

USA of Indiana Travel Program: Tips for Navigating the College Recruiting Process. Revised 12/21/2020

There are three primary approaches to the college recruiting process and for making the most of the college showcase for players.

1. Direct contact from players to college coaches with an invitation to watch the player's games
2. Promotional activity along the sidelines
3. Utilization of the various college recruiting online tools

Each option has pros and cons, but each are tools to help a player be seen and have productive conversations with college programs.

Please visit the USA of Indiana College Information webpage for free resources, including a College Planning Guide and NCAA Eligibility Information.

<https://www.usaofindiana.org/Default.aspx?tabid=932833>

DIRECT CONTACT FROM PLAYERS TO COLLEGE COACHES

Keep in mind, coaches can only form teams with players who WANT to come to their school, so a direct inquiry from the player to the coach is by definition of interest to the college coach because the player has expressed an interest in the school. Do research on the level of play, league, record, what positions will be opening up when the player is graduating.

To do this, a player has to do their research. Make a list of programs that are a good fit for the following:

1. Academics: Does the school offer your area of study? Do you have the GPA to get accepted?
2. Affordability: Understanding that soccer programs rarely if ever give full scholarships, is the school a realistic option financially?
3. Type of school: Are you looking for an urban school? Rural? Big? Small? Make sure you WANT to attend the school, beyond the soccer-playing experience.

Make a list of a dozen schools that fit these criteria. Reach out to their head coaches and introduce yourself. Schedule a meeting with the coach during a campus visit. Invite them to your showcase and league games.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY ALONG THE SIDELINES

During a college showcase, especially for elite level teams, college coaches will be watching games. They are identifiable in their logo gear. Have a team manager or parent make a team brochure with basic information about each player with enough copies to pass out. Approach each college coach at the sidelines of the game to introduce yourself, ask if they would like a copy of the brochure, and then ask if there is someone specific, they were there to watch (team manager or coach can help point them out and add in a few good words). Coaches are interested in knowing if anyone on the team has already committed, so try to keep the brochure up to date with that information.

How to create a Promotional Team Brochure:

1. Collect a photograph, high school information, graduation date, GPA, position, intended major, and contact information for each team player.

2. Using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or Publisher, use a page template that allows you to break the page into sections. Create one for each player and insert the information and photograph.

ONLINE RECRUITING TOOLS (GotSoccer, Captain U, Hudl, NCSA)

Player Profile Options:

There are two free profile pages that are readily available for USA of Indiana players to keep current and share. Each USA of Indiana travel soccer player already has a Got Soccer player profile, which can be updated by the player and then shared with interested college coaches. To update, log into your player Got Soccer profile. Select the My Profile tab at the top of the page. Tabs along the left side of the page walk you through the various sections to update. The free profile page includes much of the information that a college coach would want to know before talking with you further about their program.

MaxPreps works the same but for high school players. Each high school team in Indiana uses MaxPreps to track scores and stats, and each team page links to a player profile. Search for your high school team on MaxPreps, go to the Roster tab, find your profile page, and keep it updated.

Most of the online recruiting tools have a basic free profile page player can create. Some high school programs use Hudl, many showcases partner with Captain U, etc. However, to truly get the benefits of these platforms, players may wish to upgrade to the paid memberships. These can be pricy. This is not the option for everyone and college recruiting CAN and DOES happen without them.

Benefits include:

- Highlight reel film editing (this can cost hundreds of dollars, so a membership that comes with a set number of films might end up saving you money in the long run)
- Profile matches for players to college programs they might never have heard of or found on their own
- Direct communication with coaching staff and monitoring of all activity by coaches on your platform
- Webinars and process management tools to be sure you are hitting all the deadlines (NCAA Eligibility Center, for example)

Additional Services:

Hudl: <https://www.hudl.com/>

Captain U: <https://stacksports.captainu.com/>

NCSA: <https://www.ncsasports.org/>

At the end of the day, you are your own best advocate. Do your research to find the best fit for you, your goals, and your family. Reach out to coaches, invite them to games, promote yourself at the games, and follow up. Send new game films as they are available. Attend the college team games so you are familiar with the coaching and play style.