many of you will have had some inquiries. This is a time where you can start narrowing them, although do not close doors completely unless you are absolutely certain there is no interest. While you do not want to 'string along' a school that you do not think you would attend, you also do not want to close a door that you may want to check into at a later time. If you have not made a visit to a school and are able to do so, take a weekend for a personal trip. It is not as valuable as one during the season, but getting in front of coaches in person is always valuable to your recruiting. For those of you who have narrowed your choices, give yourself time to act. Coaches will often want answers as they try to finalize their recruiting. That said, coaches will often give you time if you ask, or if you set a comfortable timeline when they first ask you where you are in the process.

SEPTEMBER 1st – College coaches are permitted to send letters in writing!

- q Ask your high school and club coach to write letters to a few preferred colleges. Include a copy of your fall schedule.
- q Register with the NCAA Initial - Eligibility Clearinghouse (your high school guidance counselor should have these forms).
- q Register for the fall ACT / SAT standardized tests. Most students take these tests at least twice. Try to schedule a winter date that won't conflict with high school or club season. Request that your ACT/SAT test scores be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse (there is a box on the application form that you check for this).
- q Prepare a videotape to be sent out when requested. Ask for help from club coaches, parents, and club teammates.
- q Continue club ball – but be selfish! If college ball is your ultimate goal, you need to play on a team with a lot of exposure. You could be the star on a local team, but if your club only attends a few regional tournaments, the college coaches won't see you! "Play" is the other concern. If you are on the club's number one team, but never play, you won't be noticed. Ask to move to the #2 team where you can compete more often.
- q Focus this summer should be on attending "Select" or "Advanced" or "Elite" camps. In this environment you will be able to gauge yourself against some of the best players, at each camp. The college coaches will be able to do the same.

JULY 1st - Phone contact from college coaches is permissible.

Senior (12th grade)

Most importantly, do not panic even if most of your peers know where they are going. There are opportunities available. You should be aggressive in making sure you communicate to all schools you have had contact with. Make sure to have a solid short list of schools you are interested in (or have approached you). Reiterate interest and provide them with your upcoming schedule. If you are playing in one of the early season 'recruiting' tournaments in February, make sure to let the coaches know. Send a note now and a reminder on the Monday or Tuesday of the week of the event. Until you get something situated, plan to maintain two key actions: 1) Be consistent with your communication to coaches on your short list and 2) Be looking for new options via your research or through any inquiries that are made at events. Consider the opportunities like the PrepVolleyball Unsigned Senior Showcase in Las Vegas. These are particularly good if you are open-minded about where you play.

- q **DO NOT LET UP ACADEMICALLY! It's easy to catch senioritis – but it may cost you your eligibility.**
- q **Review core academic requirements with your guidance counselor. Make sure you are "on track."**
- q Send out your fall schedule to college coaches.
- q The first day of class for your senior year is the first day you may attend an official visit. If you haven't already verbally committed, take those visits ASAP! If you are offered an official visit -- prepare for your visit with a list of questions written down. (You'll be amazed how nervous you will get – and you'll forget what you wanted to ask!) Be prepared for any questions the college may have for you.
- q Early signing period -- dates vary slightly from year to year -- Check on the NCAA website for the current years dates.

You can contact college coaches (by phone) at any time (prior to July after your Junior year they can not call you).

Preparing for a Tournament:

Remember you may email or call a college coach at anytime after the start of your junior year.

Enjoy Yourself and Play Your Game

It is almost impossible for players and parents to ignore the presence of the college coaches. The player and parent will notice that a coach they have been communicating with is present on their court. Then every play is analyzed. (e.g.) I 'shanked' that serve receive, missed that important kill attempt, etc... and the coach will now stop recruiting me. In reality this is rarely the case. Certainly your level of play matters, but what matters more when you are not playing well is how you react.

Of course the coaches will make their assessment of your level and whether they think you will help their program. This is the nature of recruiting. However, it is your general play that will reveal this. In most situations, what is really important is for the player to handle errors in a positive way. In fact, many coaches want to watch how players react when they are not playing well.

When competing in events where the coaches are evaluating, enjoy yourself. Focus on having a positive attitude when you are in the game, on the sideline, or in the huddle. While your level of play will take care of itself, your positive attitude can make a big difference. It may very well set you apart from your peers.

Let The Coaches Know Your Schedule

Be sure to let the coaches know that you are playing. Most coaches have a long list of players they are looking at during a tournament. To see all of them is often difficult. You will help your chances significantly by sending a brief e-mail - the CBound (www.cbound.com) web site has some samples - to let the coach know you will be playing. Write just one or two sentences to inform them that this event is on your schedule. This will help keep your name in their mind, and encourage them to watch one of your matches. Even if the coach may have indicated in an earlier communication that he/she plans to watch you, help make it happen by sending an e-mail four or five days before the event as a reminder that you will be playing.

Follow-up After the Event

After the event, make sure to follow-up with the coaches by sending a brief e-mail. If your parent saw a coach on your court, you can include a 'thanks for watching me' in your e-mail. Again, a brief note is all that is needed, and one that comments on your team's performance (talk about the positives, even if your team did not do as well as you may have hoped). This communication will remind the coach of your interest and help keep your name in their discussions.