Project Title: Ready Reference Guide: A Coach’s Guide to Ethical Recruiting

Brief summary of project: This “Ready Reference Guide” is meant to be a tool for collegiate coaches to have and use during the recruiting process. Throughout this guide are ethical recruiting techniques designed to help coaches better recruit potential student-athletes. Coaches will learn techniques used in Professional Sales and Business Administration along with different coaching practices. This guide also contains a summarized version of the NCAA Division I manual for coaches to refer back to when they have a question about the rules and regulations of NCAA compliance.

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Purpose Statement:

This ready reference guide is a resource available to collegiate football coaches in order for them to better understand and utilize ethical practices and NCAA compliance when recruiting. By having this easy to read guide on proper recruiting practices coaches will have the opportunity to learn new techniques on how to become a more ethical recruiter, and also be able to avoid penalties from the NCAA for recruiting violations.

Throughout this guide we will explain the rules of recruiting in an easy to read way, give helpful tips on a few do’s and don’ts in recruiting, and also provide an example of previous programs’ mistakes and the punishment they received.

Part 1:

In this section of the “ready-reference-guide,” we will discuss a few Do’s and Don’ts regarding ethical recruiting and some techniques you should utilize as a recruiter. This section is meant to be a resource available to look at quickly if you ever find yourself in a recruiting dilemma. Here is a quick look at the Do’s and Don’ts of recruiting:

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If you follow these ten simple Do’s and Don’ts in recruiting, you will keep yourself out of trouble with the NCAA, and establish yourself as a trustworthy recruiter that kids will want to play for. But what do each of these mean? Next we will take a deeper look into these recruiting practices so you will have a better understanding of ethical recruiting.

Don’ts:

Tell recruits it’s all about football:

When you sell a recruit on football alone they will believe that is the most important thing to you, not that you really care about their development as a person. Although football will obviously be a huge part of their lives for the next four or five years, it will not be the only thing. They will need to learn how to balance their time with school, football, and social lives, learn a skill for their degree, and eventually be able to graduate and have a life after football. So, by telling your recruits that it is all about football, they might lose sight of other important things when going to school.
There is a business theory that comes to mind in this type of decision making that the potential student-athlete will be making, it is called the individualism approach theory. In the individualism approach theory states that personal benefit might be the most important factor when making a decision. Or in other words, the person will choose the path that will have the most benefit to them in the long-run. Some young athletes will most likely think that the best decision for them will be to only think about football and put everything into becoming a professional athlete. This is where the coach should come into play, as a recruiter and possibly a future coach of this young person, you need to use this approach to convince student-athletes that the most beneficial decision for them will be to choose the path that will give them success after sports through their education.

**Give ANY cash or gifts to recruits:**

This one is simple: you cannot give money or any other kinds of gifts to the kids you are recruiting! Not only is it unethical to do so, but it is also against the rules of the NCAA. Getting caught giving money or gifts to a recruit will result in severe punishments to you as a coach, to the institution you coach at, and even the recruit. Think of it this way, would you bribe someone if you were in a business setting? No, because it is unethical and also against the law. It shouldn’t be any different when you are recruiting, treat this process the same as you would a business that is your livelihood and don’t do anything illegal that can jeopardize that business.

This “don’t” is based mostly on ethics and doing what is morally correct. The theory that I think of when I think of this type of decision making is the “justice approach.” This theory states that an action that shows unjust favoritism for one person over another is unethical and wrong. In other words, are you treating everyone fairly? Or are you giving one person an extra benefit just because you feel that is the only way to get them to commit? Not only is this practice illegal in the NCAA, but it is morally wrong to treat one recruit better than the others just to get them into your program.

**Recruit to win football games alone:**

Winning football games is important, after all if you don’t win you will probably lose your job. However, winning football games is not the most important part of a successful program. A successful program is one that teaches student-athletes lessons, helps them mature, and most of all, graduate with their degree. So yes, it is important to recruit good football players, but it is just as important to recruit good young men as well. Don’t focus purely on a recruit’s playing ability; rather, focus on his character and how he can be a positive image for your program for the next four or five years.
Sell kids on the wrong reasons:
Many times when you have a student-athlete on a recruiting trip you have them hang out with some of your players on the weekends so they can have a good time. You do want to show your recruits that they will have fun while they are in college, but don’t sell them purely on being a party school. Those are the wrong reasons for a recruit to come to your school. In the long run, selling student-athletes on these reasons will most likely result in negative outcomes that will look bad for both you and the program.

It is always best to be honest with your potential student-athletes, with the good and the bad aspects of playing college football. Yes, you want to sell the recruit on having fun and that playing college football will be the best time of their life, but also consider giving them a glimpse of how hard it is to play college sports. The theory to be used here is called a “realistic job preview.” This business theory states that you should give a potential employee a realistic look into the day-to-day life of what that employee will be doing. By doing this you will allow that recruit to make a more informed decision about what they are going to do, and reduces the risk of the employee becoming disgruntled about not being told the whole truth. The potential student-athlete is the same way, they should be told how difficult the life of a student-athlete is, not just the more glorious aspects of it.

Try to outsmart the NCAA:
Sometimes the NCAA’s rules and regulations can seem a little ridiculous with some of its policies, which makes it hard to stay in compliance with the rules of recruiting, and every once in a while you might make a small mistake. Usually these mistakes can be taken care of by your school’s compliance officer and you will have nothing to worry about. However, if you blatantly break a rule in recruiting and try to hide it or deny it, that is when the NCAA will come down hard on you. There are numerous examples of coaches or boosters trying to outsmart the NCAA and get away with violations they know they are committing (think Southern Methodist University in the 1980’s), and in most cases, the NCAA discovers them, causing harsh punishment on the institution.

This is an extremely important “don’t” on the list as it is usually the one that gets coaches and programs in trouble. Think of it this way, you wouldn’t blatantly break a federal law multiple times and think you weren’t ever going to get caught, so why try it with the rules of the NCAA? It may seem like a good idea to do a little extra when trying to get a big recruit, but in the end it is much better to just follow the rules. Not only is it the ethical thing to do, but it will also save your program from a lot of punishment from the NCAA.
Do’s:
Sell your institution and the education the recruit will receive from it:

The number one goal for the players in your program should be to graduate from the institution with a degree. Too many times you will see coaches in programs who put winning in front of that goal, and that doesn’t help the recruit in their future. Sure, every kid wants to go on and play in the NFL, but in reality that dream only comes true for a very select few; 1.7% of college football players end up making it in the NFL every year (Business Insider). So, as much as you want to tell every recruit that they will be able to make it to the NFL if they come to your program that just isn’t true.

Instead, focus on everything else that the recruit receives by taking a scholarship to play for your program; things like getting a college education, growing up and maturing as a person, and giving themselves a bright future after they hang-up the cleats. Your number one pitch as a salesman (recruiter) should be the education that they will receive by joining your program. If you do it correctly you can turn it into a win-win situation for both you and the recruit, the same way you would as a salesman selling something for a company. The ideal win-win in this situation would be that the recruit will get a first-class education for free (or almost free), get to continue playing the sport that they love, and you will get a great football player and person for your program.

Think about the recruit’s future:
This one goes along with selling education more than selling football. There are players who feel they are only in school for sport and that their athletic ability will be enough for the rest of their lives, but even being a professional athlete doesn’t last forever. As a coach, you are much more to your players than just someone teaching them techniques and strategies to become better players; you are also a mentor, an academic advisor, a nutritionist, a strength coach, and in some cases a father figure and much more. So it is important to remember that you will be a large part of the players’ lives for four or five years. Always remember that the player will have a life after they play for you, so as their coach you need to do what is best for the player and his future.

The best way to recruit a student-athlete to play for you is to show him and his family that you care about him more than just as another player on the team. You have to show the recruit and make him believe that you will be there to support him outside of football while he plays for you, and also after he is done playing the game. This will be one of the biggest decisions of a young man’s life, so keep that in mind while recruiting and you will be a very successful recruiter.
Dr. Edwin A. Locke’s theory on motivation is a great tool to use when talking about a recruit’s future, it is called the goal-setting theory. This theory states that goals should have five main components: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and complexity. The recruit needs to be given clear goals, goals that they fully understand and how to achieve them. They must be challenging but still attainable in a reasonable time-frame. Both you and the recruit should commit to the goals and have an agreement that they will work together to achieve these goals. As the coach, you will need to give feedback on how the recruit is doing on the path to the goal, what they are doing right and what they should improve on as well. Lastly, these goals cannot be so simple that anyone could do it, but should not be so difficult that they would not be able to achieve them. By sitting down and creating goals for the student-athlete you will help them to work towards the brightest possible future outside of sports.

**Sell yourself as a coach:**

Recruiting is just as much sales as it is coaching, you are selling your program and institution and everything that goes along with it. This also includes you as a coach and as a person, so use that when you are recruiting! Show the recruit all you have to offer him like you would if you were selling any other product or service, you have your own set of features and benefits just like anything else.

For example, a salesperson selling a vacuum cleaner might say, “This vacuum is wireless (feature). Therefore it will better allow you to maneuver around your house, reach places you wouldn’t with a standard vacuum, and save on home energy costs (benefits).” The same pitch can be used when recruiting, “I played five years in the NFL at your position (feature), which allowed me to learn the best techniques from top coaches in the nation (benefit).” To recruits coming to your program now sounds a lot better to them because they will get a level of coaching they might not get from another program. You probably didn’t get into coaching thinking you would also be in sales, but again, recruiting is all about selling yourself, the program, and the institution, so make sure to keep those selling skills sharp!

Another way to sell yourself as a coach is to become a “situational leader.” Situational leadership is another business theory, which involves being able to change your leadership style based on the developmental stage of each individual employee. For example, for an employee who is just starting and needs help, you might have to be a leader who tells or directs the employee on what to do. Until that employee has a good understanding of what they are doing, you will have to be there for them to show them how to do their job. Once that employee becomes self-
sufficient, you can change your leadership style and become more of a delegating leader, where you tell the employee what needs to be done and they will know how to do it.

This type of leadership can be very useful in sports as well. When a new freshman comes into the program you will need to be much more of a telling/directing leader where you tell them what to do, when to do it, and how it should be done. By the time that player is a senior, you can become more of a delegating leader, in which you just need to give the player a task and they will get the job done.

Be a “Consequentialist” when determining ethics:
The consequentialist theory is a theory in business to determine whether an action is ethical or not. It states, “If the consequences are good, the action is right; if they are bad, the action is wrong.” Basically, what this means is that when you are trying to determine whether something you are about to do is right or wrong, think about the possible consequences of the action. If you know the action could result in something bad, say, getting the program in trouble for a recruiting violation, then the action is most likely a non-ethical one and you should not do it.

This theory can be used in almost every decision in a person’s life, but it is something that can be very useful in recruiting to determine whether or not the recruiting practices you are using are right or wrong. Just think to yourself, could what I am doing in recruiting hurt the recruit or my program? If the answer is yes, then you should most likely stop that action and change your recruiting process.

Become a mentor for the recruit as soon as the recruiting process begins:
Another business theory that relates to sports is Douglas McGregor’s “Theory X and Theory Y,” which is tied to motivation. He states that you can divide employees (athletes) into two different categories when it comes to motivation, X and Y. In Theory X employees avoid work and dislike responsibility. In order to motivate them you must enforce rules and have set punishments established so that they will do the work. Theory Y states that employees (athletes) enjoy putting in the work when they have the opportunity to take responsibility in the workplace. To motivate these employees you must give them opportunities to be responsible for their own success and motivate themselves.

As a coach, you will always have players who hate to practice and be in the weight room; these would be player X’s. To motivate them you have to be willing to push them, enforce that they practice correctly, and also establish some punishments for if they decide they don’t want to do the work. You will also have players that love to practice and get better whenever they are presented with the opportunity to do so; these are player Y’s. In order to get the most out of these athletes you must give
them as many opportunities as possible to show what they can do, whether that be in the weight room, or during a 1-on-1 in practice. These theories are directly related to coaches and their athletes, and it is the coach’s job to recognize which type of motivation to use early in the recruiting stage. The earlier you can identify which type of player the recruit is, the easier it will be to recruit him and to help him become the best player possible.

Example:
Reggie Bush:

Summary:
Reggie Bush was one of the most sought after recruits in the country coming out of Southern California; he was an extremely talented athlete who could go to almost any school in the country. Naturally, he chose to stay home and play for national powerhouse University of Southern California. He played running back for the Trojans from 2003-2005, where he won the Heisman Trophy and two National Championships. Shortly after declaring for the NFL draft, an investigation into USC’s football program revealed that there were major violations in his recruitment as well as while he was attending the University. The investigation found that boosters were giving money to both Reggie and his family members in order to entice him to attend USC as well as for his play on the field.

Infractions and Punishment:
This investigation found that there was a lack of institutional control, impermissible inducements, extra benefits, and exceeding coaching staff limits. The two main violations as they relate to recruiting were the impermissible inducements and extra benefits. While Reggie was being recruited boosters were also giving he and his family cash gifts in order to convince him to attend USC, which is a major violation of NCAA recruiting rules (NCAA 13.2.1.1). Next, while he attended USC, the cash gifts continued for his play on the field, as well as gifts from agents in order to gain Reggie as a client when he decided to turn pro.

As a result, the NCAA came down hard on both Reggie and the University of Southern California. The NCAA decided that the coaches and athletic administration did not do enough to both prevent and stop these infractions from occurring. The penalties for these infractions included a four-year probation; a two-year football postseason ban; vacated regular and postseason wins; and scholarship reductions. Along with these punishments the University was also forced to discontinue its relationship with several boosters who were involved in giving student-athletes cash gifts.
These punishments are still being felt by the University, and have caused it to suffer in several sports for the last four years. The upcoming football season will be the first in which the football team will have all of its scholarships back. However, as harsh as these punishments were, they were not as bad as the scrutiny and punishment that Reggie had to go through; he had to give back the most prestigious honor in all of college football, the Heisman Trophy.

What should have been done:
The University and the athletics staff could have prevented these violations from occurring mostly by not looking the other way while they were occurring. The argument could be made that they did not know of everything that was going on during the recruiting process, but that would be hard to prove, seeing as coaches who recruit high-caliber players are highly involved in that recruit’s life. The coaches who knew about these infractions should have put a stop to them and not allowed the boosters to provide any of their players with money. They also should have done a better job educating themselves and their players (current and future) about NCAA violations and how they can affect the program.

Future programs will need to make sure they are on top of their coaches to ensure that they are recruiting ethically. If a program finds out a coach or coaches are using unethical recruiting practices, they should come down hard on those coaches as an example that the program will not tolerate conduct that could endanger the program. By showing coaches that they must be ethical when they are recruiting you will set a standard of excellence that will make your program more reputable. In the short run it may seem like a good idea to do something unethical to land a recruit, but in the long run it will only hurt the program and the university.

These violations have caused a huge drop-off for a program that at one time was known to be a national power in almost all sports, and also caused a former student-athlete to return something that he worked his whole life to achieve. As a coach it is your job to do whatever you can to prevent these types of violations from occurring by being educated on the NCAA’s rules for recruiting. Hopefully, this program will be able to recover from these violations and learn from past mistakes to prevent any further violations, and be able to return to a level that they have known for so long.
Part 2:

General Principles of Recruiting and Ethical Conduct:

Principle Governing Recruiting:

“The recruiting process involves a balancing of the interests of prospective student-athletes, their educational institutions and the Association’s member institutions. Recruiting regulations shall be designed to promote equity among other member institutions in their recruiting of prospective student-athletes and to shield them from undue pressures that may interfere with the scholastic or athletics interests of the prospective student-athlete or their educational institutions”. (NCAA 2.1).

In other words, recruiting should be about the interests of the student-athlete first, not your program. This will be one of the student-athletes biggest decisions in their life and you must be there to guide them through that process as well as try to sell them on the positive aspects of your program.

Ethical Conduct Principles:

“The general principle of ethical conduct in the NCAA is to promote honesty and sportsmanship. Individuals employed by a member institution to administer, conduct, or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports”. (NCAA 10.01.1).

A good example of unethical conduct in coaching, and specifically recruiting, would be, “having knowledge of involvement in offering or providing a prospective, or enrolled, student-athlete an improper inducement or extra benefit or improper financial aid”. (NCAA 10.1c). As a coach you know it is illegal to offer your student-athletes extra benefits, and to do so would be acting unethically, so don’t do it!

The general definition of ethics is to act in a way that you feel is the right thing to do based on personal morals. It is no different in regards to ethics in coaching sports, you need to act in a way that you feel is the correct, honest, and most sportsmanship-like way possible. Most likely the reason you got into coaching was to mold young men and coach them the right way, so remember that when you are recruiting!

Disciplinary Action Regarding Unethical Conduct:

“Prospective or enrolled student-athletes found in violation of the provisions of these ethical regulations shall be ineligible for further intercollegiate competition, subject to appeal to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of eligibility. Institutional staff members found in violation of the provisions of these regulations shall be subject to disciplinary or corrective action set forth in Bylaw 19.9, whether such violations occurred at the
certifying institution or during the individual’s previous employment at another member institution”. (NCAA 10.4).

Obviously the disciplinary actions are very severe for the student-athlete and could possibly cause the student-athlete to be ineligible for competition, so it is the responsibility of the coach to help protect their student-athletes from unethical practices and to set an example for them. You are much more than just a coach to many of your student-athletes, you must do everything in your power to protect them and help them succeed for the rest of their life, and you can do so by acting in an ethical way and avoid the consequences of acting unethically.

Certification to Recruit Off Campus:

“Only those coaches who have been certified may contact or evaluate any prospective student-athletes off campus. Certification must occur on an annual basis”. (NCAA 11.5.1).

“Such certification procedures shall be established and administered for its member institutions by the member conferences of the Association or, in the case of independent institution, by the NCAA national office or the conference office that administers the National Letter of Intent for that institution. Such certification procedures shall include a requirement that the coaches shall have passed a standardized national test developed by the NCAA national office covering NCAA recruiting legislation, including Bylaw 13 and other bylaws that relate to the recruitment of prospective student-athletes as a condition for being permitted to engage in off-campus recruiting. Member conferences shall establish the procedures for administering and correcting the test within each conference”. (NCAA 11.5.1.1).

Recruiting off-campus and in other states is extremely important for building a successful program, and in order to do that you must be certified by the proper offices of the NCAA and the conference you are coaching in. So, get this certification done every year to avoid being prohibited to do so. This process is a great way to remind yourself of any new rules or regulations the NCAA has come out with regarding recruiting.

Recruiting:
General Principles:

“The recruitment of a student-athlete by a member institution or any representative of its athletics interests in violation of the Association’s legislation, as acknowledged by the institution or established through the Association’s infractions process, shall result in the student-athlete becoming ineligible to represent that institution in intercollegiate athletics”. (NCAA 13.01.1).

Clearly, it is very important to abide by the recruiting rules of the NCAA when it comes to recruiting. The consequences of violating any policies in recruiting will result in the student-athlete becoming ineligible to play for your school. So be careful in what you do, because you
could go from recruiting a potential star athlete for your program, to losing that athlete all together with one small mistake in recruiting.

Definitions and Applications:

In recruiting, it is very important to have a full understanding of the definitions of the terms used by the NCAA. Sometimes the definitions in the rules of recruiting can be confusing or may mean more than you would think. Because of this you should be sure to study the definitions given in the NCAA manual so you will stay in compliance with the rules. Here are a few important definitions to understand as defined by the NCAA, as well as some simple explanations for a few of the more confusing rules:

- **Contact** – is “any face-to-face encounter between a prospective student-athlete or the prospective student-athlete’s parents, relatives or legal guardians and an institutional staff member or athletics representative during which any dialogue occurs in excess of an exchange of a greeting”. (NCAA 13.02.4).
  
  - Pretty much any time you meet with a prospective student-athlete or his/her parents and you say more than hello, it is considered a contact.

- **Contact Period** – a contact period is “a period of time when it is permissible for authorized athletics department staff members to make in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts and evaluations”. (NCAA 13.02.5).

- **Evaluation Period** – An evaluation period is “a period of time when it is permissible for authorized athletics department staff to be involved in off-campus activities designed to assess the academic qualifications and playing ability of prospective student-athletes. No in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts shall be made with the prospective student-athlete during an evaluation period”. (NCAA 13.02.5).

- **Quiet Period** – A quiet period is “a period of time when it is permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts only on the institution’s campus. No in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts or evaluations may be made during the quiet period”. (NCAA 13.02.5).

- **Dead Period** – A dead period is “a period of time when it is not permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts or evaluations on or off the institution’s campus or to permit official or unofficial visits by prospective student-athletes to the institution’s campus. It remains permissible, however, for an institutional staff member to write or telephone a prospective student-athlete during a dead period”. (NCAA 13.02.5).
  
  - This is an important definition to remember, what it means is that during the dead period the only means of recruiting allowed are through writing or telephone calls to the prospective student-athlete. You may not have the athlete on your campus, or have any face-to-face interactions.
• **Evaluation** – “Any off-campus activity designed to assess the academic qualifications or athletics ability of a prospective student-athlete, including any visit to a prospective student-athlete’s educational institution or the observation of a prospective student-athlete participating in any practice or competition at any site”. (NCAA 13.02.7).
  o An evaluation is pretty much any time you watch the student-athlete participate in their sporting event to try and determine their athletic abilities.
  o There are a few exceptions to this definition that relate to football that are important to understand. First, any evaluation that is done by a coach during the contact period will be considered a contact and not an evaluation. Second, if more than one coach is present for an evaluation then you must count that many evaluation days for that student-athlete. For example, if two coaches go to a game, then you must use two evaluation days for that student-athlete.

• **Prospective Student-Athlete** – “A prospective student-athlete is a student who has started classed for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospective student-athlete if the institution provides such an individual any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students in general”. (NCAA 13.02.12).
  o Once a student-athletes enters the ninth grade they can be considered as a prospective recruit for your program and anything you do to recruit that athlete must fall within the rules laid out by the NCAA.

• **Recruiting** – “Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospective student-athlete or a prospective student-athlete’s relatives by an institutional staff member or by a representative of the institution’s athletics interests for the purpose of securing the prospective student-athlete’s enrollment and ultimate participation in the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program”. (NCAA 13.02.13).
  o Plain and simple, recruiting is anything that you do to sell your program to a potential student-athlete or their family to try and get them to play for you.

• **Representative of Athletics Interests** – this is “an individual, independent agency, corporate entity or other organization who is known by a member of the institution’s executive or athletics administration to: have participated in promoting the athletics program, made financial contributions to the institution, have been requested to assist in the recruiting process, or have provided benefits to the prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.02.14).
  o A representative of athletics interests is what it sounds like, if a person has an interest in the well-being of the athletics program’s success, or
have donated money, then they are considered to be a representative of athletics interests.

• **Telephone Calls** – “All electronically transmitted human voice exchange shall be considered telephone calls”. (NCAA 13.02.15).
  
o This definition was put in by the NCAA to prevent coaches from finding some sort of loophole to get messages out to student-athletes. A telephone call is any call to an athlete through voice or video, for example, a Skype call is still considered a telephone call.

• **Visits** –
  
o **Official Visit** – “An official visit to a member institution by a prospective student-athlete is a visit financed in whole or in part by the member institution”. (NCAA 13.02.16.1).
  
o **Unofficial Visit** – “An unofficial visit to a member institution by a prospective student-athlete is a visit made at the prospective student-athlete’s own expense. The provision of any expenses or entertainment valued at more than $100 by the institution or representatives of its athletics interests shall require the visit to become an official visit”.
  
o This one is pretty simple as well, if the visit will cost the institution over $100 for the prospective student-athlete it must be counted as an official visit.

**Contacts and Evaluations:**

A contact is any face-to-face encounter between a prospective student-athlete and a coach or other institutional staff member regarding recruiting. Basically what this means is that unless you happen to run into the prospective athlete or his/her parents on the street and exchange anything more than a hello, it is considered a contact. Also, you must remember that it is considered a contact when you speak to the prospective student-athlete’s parents or legal guardians and you may lose important face-to-face time with the actual student-athlete by speaking to a relative.

In football, there is an additional rule regarding contacts; “if you make a visit to a prospective student-athlete’s school or other evaluation site you must also count that visit as a contact for that week for that particular student-athlete and any other student-athlete at that particular institution, even if no contact was made with a prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.02.4.1).

This can be another confusing rule by the definition given in the NCAA Manual. What this rule really means is that if there are one or more student-athletes at a school in which you intend to visit you should be sure to actually meet with all of those student-athletes, because even if you don’t see the student-athlete in person it still counts as a contact.
Contactable Individuals:  

It is important to know who you can and cannot contact in terms of recruiting and how you can recruit them. Officially, “you cannot begin recruiting an off-campus recruit until July 1 following the completion of his or her junior year in high school”. (NCAA 13.1.1.1). Now this does not mean that you cannot recruit prospective student-athletes before that date, you just are limited on how you can recruit them. For example, you cannot invite a sophomore in high school to come on an official visit to your campus.

“It is also an NCAA violation to contact a student-athlete who is enrolled in their first year at a two-year college, such as a junior college”. (NCAA 13.1.1.2). To go along with that rule, “it is also impermissible to contact any student-athlete who is currently enrolled in another NCAA or NAIA four-year college institution, without first obtaining permission from that university”. (NCAA 13.1.1.3). The exception to these rules is “if the student-athlete has withdrawn from another university, in this case it is permissible to contact that prospective student-athlete, as long as they have been withdrawn for at least one academic year”. (NCAA 13.1.1.3.2). “However, it is still impermissible to contact a recruit who is withdrawn from school if they are serving an official religious mission, in that case you must not contact that student-athlete for recruitment”. (NCAA 13.1.1.3.2.1)

Permissible Recruiters:

As a general rule there are only certain people within an institution who are allowed to contact prospective student-athletes. “Only authorized institutional staff members who have been certified on an annual basis are allowed to recruit prospective student-athletes”. (NCAA 13.1.2.1). “There are a few exceptions to this rule for people other than authorized institutional staff members to recruit, but only on a limited basis. These people are the following: the admissions program members, a coach who is a prospective student-athletes parent or legal guardian, the spouse of prospective student-athlete’s coach, established family friend/neighbor, spouse of staff member, an interpreter, any unavoidable incidental contact, and any relatives of enrolled student-athletes”. (NCAA 13.1.2.2).

Most of these people are pretty self-explanatory, however it is important to define a few of these people and how they can help. The first one is a coach who is the prospective student-athlete’s parent or legal guardian. “The contact limitations do not apply to a coaching staff member who is the parent or legal guardian of a participant in any activity being observed, provided the attendance by the coaching staff member at such activity does not involve any personal contact with any other participating prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.1.2.2 B). Basically what this means is that if a coach on staff has a kid being recruited, the contact limitations do not exist.

The next exception that needs a little more explaining is the unavoidable incidental contact. “An unavoidable incidental contact made with a prospective student-athlete by representatives of the institution’s athletics interests, provided the contact is not prearranged
by the representative or an athletics department staff member, does not take place on the
grounds of the prospective student-athlete’s educational institution or at the sites of organized
competition and practice involving the prospective student-athlete or the prospective student-
athlete’s team, is not made for the purpose of recruitment of the prospective student-athlete,
and involves only normal civility”. (NCAA 13.1.2.2 G). What this rule means is that if you run
into a prospective student-athlete outside of their school or practice site, and only exchange a
normal greeting, it is not considered contact and is permissible.

“Talent scouts and the use of a talent scout by an athletics interest of an institution is
not allowed in recruiting prospective student-athletes”. (NCAA 13.1.2.8). This means that you
cannot pay a person who offers a recruiting service to recruit a particular prospective student-
athlete for you. This has been done before and it turns into an institution giving the talent scout
money to in-turn give it to the prospective student-athlete to come to their university.

Telephone Calls:

The general rule for the period in which telephone calls can be made is: “calls made to
an individual may not be made before September 1 at the beginning of his or her junior year in
high school”. (NCAA 13.1.3.1). However, there is one exception for football recruiting, which is
that “one telephone call may be made from April 15 through May 31 of the individual’s junior
year in high school”. (NCAA 13.1.3.1.3)

“Once you reach the applicable limit on telephone calls to a prospective student-athlete
for a particular time period, the institution may not initiate an additional telephone call during
the same time period, even if no direct conversation occurs during the additional call”. (NCAA
13.1.3.1.8). What this means is that no matter what you cannot make any additional phone
calls to recruits during one time period, even if the phone call doesn’t lead to a conversation
with the recruit.

“Any violations to the rules regarding telephone calls will fall only on the institution that
made the violations, and not on the prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.1.3.1.9). The
reason for this is because the student-athlete is allowed to make as many calls to coaches as
they would like, so it would not be their fault if a coach messed up and violated one of the
recruiting rules regarding telephone calls.

Exceptions to Telephone Call Rules:

There are a few exceptions to the rules of telephone calls in recruiting which are
important to know, so we will go over a few of them right now. The important exceptions to the
rules that are important to know are: the official-visit exception, and the letter-of-intent signing
date-exception regarding football.

The first exception, the official-visit exception, refers to the rule that “coaches are
allowed to contact a prospective student-athlete via telephone unlimited times in the five days
immediately preceding an official-visit to the institution. Also, if for some reason the official-
visit is canceled in the days preceding the official-visit, the calls made during that time period will not count against the institution”. (NCAA 13.1.3.3.1).

The next exception, the letter-of-intent signing-day exception with regards to football, refers to the rule that “coaches may make unlimited calls to a prospective student-athlete in the 48 hours before and the 48 hours after 7 a.m. on the initial signing date for the National Letter of Intent”. (NCAA 13.1.3.3.2.1).

Permissible Callers:

“All telephone calls made to a prospective student-athlete must be made by the head coach or one or more of the assistant coaches who count toward the numerical limitations. In bowl subdivision football, such telephone calls also may be made by a graduate assistant coach, provided the coach has successfully completed the coaches’ certification examination”. (NCAA 13.1.3.4.1).

“An exception to this rule for football is on the days before a prospective student-athlete commits to the institution. In this case it is permissible for the president of the institution, the athletic director, academic advisors, compliance administrators, or any non-coaching staff members calling in conjunction with an official visit may call the prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.1.3.4.1.1).

These rules may seem very simple, but they are important to remember when recruiting student-athletes. By allowing someone to call a prospective student-athlete who is not supposed to could cost you in recruiting and possibly cause you to lose that recruit. To be on the safe side you should always allow the head coach to call prospective student-athletes or check with him/her and compliance before making a call yourself.

Contacts:

“In football, each institution shall be limited to six in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts per prospective student-athlete at any site and shall include contacts made with the prospective student-athlete’s relatives or legal guardians, but shall not include contacts made during an official visit”. (NCAA 13.1.5.2).

Bowl Games:

“During a dead period, a prospective student-athlete may attend an institution’s bowl game practice session at the bowl site, provided the practice is open to the general public and the prospective student-athlete observes the practice only from an area reserved for that purpose for the general public. No contact between the prospective student-athlete and institutional staff members or representatives of the institution’s athletics interests may occur”. (NCAA 13.1.6.2.4).
Limitations on Number of Evaluations:

“In football, institutional staff members shall be limited to three evaluations during the academic year during which the prospective student-athlete competes or practices on any team. Not more than one evaluation may be used during the fall evaluation period and not more than two evaluations may be used during the April 15 through May 31 evaluation period. An authorized off-campus recruiter may use one evaluation to assess the prospective student-athlete’s academic qualifications during the April 15 through May 31 evaluation period. If an institution’s coaching staff member conducts both an athletics and an academic evaluation of a prospective student-athlete on the same day during the April 15 through May 31 evaluation period, the institution shall be charged with the use of an academic evaluation only and shall be permitted to conduct a second athletics evaluation of the prospective student-athlete on a separate day during the evaluation period”. (NCAA 13.1.7.4).

It is very important to understand the limits on how many evaluations you can make on potential recruits, as well as how to use them. Basically, what this rule is saying is that you have one athletic evaluation during the fall, and two during the spring. However, if you choose to do an academic evaluation on the same day as an athletic evaluation, you will get an extra evaluation in the spring. So remember this rule when you want to get an extra evaluation on a recruit.

All-Star Contests:

“In football, an institutional staff member shall not attend an all-star contest or other activities associated with such a contest (e.g., practice, banquets, coach’s clinics, etc.)”. (NCAA 13.1.7.9.6).

Contacts and Evaluations Conclusion:

Obviously, contacts with recruits and evaluating those recruits make up a majority of the recruiting process. So in order to properly recruit athletes this is an important section in which you should make sure you know back to front. Even a small mistake with one of these rules can cause you to lose a recruit, so stay on the safe side and only contact your recruits when and how you are supposed to.

Offers and Inducements:

Throughout this section of the guide we will be discussing what you can and cannot do in terms of giving gifts to potential recruits. This is usually where programs will get into a lot of trouble with the NCAA because they think it is okay to slide a few shirts or shoes to a recruit without anybody looking. As you will see in this section, that is never the case. In fact, if you want to just skip this section I will tell you right now what you can give away to prospective
student-athletes: nothing! Besides, you should sell the recruit on the integrity of your own character, education, and the principles of the program, not just pay them to come to your school. We will go through these rules in more detail anyway in the next few sections.

**General Regulation:**

“An institution’s staff member or any representative of its athletics interests shall not be involved, directly or indirectly, in making arrangements for or giving or offering to give any financial aid or other benefits to a prospective student-athlete or his or her relatives or friends, other than expressly permitted by the NCAA regulations. Receipt of a benefit by a prospective student-athlete or his or her relatives or friends is not a violation of NCAA legislation if it determined that the same benefit is generally available to the institution’s prospective students or their relatives or friends or to a particular segment of the student body determined on a basis unrelated to athletics ability”. (NCAA 13.2.1).

The preceding paragraph is the NCAA’s general statement on offers and inducements regarding recruiting. Basically, what it is saying is that unless what you are offering to the recruit is available to the general public, and not just to the recruit because he or she is a recruit, you cannot give it to them. That includes money and material gifts to the recruit or any of his or her friends or family.

**Specific Prohibitions:**

“Specifically prohibited financial aid, benefits and arrangements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An employment arrangement for a prospective student-athlete’s relatives;
- Gift of clothing or equipment;
- Co-signing of loans;
- Providing loans to a prospective student-athlete’s relatives or friends;
- Cash or like items;
- Any tangible items, including merchandise;
- Free or reduced-cost services, rentals or purchases of any type;
- Free or reduced-cost housing;
- Use of an institution’s athletics equipment (e.g., for high school all-star game);
- Sponsorship of or arrangement for an awards banquet for high school, preparatory school or two-year-college athletes by an institution, representatives of its athletics interests or its alumni groups or booster clubs; and
- Expenses for academic services (e.g., tutoring, test preparation) to assist in the completion of initial-eligibility or transfer-eligibility requirements or improvement of the prospective student-athlete’s academic profile in conjunction with a waiver request”.

(NCAA 13.2.1.1).
Awards to Prospective Student-Athletes:

“A member institution is limited to providing the following awards to prospective student-athletes:

- Awards to prospective student-athletes for outstanding athletics accomplishments are prohibited, except as provided below;
- Awards to high school, preparatory school or two-year-college athletics teams in the name of the NCAA member institution are prohibited, regardless of the institution’s involvement (or lack thereof) in the administration of the award; and
- Any award presented at regularly scheduled high school, preparatory school and two-year-college athletics contests or matches under the provisions of Bylaw 13.11.3.4 must be limited to $50 but may bear the institution’s name and logo”.

(NCAA 13.2.2).

This is pretty straightforward, as much as you would like to throw a bunch of money at a recruit to convince them to come to your school, you can’t. End of story, so don’t do it! You will get caught and the consequences are much worse than the reward of a single recruit.

Loans to Prospective Student-Athletes:

“Arrangement of educational loans by an institution for a prospective student-athlete shall be permitted, provided the loan is not made prior to the completion of the prospective student-athlete’s senior year in high school. Such loans must be from a regular lending agency and based on a regular repayment schedule”. (NCAA 13.2.4).

Summer Housing for Prospective Student-Athlete:

“An institution may rent dormitory space to a prospective student-athlete during the summer months at the regular institution rate, provided it is the institution’s policy to make such dormitory space available on the same basis to all prospective students”. (NCAA 13.2.5).

Medical Expenses:

FBS: “In bowl subdivision football, an institution may finance medical expenses for a prospective student-athlete who sustains an injury while participating in voluntary summer conditioning activities that are conducted by an institution’s strength and conditioning coach
with department-wide duties or while participating in required summer athletic activities”. (NCAA 13.2.7.1).

**FCS:** “In championship subdivision football, an institution may finance medical expenses for a prospective student-athlete who sustains an injury while participating in voluntary summer conditioning activities that are conducted by an institution’s strength and conditioning coach with department-wide duties or a countable coach who is a certified strength and conditioning coach or while participating in required summer athletic activities”. (NCAA 13.2.7.2).

**Offers and Inducements Concluded:**

Although this section seems like it should be common sense, it is where coaches will get into the most trouble in recruiting. Even small gifts that you think will go unnoticed will come back to bite you in the end, the NCAA takes these kinds of violations very seriously and it can jeopardize not only you landing a recruit, but your job, the integrity of the program, and that recruit’s future. So always play it safe, and don’t give recruits any money or gifts, it’s not worth it.

**Transportation:**

Most of the time when you have recruits on-campus they have traveled from somewhere and do not have transportation available to them. So, when this happens it is important to remember the rules from the NCAA on what you can do and what you cannot in regards to transportation. In this next section we will briefly go over a few rules of transportation and how you can stay in compliance with the NCAA rules when you have a recruit and his or her family in town.

**General Restrictions:**

“An institution may not provide transportation to a prospective student-athlete other than on an official paid visit or, on an unofficial visit, to view a practice or competition site in the prospective student-athlete’s sport and other institutional facilities and to attend a home athletics contest at any local facility when accompanied by an institutional staff member. During the official paid visit, transportation may be provided to view a practice or competition site and other institutional facilities locates outside a 30-mile radius of the institution’s campus”. (NCAA 13.5.1).

“If non-permissible transportation is provided, the institution may not avoid a violation of this rule by receiving reimbursement for mileage from the prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.5.1.1).

In other words, unless you have a recruit in town on an official visit, you cannot provide any type of transportation to that recruit, even if they pay you for the mileage of the trip. This seems like a tacky rule, but it is another area that the NCAA is very strict on, even allowing a recruit to get into your car is risky, so I would advise against it.
Air Transportation:

“An institution providing air transportation to a prospective student-athlete to and from an official campus visit must use commercial transportation at coach-class airfare. Coaching staff members shall not accompany a prospective student-athlete to or from an official visit when air travel is used, except as permitted in Bylaw 13.5.2.4”. (NCAA 13.5.2.3).

“An institution may not arrange payment of the airline ticket to allow a prospective student-athlete (or friends and family) to take advantage of ticket bonuses, rebates, refunds, upgrades or other benefits connected with the purchase of the ticket”. (NCAA 13.5.2.3.1).

Official Visits:

Bringing recruits on official paid visits are, for the most part, where you will make the most impact on the prospective student-athlete’s decision to come, or not to come, to your school. You are able to show them your facilities, the school, the city, introduce them to the players and coaches, and much more. So it is important to make sure you are in compliance with the NCAA rules for what you can and can’t do with the recruit on an official visit.

Institutional Policies:

“An institution must have written departmental policies related to official visits that apply to prospective student-athletes, student hosts, coaches and other athletics administrators that are approved by the institution’s president or chancellor and kept on file at the institution and conference office. The institution is responsible for the development and enforcement of appropriate policies and penalties regarding specified areas, as identified by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors. The institution shall have an outside entity evaluate its policies related to official visits once every four years. The institution may be held accountable through the NCAA infractions process for activities that clearly demonstrate a disregard for its stated policies”. (NCAA 13.6.1).

What this long paragraph is saying is that even though the NCAA has its specific rules regarding what you can and cannot do during an official visit, it is the responsibility of the athletic department to keep their own set of policies on what is allowed on campus and what is not. So make sure you get with your athletic department and have a good understanding of your institution’s policies.

Limitations on Official Visits:

“A member institution may finance only one visit to its campus for a prospective student-athlete”. (NCAA 13.6.2.1). Which means that you cannot bring a recruit on more than
one official visit to your campus, but you may invite them on an unofficial visit in which you do not pay for the visit.

“The total number of official visits a member institution may provide prospective student-athletes in the following sports on an annual basis shall be limited to: a. Football – 56”. (NCAA 13.6.2.6). Which means, as a football coach, you are allowed to bring 56 different prospective student-athletes to your campus for an official visit per year.

Length of Official Visit:

“An official visit to an institution shall not exceed 48 hours. A prospective student-athlete may remain in the locale in which the institution is located after the permissible 48-hour period for reasons unrelated to the official visit, provided that at the completion of the 48-hour visit, the individual departs the institution’s campus, and the institution does not pay any expenses thereafter, including the cost of return transportation to the prospective student-athlete’s home. Additionally, if the prospective student-athlete does not return home prior to attending the institution, the one-way transportation to the campus would be considered a violation of Bylaw 13.5.4, which prohibits transportation to enroll”. (NCAA 13.6.4).

“The 48-hour period of the official visit begins at the time the prospective student-athlete arrives on the institution’s campus, rather than with the initiation of the prospective student-athlete’s transportation by a coach or at the time of the prospective student-athlete’s arrival at the airport or elsewhere in the community. The prospective student-athlete’s transportation to and from campus must be without delay for personal reasons or entertainment purposes. The institution may not pay any expenses for entertainment in conjunction with the prospective student-athlete’s transportation. At the completion of the 48-hour visit, the prospective student-athlete must depart the institution’s campus immediately; otherwise, the institution may not pay any expenses incurred by the prospective student-athlete upon departure from the institution’s campus, including the cost of the prospective student-athlete’s transportation home”. (NCAA 13.6.4.1).

These rules can seem somewhat complicated when you first read them, but really they are pretty simple. You may have a recruit on an official visit for a total time of 48-hours, not including the trip there. What this means is that from the time the recruit steps onto your campus, the clock starts, not when they go to the airport or get into the car to travel to your campus. However, at the end of this 48-hour period you may no longer pay for any expenses for the recruit, so you need to make sure you begin transporting them home before the 48-hours are up.
Accommodations on Official Visit:

“A prospective student-athlete on an official visit shall be provided lodging and take meals as regular students normally do. Local commercial facilities may be used but at a scale comparable to that of normal student life and only within a 30-mile radius of the institution’s campus. Lodging may not include special accessories (e.g., Jacuzzis, suites) that are not available generally to all guests residing at the establishment”. (NCAA 13.6.6).

Entertainment/Tickets on Official Visit:

“An institution may provide entertainment, pursuant to Bylaw 13.6.7.5, on the official visit only for a prospective student-athlete and their parents (or legal guardians) or spouse and only within a 30-mile radius of the institution’s main campus. Entertainment and contact by representatives of the institution’s athletics interests during the official visit are prohibited. It is not permissible to entertain other relatives or friends of a prospective student-athlete at any time at any site”. (NCAA 13.6.7.1).

Complimentary Admissions:

“During the official visit, a maximum of three complimentary admissions to a home athletics event at any facility within a 30-mile radius of the institution’s main campus in which the institution’s intercollegiate team practices or competes may be provided to the prospective student-athlete. Such complimentary admissions are for the exclusive use of the prospective student-athlete and those persons accompanying the prospective student-athlete on the visit and must be issued only through a pass list on an individual-game basis. Such admissions may provide seating only in the general seating area of the facility used for conducting the event. Providing seating during the conduct of the event for the prospective student-athlete or those persons accompanying the prospective student-athlete in the facility’s press box, special seating box or bench area is specifically prohibited”. (NCAA 13.6.7.2).

For any complimentary admissions to games, most likely a football or basketball game, you may only give your recruit and their family general admission tickets, and only for that one game that they are in town.

Cash to Prospective Student-Athlete:

“The institution or representatives of its athletics interests shall not provide cash to a prospective student-athlete for entertainment purposes”. (NCAA 13.6.7.4). Plain and simple, don’t give any, ANY, cash to your recruits while they are on campus. Doing so can damage your program more than it can help. So don’t do it!
Meals on Official Visit:

“The cost of actual meals, not to exceed three per day, on the official visit for a prospective student-athlete and their parents, legal guardian, or spouse need not to be included in the $40-per-day entertainment expense. Meals must be comparable to those provided to student-athletes during the academic year. A reasonable snack may be provided in addition to the three meals”. (NCAA 13.6.7.7).

“A luncheon, dinner or brunch at the home of an institutional staff member may be held for a prospective student-athlete on an official visit, provided the entertainment is on a scale comparable to that of normal student life, is not excessive in nature and occurs on only one occasion”. (NCAA 13.6.7.7.1).

“In football, an institution may provide meals for up to four family members accompanying a prospective student-athlete on an official visit”. (NCAA 13.6.7.7.2).

To be safe, when purchasing or making food for a recruit, just make sure the food you are providing is something that other student-athletes have access to on a normal basis. Which means you should not take the recruit and his or her family members out to the nicest steakhouse in town and spend hundreds of dollars on them.

Normal Retail Cost:

“If a boat, snowmobile, recreational vehicle or other similar recreational equipment is used to entertain a prospective student-athlete or their parents (or legal guardians) and spouse, the normal retail cost of the use of such equipment shall be assessed the $40-per-day entertainment figure; further, if such normal retail costs exceeds $40-per-day entertainment allowance, such entertainment may not be provided”. (NCAA 13.6.7.8).

What this means is that you are not allowed to take a recruit on any recreational activity for a cost that is less than it would be normally for someone else. If you are going to take a recruit out to do something, it must not be over the $40-per-day limit, or else you can’t take them on that activity.

Activities during Official Visit:

“An institution may not arrange miscellaneous, personalized recruiting aids (e.g., personalized jerseys, personalized audio/video scoreboard presentations) and may not permit a prospective student-athlete to engage in any game-day simulations during an official visit. Personalized recruiting aids include any decorative items and special additions to any location the prospective student-athlete will visit regardless of whether the items include the prospective student-athlete’s name or picture”. (NCAA 13.6.7.9).

Basically, you can’t have a personalized item made special for the recruit when they visit, even their name over a locker for when they visit the locker room. Doing so is considered an extra benefit and will get you into some serious trouble with the NCAA.
Unofficial Visits:

Unofficial, nonpaid, visits are another very important recruiting tool, and are something you definitely need to take advantage of. Now, it may seem much less complicated to bring a recruit on an unofficial visit because you aren’t paying for the visit. However, you need to be very careful when you have recruits on unofficial visits because there is also less that you can do with them. Here are a few important rules regarding unofficial visits to remember.

Number Permitted:

“A prospective student-athlete may visit a member institution’s campus at his or her own expense an unlimited number of times. A prospective student-athlete may make unofficial visits before his or her senior year in high school”. (NCAA 13.7.1).

Entertainment/Tickets:

“During an unofficial visit, the institution may not pay any expenses or provide any entertainment except a maximum of three complimentary admissions to a home athletics event at any facility within a 30-mile radius of a member institution’s main campus in which the institution’s intercollegiate team practices or competes. Such complimentary admissions are for the exclusive use of the prospective student-athlete and those persons accompanying the prospective student-athlete on the visit and must be issued on an individual-game basis. Such admissions may provide seating only in the general seating area of the facility used for conducting the event. Providing seating during the conduct of the event for the prospective student-athlete or their parents (or legal guardians) or spouse in the facility’s press box, special seating box or bench area is specifically prohibited. Complimentary admissions may not be provided during a dead period”. (NCAA 13.7.2.1).

The rules for an unofficial visit are very similar to that of an official visit in regards to any entertainment or tickets. However, in the case of an unofficial visit, the only thing you are allowed to pay for are three complimentary admissions to a home athletics event. You are not allowed to pay for anything else on an unofficial visit.

Meals:

“A prospective student-athlete on an unofficial visit to an institution may pay the actual cost of meals and eat with the other prospective student-athletes who are on their official visits or with enrolled student-athletes”. (NCAA 13.7.2.1.2).

So you can still allow a recruit who is on an unofficial visit to eat with the rest of your recruits, but they will have to pay for the cost of their meal.
Housing – Lodging in Dormitories:

“A prospective student-athlete on an unofficial visit may stay in an enrolled student-athlete’s dormitory room only if the prospective student-athlete pays the regular institutional rate for such lodging”. (NCAA 13.7.2.1.3).

Reserving Game Tickets:

“An institution may not reserve tickets to be purchased by a prospective student-athlete on an unofficial visit. Tickets may be purchased only in the same manner as any other member of the general public”. (NCAA 13.7.2.1.5).

Medical Examinations:

“During a prospective student-athlete’s official or unofficial visit to campus, a member institution, through its regular team or other designated physician, may conduct a medical examination to determine the prospective student-athlete’s medical qualifications to participate in intercollegiate athletics, provided no athletics department staff member other than the athletic trainer is present, the examination does not include any test or procedure designed to measure the athletics agility or skill of the prospective student-athlete and the results of the examination are not used by the institution to deny admission of a prospective student-athlete who is otherwise qualified for admission under the institution’s regular admission criteria”. (NCAA 13.11.2.6.1).

So, you may have the team physician and athletic trainer to perform a physical examination on a recruit, but you aren’t allowed to test the skills of the recruit during any of the tests. Also, you can’t deny a recruit admission to your school based on the results of the physical.

Recruiting Calendar:

The NCAA recruiting calendar is provided to let coaches know exactly when they are in a dead period, quiet period, evaluation period, or contact period. This calendar is provided in the NCAA manual and is updated as needed based on each year’s rules and procedures. This is something very important to know and keep updated on when recruiting. It is also fairly long so instead of having it in this guide, it is located on pages 139-140 in the NCAA manual for football. I would advise all coaches to know this calendar very well so you are prepared on when you can and cannot recruit athletes.
Literature Review:
Why I chose this project:

The combination of my three BIS emphasis areas was meant to prepare me for a career in the industry of sports, so I knew I had to find a project that would tie into that career field. Coaching sport was easy because it directly related to this field, I could use many of the theories and practices learned through this area in a variety of ways in a project. Professional sales wasn’t too hard to relate because when you think about it sales can be related to any industry and you are constantly selling yourself in anything you do. The third area, business administration, was a little more difficult to integrate into a project. I had to come up with a way to tie business into coaching and sales in a project that made sense. So, I decided to focus on the area of ethical practices in business and relate them to a coach’s day-to-day experiences with his or her players.

This project is an ethical guide for coaches in the area of recruiting new players. This was the perfect way to integrate the three areas in a way that made sense and would actually be useful for a coach or person in athletic administration to use. As a coach in the NCAA there are so many rules and regulations to follow that sometimes it is difficult to find the best practices to sell your program, and still abide by those rules. With this guide coaches can have something to take with them when recruiting that is easy to use and handy for them if they ever have a question on whether or not they are being ethical in their recruiting.

I have been an athlete my whole life, so when my athletic career ended I knew I wanted to work in the sports industry. This project has allowed me to look at a side of sports that I have
yet to experience: the business side. There is so much more to sports and sporting events that people will never see. Most people will only ever see the final product, the game or event they go to as a fan. In the background there are coaches that have been recruiting and game-planning for months, academic advisors who make sure athletes are on top of their school work, directors of operations making sure the event is planned and executed, and athletic administrators overseeing everything else. It truly is a business, and this project gave me the opportunity to look into the other side of things, not just from the prospective of the player.

The end goal for this project is for it to be something that a person in athletic administration anywhere in the country can take and personalize, and then implement it into their own program to make sure they are doing things the right way. There are numerous examples, a few of which being referenced through this project, of programs doing the wrong things and maybe if they had something to remind them of the right way they would not have caused their program to go through the trials and consequences of their actions. There are always going to be some bad seeds in any industry, but by having a handy tool that coaches and administrators can use to remind them of what to do and what not to do, we can limit the number of illegal practices in recruiting. These practices not only hurt the programs, but the players that were being recruited as well. Players should not have their opportunity to receive a college education and play the sport they love jeopardized because a coach either did not know, or just decided not to follow the rules set out by the NCAA.
How this project relates to Coaching Sport:

Many people believe that the only thing coaches do is teach their athletes skills and strategies related to their sport. However, there is much more to being a college coach than just that; a college coach is a mentor, an academic advisor, and a father/mother figure for their athletes who are away from their families for the first time. They are the ones that sit in living rooms telling parents that they will take care of their kids while they are playing for them and that they will leave school with a degree. With all of that, a coach’s job is still to win games for the school, so sometimes coaches can forget about the more important aspects of coaching and do whatever it takes to win games.

For this project I focused on college football because that is what I had experience with and it is the sport I would want to be involved with in the future. College football is often the most scrutinized when it comes to recruiting scandals, so this recruiting guide might be something that is needed in college football today. Coaches have to understand the rules and what it means to be ethical when they are recruiting or else they will probably end up doing something that can get them in trouble. This is where the recruiting guide would be useful, coaches could have something on hand to look at and remind themselves of both the rules of recruiting and some tips on how to better recruit.

The NCAA has a manual of bylaws that it gives to coaches every year which is well over 400 pages and includes rules and regulations on almost every aspect of being a college coach, including hundreds of pages on recruiting. Now, coaches are required to take a compliance test in order to stay certified as a college coach, but with that much information it is hard to ask
every coach to memorize everything from the manual. In part two of this project I have broken
down the one-hundred plus pages of recruiting material and turned it into less than twenty
pages of easier to read explanations of the important rules and regulations for coaches to
know. By having this material on hand and easier to read, it allows coaches to have a better
understanding of the rules without having to memorize everything in the NCAA manual.

Being a college coach today is hard enough as it is. With the pressure to win games,
recruit well, game-plan, and teach your current athletes everything they need to know in order
to perform, it is easy to forget some rules in recruiting. With this recruiting guide, athletic
programs would not only have a teaching tool to give to new coaches when they are hired, but
also have something to give to coaches when they are on the road recruiting that can remind
them of what to do and what not to do.

There have been numerous examples of coaches making small mistakes in recruiting
which end up in suspensions or fines for their program. If coaches had a better understanding
of the right and wrong ways to recruit an athlete, they would be much less likely to cause their
program any problems and be able to protect themselves from the NCAA. Mistakes in recruiting
not only hurt the program and the coach, but potentially the player as well. Giving a recruit a
gift or extra benefit just one time can cause the student to become ineligible and they would
lose out on an opportunity to play the sport they love as well as receive an education they
might not be able to receive otherwise.
How this project relates to Professional Sales:

Normally, people do not relate college athletics to sales. But for this project it fit very well into recruiting. When you think of recruiting you think of a coach sitting in a potential student-athlete’s home with him or her and their parents discussing the program, the school, the coaches, the city, and everything else related to the university. They ask questions about everything, and the coach answers in a way that he feels will get the best response from the student-athlete in order to get them to attend your school. This process is very similar to the selling process. A salesperson will prospect a company, reach out to them to speak more about what they are selling, pitch them on their product, and answer any questions they have about it.

This project was a great way to integrate selling into recruiting because recruiting is just that, selling! I was able to integrate different selling practices into this guide in a way that coaches can understand and implement in their recruiting pitches. One of the most important lessons I learned in sales was to find a “win-win” situation for yourself and the potential customer. In order to do this you must find what the customer’s needs are by asking questions and listening to what the customer has to say. This practice can be directly implemented into a coach’s recruiting practices by asking the potential student-athlete what they are looking for in choosing a school to go to, and then listening and finding how you can fill those needs with your program.

Another sales technique that can be used when recruiting are “feature-benefit” statements. This technique involves stating a feature of your product, and then explaining to
the customer how this feature will benefit them. For example, if your school is known for having a good program of study, you can use that in a feature-benefit statement. “Here at ABC University we have an excellent business program, this program will open many doors in the business world after you graduate.” The feature in that statement being the excellent business program, and the benefit being that it will give the student-athlete more options when they graduate from that program.

Most college coaches have never received any type of sales training, but with this guide they can learn a few simple sales techniques that will help them to become better recruiters. Just by understanding which parts of your program or university can be considered features and using them to explain how they benefit the student-athlete can make you into a decent salesperson. After that, if you are able to understand that asking what the recruit wants and how to show them a win-win scenario by coming to your school, you will have a leg up on other recruiters who are only trying to tell the recruit about their school.

From my experience in sales and from what I have learned in the sales department I have learned that sales is an area that can and will be used in everything that you do. Whether you are recruiting as a collegiate coach, or are the president of a landscaping company, knowing how to sell yourself and your product is a valuable skill. Hopefully coaches can learn a few of these techniques through this project that they can implement into their recruiting process that will allow them to become the best recruiters possible.
How this project relates to Business Administration:

This emphasis area was the most difficult to implement into this project, but I was able to use a few leadership and ethics theories from business and relate them to recruiting. When you think about it a college football program can be viewed as a business. The players are the employees, the coaches are the managers, and the athletic director is the CEO. I wanted to be able to use business theories and implement them in an easy to understand way that a coach could look at and use during the recruiting process.

The first theory that I used was an ethical theory on decision making called consequentialism which is used to determine whether or not what you are doing is ethical. The theory states that if the end result of an action is a bad one, then the action itself must be wrong. Conversely, if the end result is something that is beneficial, the action must be a good one. This way of thinking can be used in recruiting as well. For example, if you know that a recruiting practice you are using could result in negative consequences, it means that it is probably unethical! This is a decision making process that can be used in any situation and it is something that could be taught to coaches to help them make better, more ethical decisions.

The second theory used in this project related to motivation. This may not seem like it has much to do with recruiting, but recruiting goes beyond just the conversations in the potential student-athlete’s home while they are in high school. As a college coach you constantly have recruits coming to watch practice and are always recruiting. So in order to get players to play for you and to continue to want to play for you, you must know how to motivate them. In Theory X/Y motivation, it basically states that people are motivated intrinsically or
extrinsically, or that they motivate themselves through hard work or are motivated by punishment. There will always be both types of players on any given team so you have to know the best way to motivate them, or they will not perform well. If you can identify which type of person you are recruiting early on, you will be able to coach them better and get the most out of them.

I am a firm believer that college sports are just as much of a business as professional sports, and the NCAA needs to make some changes to make things fairer for players. What does this have to do with the coaches? Well, if you can have a better understanding of the business of sport and know how the NCAA works, you can take care of your players, your program, and yourself as a coach. This is where part two of my project comes in; by shrinking the NCAA manual to an easy to read guide for recruiting coaches will have a better understanding of what they can and cannot do and will have something with them at all times in which they can reference.

One of my career goals for my future is to work in either a front office of a professional sports team, or in the athletic administration of a college program. By studying business with a sports perspective I now have a better understanding of what it means to work in the business of sport. I think that through this project I was able to learn a lot about the NCAA and was able to gain an understanding of some of the behind-the-scenes processes that will give me a jump when I am able to take a position in one of those areas.
What I learned through this experience:

This experience has given me a unique look into sports that I haven’t seen before. I have always only been a player and have never really had much experience with the compliance side. There is so much more that goes into sporting events that people don’t see and that is something that I find very interesting. I would love to one day be the one running all of the behind-the-scenes action that goes into putting on a sporting event, and by studying sports from my three emphasis areas I think I will have a jump on others that may not have been able to do a degree like this one.

I think that in today’s world it is more important than ever to be versatile in what you can do in the workforce. So, by being able to study three different areas and not limit myself to one area, I have become more versatile. I know that I will be able to use my new sales skills for the rest of my life in whatever I end up doing, and the same goes for my business administration emphasis area. The coaching sport area may seem like I would only be able to apply what I learned to a position in coaching, but I think that I was able to learn things in that emphasis area that will help me for the rest of my life as well. Learning how to be a leader and how to motivate people is something that will be used regardless, and those are two things I learned a lot about in that area.

As for this project specifically, I learned how to integrate three seemingly completely different areas of study and turn them into a project that I could use in the future, and other coaches and athletic administrators could implement as well. This project forced me to think outside of the box in order to bring these three areas together, which is a skill that is sometimes
overlooked. By learning how to think in different ways and to work through problems that arise, you will be able to be a better problem-solver in the future when you are in the work force.

Some things that I could have done better through this process would be to not procrastinate as much as I did on some things, and I also could have implemented a few more selling techniques into the Ready Reference Guide. I think that sales skills are more important than most people think and what I have learned through that emphasis area I will be able to use for the rest of my life. This process is very similar to that of a thesis for a Master’s program, I imagine at least, which is good because if you were ever going to continue your education you would have some experience in what you should do.

I have enjoyed being able to learn from multiple emphasis areas and not just focusing on one thing. Being diverse in what I know will help me in the future as I begin looking for a career in the business of sport. I know that I will have a much better understanding of sports and how it is a business than others who did not go through this type of education will.

Audit Trail:

12/5/14

Finalized the idea to create a “ready reference guide,” guide for coaches to use in recruiting. Will create this guide with the idea to teach coaches some simple selling techniques along with ethical practices. I will find the recruiting material in the NCAA manual to find most
important aspects, and research a few examples of unethical recruiting practices in the past to show coaches what can happen.

1/28/15

Spoke with Dr. Thompson about being my third committee member, he gave me a few more ideas for the project. I will try to incorporate a few business theories into the project, such as leadership or motivational theories and tie them into sport.

2/1/15

Finalized the project idea, I will shrink the 100 pages on recruiting in the NCAA manual into about 20 for the guide. I will also create a “what to do” and “what not to do” in recruiting with examples of what teams have done in the past that have gotten them into trouble.

**General Steps:**

- Identify problems in recruiting practices
- Gain an understanding of the NCAA Manual, specifically recruiting
- Summarize and create an easy-to-understand version of recruiting materials in NCAA manual
- List and explain 5 “do’s” and 5 “don’ts” for recruiting
- Summarize an example of improper recruiting, explain what the program did wrong and how they can fix it
My advice for another student with similar emphasis areas trying to recreate this type of project would be to manage your time wisely and not become overwhelmed in the project. There are many different resources available on campus to help you with your project and I would use them as often as possible. Also, keep in contact with your committee members often and get ideas from them when you are stuck. Lastly, I would advise you to break down your project and create deadlines for when you want to complete each part. That way you will not feel like you have to do the whole thing at once and will not become overwhelmed.

**Analysis:**

**What worked?**

I felt that it was pretty easy to incorporate sales techniques into the recruiting techniques for this project. Sales is very similar to recruiting in that you are trying to get the recruit to buy into your program. There were several selling techniques that are simple and easy to teach through this guide, and I believe will be beneficial for coaches to learn.

**What did not work?**

My original project idea was to do a research paper on whether or not college athletes should be paid for their play. This ended up being extremely complicated and much more work than anticipated for this project. I ended up changing my idea after speaking with several of my
committee members, we came up with this idea which worked much better with incorporating all three areas as well as creating something that would be useful for actual college coaches.

**What would you do differently?**

The main thing I would do differently would be to manage my time better throughout the process of creating this project. I feel like I could have finished this project much sooner if I had kept to a deadline and worked on my project more consistently. Another thing that I could have done differently would be to actually turn the “ready reference guide” into a pamphlet or booklet that looked clean and would be something that coaches could keep on hand at all times.

**What skills and knowledge helped you?**

My classes in all three emphasis areas helped me to create and implement different practices into this project. However, I felt that what helped me the most was having experience in a college program. This gave me an inside look at the recruiting process and having an idea of what coaches do now, and what they could do in the future to improve their recruiting skills.

**Who benefitted from your work and how?**

This project would help current and future coaches in understanding the rules for recruiting in the NCAA. It could also be used as a training tool for compliance officers in athletic administration to teach what you should be doing and what you shouldn’t. Lastly, this project helped me to have a better understanding of athletic administration departments and how they
work. Ultimately, I would like to work in an athletic administration and this project will help give me a jump on being in that industry.

**How will you share your work in the future?**

This is something that I will be able to take with me into job interviews in the future to show that I have an understanding of NCAA compliance, recruiting, and possibly how to improve current recruiting practices in their program. I have also considered being a coach and this will help be to become a better coach and recruiter if I decide to take that path.
Works Cited


