

A Prime Time for College Visits

Written by the Baseball Factory Staff

Before the 2006 season tees off, players and parents should take full advantage of any free time they have on their hands as once the season begins there will be few spare moments to do anything but study and play baseball.

Student-athletes interested in pursuing baseball at the next level should recognize January and February as key times to visit schools of interest. College visits give players the opportunity to assess the coach's personality, coaching style and needs and wants. At the same time, players and parents will be able to see the campus and witness college life first-hand.

The Baseball Factory Recruiting Staff outlines the steps players should take to arrange visits with college coaches.

- 1) Gather contact information on about 6 -10 schools which peak your interest.
- 2) Contact each of these coaches by phone. Be sure that the PLAYER not the PARENT is the one making these calls. Coaches are interested in speaking with and getting to know potential players, not their parents. It is as important to the coach as it is to the player, to find a perfect fit. Players, who rely on their parents to write letters, make phone calls and arrange visits, will find it difficult to make a connection with the coaching staff.

When speaking with college coaches:

- 1) Let them know that you are interested in finding out more about their program
- 2) Make them aware you live within a close proximity of their university and would like to schedule a visit at a time when you can watch the team practice.
- 3) Ask the coach if there is a way you could take a campus tour in order to find out more about the school, the academics, social life, etc.
- 4) Ask them if there would be time to meet with anyone from the coaching staff
- 5) Express an interest in meeting a few of the players

When visiting day arrives, make the most of the experience.

• Watch the practice intently and try to picture how you would fit in athletically. Pay close attention to the athletes that play your position and ask yourself how you compare and what you can do to bring yourself to that level. Observe the dynamics of the practice and determine if the coaching style will benefit you in the coming years.

• Meet with someone in the admissions office to learn about the university's academic programs, social atmosphere and campus environment. What is the student to teacher ratio? What majors does the school offer? What academic scholarships/grants are available? When do most students declare their major? Do most students live on or off campus? What is the percentage of students who go home on the weekends? Come up with other questions that are of importance to you. Do not be afraid to make a list.

• Talk with the coaching staff and find out what type of player they are recruiting, who they have signed already, how much scholarship money they have left, if they have an interest in you, have they seen you play (either in person or from a video), etc.

• Talk with the players and ask specific questions about the coaching staff, the school life, the team, the town, etc. Players will give you honest feedback and may help you decide if the college is right for you.

By scheduling several visits you will be able to make comparisons between schools and discover which will be the best fit for you athletically, academically and socially.

College visits are essential for seniors but juniors can benefit from them as well. Keep in mind though that the coaching staff is not permitted to make verbal contact with you until July 1 before your senior year according to NCAA regulations. Juniors can set up visits through the admissions office and still obtain valuable, first-hand information about the schools. If you have not done so already, be sure to take along an introductory package of information (letter of interest, baseball resume etc) with you that you can leave with baseball coaches.

January and February are perfect visitation months because:

- ∴ the college baseball team will be practicing - they have not started playing games, so, the coaching staff (and players) will not be totally stressed out YET!!!!

- ∴ you will be able to see the entire college "scene" - campus life, classes, professors, baseball practice, possibly even a basketball game while you are on campus.

For more information on college visits and other steps in the college recruiting process contact a Baseball Factory representative by emailing info@baseballfactory.com.