

Flipturn

The Ever Changing World of College Recruiting for Swimmers

By Lori Payne
Assistant Director of Swimming
American College Connection

College swimming recruiting seems to change every year. Up until a few years ago college coaches recruited high school seniors and a few juniors; however, all of that has changed. We do know that the upper level college coaches start putting a list of recruits together in the 9th grade.

There are 3 main reasons why the recruiting process is starting earlier and becoming much harder to understand. We have surveyed the college coaches over the past 3 years and here is what we have found:

- 1) Nearly 3 years ago the NCAA changed their contact period for recruits to June 15 after their sophomore year.
- 2) Covid has caused schools and coaches to limit their roster size even for women at some schools. Coaches tell us they are taking less Walk-Ons and are offering scholarships much earlier than ever before.
- 3) Last year the NCAA gave every college athlete an extra year of eligibility. This is referred to as the Super Senior. Great idea, but who is going to pay for it? Now the coaches have to decide if they are going to give their current swimmers an extra year of scholarship, or go out and find a recruit.

More and more of the upper level teams are finished with their recruiting up to 2 years in advance.

The Ivy League schools are being forced to get commitments from high school juniors. This past year, 5 of our juniors gave verbal commitments to Ivy League schools. We have never seen this happen before. We have spoken to some of the Ivy League coaches and they all tell us that if they don't go after the fast kids early, they are gone by their senior year.

It is imperative for any recruit wanting an Ivy League school, to know what times they need, when they need to hit those times, and if the coach will be able to offer an admission slot- and even then, it is not a guarantee, (but is a good guarantee).



It is a necessity that kids and parents start the recruiting process as a freshman if they want to swim D-I. They need to get their information in front of the coaches in the 9th grade and really paint a picture of their potential to the coaches.

We know the successful coaches start putting their recruiting list together with 9th graders. Race video will be important to send for the girls and the young boys depending on how much more growing they will do.

Coaches are looking for conference scorers. To get an idea if a coach would be interested in you go to their conference results and look up the 16th place time in prelims for your top 3 events. Check their rosters to see how many returning swimmers are in your events, and find out who they recruited in your events

Freshman

Get information to college coaches.

What to send:

- Year of graduation
- GPA
- A few best times
- Goals for the next shave/taper meet
- Have your coach or someone be able to sell the college coaches on your potential to develop
- Race video is not necessary at this point

Sophomores

Get information to college coaches including race video. D-I and D-II coaches are not allowed to communicate with recruits until June 15 after grade 10. D-III, NAIA and Junior College coaches can start contacting recruits as early as the 9th grade.

- Year of graduation
- GPA
- Area of academic interest if known
- Height and weight
- A few best times
- Goals for the next shave/taper meet
- Sell your own potential. You must get the coaches to have an idea of how fast you will be as a senior in high school and a freshman in college
- Have your coach or someone be able to sell the college coaches on your potential to develop
- Race video is a must as June 15 gets closer. Ask your coach or someone to analyze your video for the college coaches and point out all of the things that you do well
- Keep the coaches updated on your progress
- You must get yourself as high on the coaches' recruiting lists as possible before June 15

Juniors

Get information to college coaches including race video.

- Year of graduation
- GPA, test scores, honors and AP classes
- Area of academic interest if known
- Height and weight
- Wingspan if at least 2" longer than height
- Shoe size
- A few best times
- Goals for the next shave/taper meet
- Sell your own potential. You must get the coaches to have an idea of how fast you will be as a senior in high school and a freshman in college
- Have your coach or someone be able to sell the college coaches on your potential to develop
- Race video is a must. Ask your coach or someone to analyze your video for the college coaches and point out all of the things that you do well
- Keep the coaches updated on your progress

Seniors

We hear from a lot of coaches who won't offer official visits to seniors anymore, as their roster spots and money are gone. Don't give up. Recruiting changes almost daily. The official signing period begins the second Wednesday in November. Many teams will continue to recruit throughout the year.

- Year of graduation
- GPA
- Area of academic interest if known
- Height and weight
- Wingspan if at least 2" longer than height
- Shoe size
- A few best times that will score at conference. Relay splits count
- Goals for the next shave/taper meet
- Sell your own potential. You must get the coaches to have an idea of how fast you will be this year and as a freshman in college
- Have your coach or someone be able to sell the college coaches on your potential to develop
- Race video is a must. Ask your coach or someone to analyze your video for the college coaches and point out all of the things that you do well
- Continue to contact coaches until you get a response. It may take quite a few attempts to get a reply, but don't give up.