



Future Collegiate Panthers and Parent(s),

Congratulations! Getting recruited to play college athletics is a dream many have, but few realize. Never forget that despite the fact that the process can get a bit tedious, there are literally millions of past, present, and future student athletes that wish they were in your position.

I have put together this list based on research and our staff's years in dealing with the recruiting process from multiple perspectives (college athlete, other high school coaches, and talks with friends who are college coaches).

- 1) There are big time athletes and coaches at every level. Many athletes overrate their level at the start of the recruiting process. Just because you have a dream of playing at Alabama doesn't mean you should automatically dismiss Moorhead State at the start of the process.
- 2) Getting a form letter, camp invitation, or Social Media follow from a school does not qualify as getting "recruited". The recruiting process starts when you have actual communication with a coach from that school. Football programs (especially the larger ones) have huge recruiting budgets, send out hundreds of form letters, and follow hundreds of athletes Social Media every year.
- 3) Keep our staff posted on any developments in your recruiting process. These include, but are not limited to, who's giving you the most attention, who's been crossed off your list, etc. If you are interested in playing at a higher level, we will be having many conversations about you with college coaches, so in order for us to do the best possible job for you, we need to have up to date information.
- 4) Your film is your resume. College coaches (at least the good ones) don't care about stats. High school stats are irrelevant to someone who is recruiting players from schools that as big as Eden Prairie and as small as Spring Valley. Some coaches will prefer to see your highlight video and some will prefer game film. They will also be watching you on our opponents' recruits video. The best way to increase your value is to play well for the Panthers. We can watch your highlight video with you if you want and make recommendations about how to present yourself in the best possible way. Make sure your Hudl profile has accurate contact information.
- 5) A significant step in the recruiting process is if/when you get "offered" by a school. This means you are being offered a full or partial scholarship. Let us know when this happens, and we can help you ask the right questions afterward.
- 6) Division I Schools (University of Minnesota, Wyoming, etc.) only give full ride scholarships in football. Division I AA schools (North Dakota State, Northern Illinois) MAY give partials but for the most part, most often give full ride scholarships. Division II Schools (Mankato, St. Cloud, etc.) almost exclusively give partial scholarships. Division III Schools (Gustavus, St. John's, UW Stout etc.) do not give athletic scholarships. NAIA schools are usually smaller but have much more flexibility to offer scholarships. Do not count them out because they are small or you have not heard of them. Many have very good programs and provide excellent educations.
- 7) It is important to consider how the financial parts play together. An example- Getting a scholarship from Winona (DII) for \$1000 to play football with a final cost to your family of \$17,000 per year may not be as good a deal as playing at UWRF (DIII) where they can't offer scholarships but your family's final cost is \$14,500 due to grants or subsidies. It is important to consider the most important part of your experience- **YOUR EDUCATION!** Plan to go to a school where they offer the programs you are interested in. You are a **STUDENT-athlete**.

8) Do not base your decision to attend based solely on a coach, facilities or on the past success of the football program. Coaches move from school to school. The coach may be gone from there the following year. Facilities are nice but only a tiny piece of the enjoyment of playing the game you love. You and your recruiting class may be the spark that changes an average program. Your decision should be based on where you can get the degree you want, where you enjoy the school, and where you feel comfortable with your teammates and classmates.

9) If you know you have no intention of going to a school, let their coach(es) know! They have heard “no” before and they are recruiting many other players as well, so even if they are disappointed, they will appreciate your honesty. They are busy and they don’t want to waste their time talking to someone that is not interested.

10) Be careful who you give your cell number to. Some college coaches are required to make a certain number of phone calls each week. The recruiting process always starts out fun, but talking to coaches night after night can become tiresome. CHECK YOUR SCHOOL E-MAIL. This is one of the e-mail address we give to recruiters. Just because you don’t use e-mail, doesn’t mean college coaches don’t use it.

11) Make sure your Social Media and voicemail message is set up and used in a professional manner. Coaches will make assumptions about you based on these things. This may seem unfair, but it is reality. Be careful what you put out there. Your audience is likely to be far bigger than you think.

12) If a school you are set on attending has a summer camp, you should try to attend. This will give their coaches a chance to get to know you and you a chance to know them. Some schools could offer scholarships at the camp. BUT, these camps can be an expensive process, so make sure you choose your camps wisely. Our staff will be happy to help you with this.

13) Be polite and courteous to everyone involved. College coaches change jobs very frequently. This means several things for you:

- The coach that is recruiting you from a school you don’t have high on your list may end up at a school that is. Make sure he has a good impression of you. Also keep in mind that college coaches from various schools talk to each other about recruits all the time. The impression (good or bad) that you make on a coach from a small college might be talking about you with a Gopher coach that evening.
- The coach that recruits you to the school you end up at is unlikely to be there for all 4-5 years that you are there. Don’t base your decision on one coach or one visit. Look at the big picture (academics, the program itself, the city the school is in, etc.)

14) If you feel like a school is being evasive or not giving you direct answers, it’s probably because they are targeting someone else for that particular spot and you are a backup plan.

15) **Be very wary of third party organizations that represent themselves as being able to “get you a scholarship”** or increase your exposure. Many of these organizations exist to make money off of naïve players and parents who are not fully educated about the recruiting process.

16) When it comes time to make your final decision, check with us one last time, then let the lucky school that you have chosen know, followed by the other finalists. Call (don’t text) the coaches of the other school(s) and thank them for recruiting you. We can let the local media know.

This list is far from complete but a start to help you on a challenging process. I have also included many links on our web page to help you and your family save some time. Do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Enjoy the process!

Coach Vik (and the Panther Football Staff)