

EAST RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL GUIDE TO COLLEGE FOOTBALL RECRUITMENT



Updated: February 2023

INTRODUCTION

East Ridge High School (ERHS) football student-athletes have many great options to pursue after they graduate:

- Join the armed services;
- Enroll in a trade school;
- Begin a working career;
- Take a “gap year” and travel, or consider future options;
- Enroll in college as a student; or
- Enroll in college as a football student-athlete

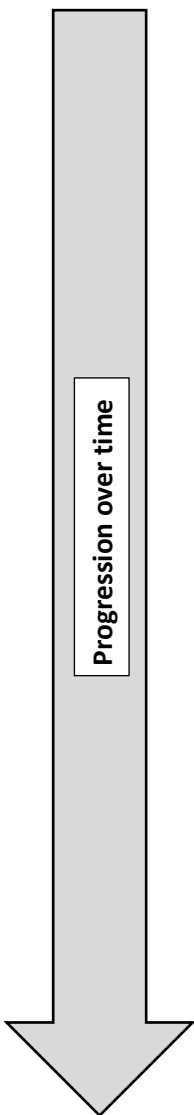
This guide is intended for those ERHS football student-athletes interested in exploring or pursuing playing football in college (and help outline your “pathway to college football”). That pathway may seem confusing, opaque and perhaps even intimidating. This guide should help make the pathway more transparent and identify where you can get answers or help when needed.

The guide isn’t intended to be comprehensive, but instead to provide helpful tips and resources. For example, you will see links throughout the document you can follow for additional information. If you have academic-related questions, your ERHS counselor can help and Coach Fritze will answer football-related questions, and provide guidance to you and your family through the process.

This guide has been written by ERHS parents based on the experiences of ERHS football players who were recruited and played in college, and the ERHS coaches who are heavily involved in player recruitment.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The following list includes tips, suggestions and information designed to help you navigate the college football recruitment process. This can serve as a “checklist” with details for each on the following pages.



- START THE PROCESS EARLY
- PUT IN THE WORK
- SET GOALS AND PLANS
- DETERMINE YOUR TARGET SCHOOLS
- NARROW YOUR TARGET SCHOOLS
- INVOLVE COACH FRITZE
- PREPARE YOUR HIGHLIGHT FILM
- BUILD AND LEVERAGE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE
- VISIT THE CAMPUS, MEET THE COACHES AND PERFORM WELL
- COMMUNICATE WITH COACHES AND RECRUITING STAFFS
- GET HELP GETTING RECRUITED
- REGISTER FOR THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER
- TAKE ALL REQUIRED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES PER NCAA
- CHECK HIGH SCHOOL COURSE REQUIREMENTS OF COLLEGES
- ENJOY THE PROCESS

You may also want to review the NCAA’s own recruiting guide, which includes a timeline by grade that can be found [here](#) (see also p. 12 and the Appendix to this document).

START THE PROCESS EARLY

Players interested in exploring college football can start as early as Freshman year, including following those steps suggested in this guide. Starting early gives you experience and confidence to navigate the process when you are older (Junior or Senior year), and may help you establish yourself as a recruitable student-athlete early on and to gain an advantage over others your age. There is little downside to starting early.

PUT IN THE WORK

This point is obvious, but bears reminding: good football players don't just show up and become recruitable student-athletes based solely on their natural abilities. They instead leverage their natural abilities through hundreds or even thousands of hours of hard work lifting, running, watching film.

Pittsburgh Steeler center J.C. Hassenauer (ERHS Class of 2014) was 5'10" 180 pounds as an East Ridge Freshman, and 6'2" 300 pounds as a senior heading to the University of Alabama. Read the story of J.C.'s hard work in [this article](#).

J.C. Hassenauer – East Ridge High School, Class of 2014



East Ridge High School



University of Alabama



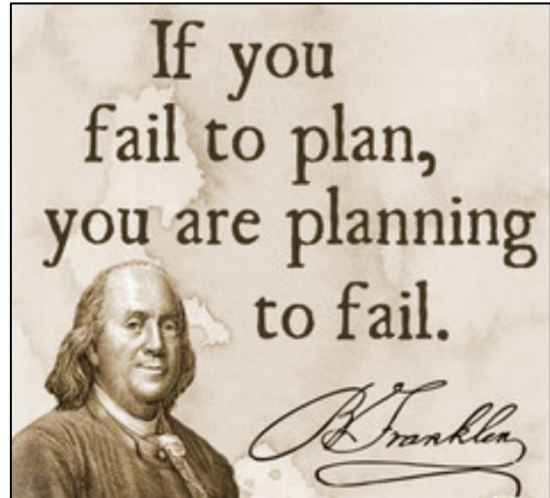
Pittsburgh Steelers

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR RECRUITMENT – SET GOALS AND PLANS

This step may also be obvious, but remember that being recruited will require you to take control of your recruitment, set your goals and make plans to achieve them through your high school career. Taking control of your recruitment – your destiny – will increase your odds of a successful outcome.

Determine: what are your goals?

Develop: what plans are necessary to achieve your goals?



The ERHS football coaches can help players think about and document their goals and the plans necessary to achieve them. Ask a friend to help hold you accountable to your plans. You can also talk to ERHS alumni, college players or former college players you know (several ERHS football alumni are now coaches at ERHS). Ask them to tell the story of their recruitment – always ask, “what do you know now that would have helped you while in high school?”

DETERMINE YOUR TARGET SCHOOLS

The schools where student-athletes eventually enroll may be entirely different than the schools originally envisioned. Your chosen school may be bigger, smaller, further away (or closer to) home. Not everybody gets recruited to play at those schools with cool helmets. So how to select your “target schools” from the nearly one thousand that play college football?

One tool to use is Xello, a free software planning tool offered by the East Ridge High School [counseling office](#) and also [here](#). Input your preferred college criteria in your Xello account (e.g., large, urban colleges with more than 10,000 students and a business school on the East Coast, for example) and you will see a list of colleges matching your interests, in rank order. Using Xello can save hours scouring colleges’ websites to see if they have the attributes you want in a school.

NARROW YOUR TARGET SCHOOLS

Select a reasonable number (say 10-15) of the top schools from your search, and begin researching their football programs. Ask yourself:

- Are they schools that are a good overall fit with your goals and do they have your desired characteristics (academics, social, etc)?
 - *Would these schools be a match even if you weren't playing football?*
- Are they football programs that match your goals?
 - *Compare to your goals. Level of play, competitiveness.*
- Will those teams need players at your position in your graduating year?
 - *Review the roster. Research if others have already committed*
- Does the program have a good reputation?
 - *Review social media, newspapers*
- Do the coaches emphasize academics?
 - *What are the coach's public expectations about grades?*
- Does the team typically recruit high school players at your position, or do they prefer players from the [transfer portal](#)?
 - *Review the roster, look at prior year statistics on the team website*
- When are they offering summer camps?
 - *Camps cannot be offered by the program, per NCAA, but are privately run by the coaches. For example, click [this link](#) for Coach PJ Fleck's camps at the University of Minnesota.*

INVOLVE COACH FRITZE IN YOUR RECRUITMENT

Coach Fritze is available to help players connect with schools and coaches. Players interested in playing college football should: i) meet with Coach to review their list of schools, as he can contact the coaches and recruiters on your behalf, and ii) complete Coach Fritze's survey to give him other important info about you that he can use and share with schools and coaches.

Also, review the list of common questions Coach Fritze is often asked by college coaches ask him about recruitable ERHS players (see Appendix at back of this document).

PREPARE YOUR HIGHLIGHT FILM

Your Raptors End Zone Club (REZC) fees provide access for all players to ERHS game video via Hudl. Make a Hudl highlight film of your best plays; as Coach Fritze notes, on-field performance is critical in the recruiting process. Some players choose to produce two videos each year: one after the first 4 games, the second at end of the season. Place your best plays at the beginning. Use the arrows to highlight yourself so you can be identified at beginning of each play.

You can also insert photos, or jpegs of slides, in your highlight video, so consider including your season statistics, community involvement, GPA, etc. Include at least a few end-zone video views (college coaches indicate they like that perspective). Remember that most college coaches also have Hudl subscriptions and can therefore see all Hudl videos, not just your selected highlights!

Examples of Hudl highlight videos:

- Tanner Zolnosky (QB, Class of 2024) [here](#)
- Grant Ryerse (K/P, Class of 2017) [here](#)
- Jack Mohler (LB, Class of 2019) [here](#)
- Marco Cavallaro (DL, Class of 2019) [here](#)
- Kendall (KJ) Moore (RB, Class of 2020) [here](#)

BUILD AND LEVERAGE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Self-promotion is not easy, but is a necessary and accepted part of the recruitment process. Be careful, however, to remember you are part of a program and team, and that your success is due in part to your teammates. Remember ONE EAST RIDGE when promoting yourself and be appropriate.

Select a social media platform on which to post your Hudl highlights, awards, and videos/pictures that help to tell the story of who you are. Don't forget volunteer work and community service, or academic awards. Twitter is most commonly used. Coaches and school recruiting staffs can access sites, even if they aren't following you, however you may want to tag those coaches/schools accounts you are targeting. Also consider tagging the various ranking services (e.g., @PrepRedZoneMN, etc) any camps you have attended (e.g., @FBUCamp, etc.),

and research and tag the recruiting bloggers who follow the teams you are targeting (e.g., @RyanBurnsMN, etc). Below is a good example of tagging.



VISIT THE CAMPUS, MEET THE COACHES AND PERFORM WELL

After you have narrowed your target schools, prepared and posted your Hudl highlights and updated your profile, you are now ready to plan to visit college campuses, meet coaches and signal that you are a recruitable student-athlete.

One of the best ways to make a good impression on coaches is to attend their summer camps and perform well. Accompany your attendance at a college's camp by planning a campus tour and meeting with an admissions counselor while you are on campus – combining these two activities will allow you to decide if the school is a good fit with your academic and athletic interests. Recommended steps to follow once you decide to visit the campus:

- 1) Email the relevant position coach and recruiting staff, include a link to your Hudl video, include a brief introduction and say, "Hi I am _____ and am interested in your school. I plan to attend your camp on June __ and look forward to meeting you then." Remember, per NCAA rules, they may not be able to reply depending on your age and the time of year.
- 2) Arrange a campus tour for the day before the camp; make an appointment with an admissions counselor and/or academic advisor in your area of interest. Mention your attendance at the camp.
- 3) Arrive early the day of camp and be ready. As soon as the coach or recruiter who you emailed arrives at the camp, walk up and shake their hand and introduce yourself saying, "I am _____ and emailed you my Hudl film with an introduction. I toured campus yesterday and really like the school. Thanks for having me at camp today, and I look forward to performing."

- 4) Perform, do your job and have a good attitude. How you respond to adversity during camp drills will be closely watched. Many camps are video recorded so coaches can see exactly how players prepare and carry themselves through the day. They especially will watch what you do during breaks – do you sit on your phone with a towel over your head, or do you interact with and encourage other players and coaches?
- 5) When camp is completed – regardless of how you performed – shake the coaches’ hands once more and say, “I am _____ and wanted to thank you for having me at camp today. I am interested in your program and look forward to staying in touch.”
- 6) When you return home, send another email thanking them, include your Hudl video again, and indicate you plan to stay in touch.

COMMUNICATE WITH COACHES AND RECRUITING STAFFS

This important area is – to be candid – a confusing, hot mess. There are two basic concepts you need to know:

- 1) You can contact any coach or recruiter at any time, by any means (email, voice mail, Twitter DM, etc).
- 2) However, coaches and recruiters can only contact you, or respond to your outreach, at certain times of the year based on your grade in school, and can only contact you through certain channels. To make matters more confusing, their contact rules will vary based on what level they represent (DI, DII, DIII).

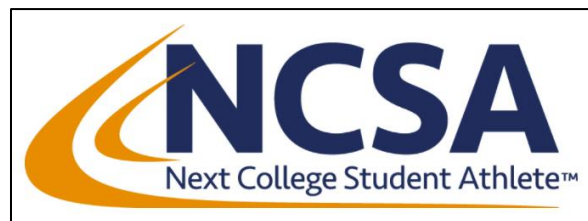
Bottom line is, just because you don’t hear from a school, or hear back from a school, doesn’t mean they don’t like you. It may be because they cannot contact you. Be persistent. Once you reach a certain age (generally second half of Junior year) and time of year, they will contact you if interested.

When you get an offer to play at a school, you may wish to post that news to your preferred social media channel to announce it. Other coaches will see that, and it may draw their attention and create more interest.



GET HELP GETTING RECRUITED

Some players seek out the help of trained professionals to guide them through the recruitment process. Several organizations are in business solely to help consult with families on the recruiting process, and to connect



players and coaches. One of the largest and best-known is [NCSA](#), which offers a variety of services and recruiting tools. For a fee, players can receive tailored consultation and set up a webpage for displaying a profile, highlight videos and other content. For additional fees connections can be made directly with college recruiters. An example of an NCSA profile is Marco Cavallaro (Class of 2019) [here](#).

Other options include:

- College Sports Scholarships [here](#)
- AthNet Sports Recruiting [here](#)

Some players and college coaches believe players should never need to pay someone else to help get recruited, if they make wise use of low-cost tools (e.g., social media, make cold calls to coaches, etc). Coaches will often say they will find players as long as they perform well and take a positive, proactive approach to their recruitment. Regardless, investigating all options is advised.

REGISTER FOR THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER (a.k.a. NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE)

The [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) determines academic eligibility to compete at an NCAA institution. Each player who wishes to play in college needs to create a Certification Account to make official visits to Divisions I and II schools, or to sign a National Letter of Intent. High school students most commonly register prior to their Sophomore year, even if they cannot yet furnish the NCAA all the necessary information required for you to be certified (e.g., ACT/SAT scores, etc.). This information can be added when available during Junior or Senior year. Costs \$100 to create an account.

PLAN TO ENSURE YOU TAKE ALL REQUIRED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES PER NCAA

The NCAA has helpful resources to assure all the required courses are taken to be eligible to play at an NCAA institution. Click [this link](#) to see detailed course requirements by level (e.g., Division I, Division II, etc.). Click [this link](#) to see a simple overview of required courses that must be taken while in high school. If you have further questions, contact the East Ridge High School [counseling office](#) and speak with your designated counselor.

CHECK HIGH SCHOOL COURSE REQUIREMENTS AT THE COLLEGES YOU ARE INTERESTED IN

For example, many colleges require at least 2 years of a foreign language. Highly selective schools (e.g., Northwestern U, Stanford, Ivy League) often require 3 years of foreign language. But some schools may surprise; University of St. Thomas “recommends” 4 years of foreign language. Research the requirements at your target schools and make sure you are on track.

NAME-IMAGE-LIKENESS (NIL), STIPENDS, ALSTON PAYMENTS

Being offered a roster spot at a school, or a partial- or full-ride scholarship, is exhilarating, affirming and can be very rewarding. Whatever a coach may “offer” you to play at their school will be tailored within NCAA limits. Complicating the

picture of what you may be offered are a wide range of possible financial incentives/awards/rewards that you have likely heard about on social media or in the news: NILs (“Name, Image, Likeness), stipends, and Alston Payments. The answer to each can be extensive, but we list below the basics of each, each of which (or none of which) may accompany an offer of a roster spot, or a partial or full-ride scholarship:

- [NIL](#): athletes may be compensated for the use of their name, jersey number, etc. An “NIL Collective” which is organized by boosters, may provide payment as an inducement.
- [Stipends](#): Certain schools (generally D-I) may provide stipends to cover the “cost of attendance” at a school, which supplements a scholarship and offset’s athletes’ inability to hold part-time employment while in school.
- [Alston Payments](#): Schools may also provide limited payment to athletes for academic achievement at a certain level.

ENJOY THE PROCESS

High school football will be a highlight of your life. Don’t let your recruitment overshadow your ability to enjoy life – in other words, keep it in perspective and be realistic. There are plenty of options, and somewhere out there are many schools that would be thrilled to have an accomplished ERHS Raptor on their roster. When you find that match, you can look forward to announcing your commitment and possibly signing a [National Letter of Intent](#).



Class of 2017 National Signing Day



Class of 2022 National Signing Day

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES I COULD MAKE?

There aren't many. Some people may think they are not good enough to aspire to play in college. But what if they work hard, grow and are persistent? Don't rule out pursuing "stretch" schools, but make sure you have alternate schools on your list at lower levels, too.

High school athletes are often afraid of violating NCAA rules during the recruiting process. While that could happen in extreme circumstances – most often around acceptance of illegal inducement payments – remember the burden of following NCAA rules is far higher for coaches and their schools.

APPENDIX

Suggested timeline for important activities:

HIGH SCHOOL TIMELINE

9th GRADE REGISTER



- » *Start planning now!* Take the right courses and earn the best grades possible.
- » Find your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses at eligibilitycenter.org/courselist.
- » Register for a free Profile Page account at eligibilitycenter.org for information on NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.

10th GRADE PLAN



- » If you fall behind academically, ask your counselor for help finding approved courses you can take.
- » If you are being actively recruited by an NCAA school and have a Profile Page account, [transition](#) it to a [Certification account](#).
- » Monitor the task list in your Eligibility Center account for next steps.
- » At the end of the school year, ask your counselor from each high school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.

11th GRADE STUDY



- » Check with your counselor to make sure you are on track to complete the required number of NCAA-approved [core courses](#) and graduate on time with your class.
- » Take the [SAT/ACT](#) and submit your scores to the Eligibility Center using code 9999.*
- » Ensure your sports participation information is correct in your Eligibility Center account.
- » At the end of the school year, ask your counselor from each high school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.

12th GRADE GRADUATE



- » Complete your final NCAA-approved [core courses](#) as you prepare for graduation.
- » Take the [SAT/ACT](#) again, if necessary, and submit your scores to the Eligibility Center using code 9999.*
- » Request your final amateurism certification beginning April 1 (fall enrollees) or Oct. 1 (winter/spring enrollees) in your Eligibility Center account at eligibilitycenter.org.
- » After you graduate, ask your counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.
- » **Reminder:** Only students on an NCAA Division I or II school's [institutional request list](#) will receive a certification.

* More information regarding the impact of COVID-19 and test scores can be found at on.ncaa.com/COVID19_Fall2022.

Source: NCAA. Click [here](#) for full document (see p. 12)

College football teams, size and scholarships:

Division Level	Number of Teams	Total Athletes in Division	Average Team Size	Scholarships Limit Per Team
D1 – FBS	129	15,167	118	85
D1 – FCS	125	13,028	104	63
D2	170	18,889	111	36
D3	248	25,709	104	N/A
NAIA	85	9,102	107	24
JUCO	68	5,160	76	85
CCCAA	68	5,354	79	N/A

Source: NCSA

Questions Coach Fritze most frequently gets from college coaches about ERHS players (in addition to basic information such as height/weight, academics, etc:

- Is he a good kid?
- Is he a hard worker?
- What are his practice habits?
- Is he a good teammate?
- Is he a leader?
- Does he play another varsity sport?
- What will be his best position in college and will that fit our scheme?
- What level of college (FBS, FCS, D2, D3) can he play at? (*Players should ask Coach Fritze what level at which they fit if it is unclear to them.)

*College coaches know if a player is talented by watching film — they will find you if you have talent. Coach Fritze's role is to answer the above questions and fill in any blanks they might have. He will give each college coach an exact analysis about you with no hyperbole.