

July 1 - And the Recruiting Season Begins

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Relieved of teaching and coaching responsibilities for the summer, college coaches spend much of their time searching for players who fit their needs athletically, socially and academically.

NCAA stipulations prohibit college coaches from contacting rising seniors prior to July 1. Since July 1, hopeful 2007 graduates have been waiting for the phone call that will launch the college recruiting process.

"The first contact with a college coach should be a very upbeat and positive one," said Kelly Kulina, former University of Maryland Associate Head Coach and Recruiting Director. "The last thing you want to do before the recruiting has even begun is to send a negative vibe to the coach," added Kulina.

A strong first impression is key in becoming an actively recruited athlete. Once a player's physical ability has been recognized, his next responsibility is to establish a positive rapport with the coaching staff.

To start, players are advised to express a genuine interest in the school and its baseball program. "Players should be very enthused and excited to hear from any coach it doesn't matter what school," Kulina said. He added that coaches often recognize when their schools are not the players' number-one choice.

Despite the inclination to drill coaches with questions, players should keep conversations light seeking only general information. Players should introduce themselves and inform coaches of any tournaments that they will be playing in during the summer. Players and parents who ask too many specific questions could result in a bad first impression.

Future visits allow recruited student-athletes to discuss with coaches the fine details including roster composition, scholarship opportunities and playing time.

"The first phone call from a coach should be handled as if he was calling you about a job," Kulina said. "For example, you would not ask a potential employer about salary over the phone."

Aspiring college athletes who have yet to be contacted should not be alarmed, as coaches will be attending tournaments, evaluating players and deciding whom they would like to pursue. Thus, many more players can expect to be called in the coming months.

"A very small percentage of players receive phone calls on July 1, maybe the top 100 players in the nation," said Kulina. "Most players will not be contacted until the later part of the summer."

The recruiting process is an ongoing one for both the athlete and the college coach as both work to find an ideal match.

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