

Contacting College Coaches

By Brad Donoho, CMP Program Manager



Hopefully after reading the two previous College Connection articles, you have taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the NCAA by registering with the NCAA Clearing House, and you have created a list of possible schools to attend. Now it is time for the crucial step in the process, building your résumé! By the end of this article, I hope to explain how to capture a coach's attention and the proper methods for contacting college coaches.

In case you have not noticed, rifle shooting is a sport that flies under the media's radar. Unfortunately, a coach cannot turn on his or her television to see how you are doing, like a basketball coach can do with the local evening news. You have to make your scores available to them. How do you do that? Coaches find recruits by looking at scores from some of the bigger matches across the country. Below you will find a list of matches that collegiate coaches tend to follow.

Match	Location
USA Shooting National Championship	Ft. Benning, GA
Junior Olympic Championship	Colorado Springs, CO
Montgomery Bell Invitational	Nashville, TN
3X Air Championship	Colorado Springs, CO
Palmyra Invitational	Palmyra, PA
American Legion Championship	Colorado Springs, CO
Junior Olympic 3-Position Championship	Anniston, AL
National JROTC Championship	Fort Benning, GA

To be honest, unless your scores are in the top ten percent of the juniors participating in these matches, there is a good chance college coaches will not be contacting you. But that does not mean they are not interested in the possibility of having you on their team. Coaches are looking for hard working, dedicated individuals who want to help a school win a championship. Shooting big matches shows them that you are dedicated to the sport and are willing to do what it takes to become a better shooter.

It is your responsibility to make sure coaches know who you are and what you can bring to their team. Making the initial contact with a coach is the most important step in the process. Consider this a job interview! Your first impression on the coach is going to weigh heavily on their decision to allow you on the team. The easiest way to contact a coach is by email. Although emails can sometimes be laid back conversations, you want to make it as professional as possible. A big mistake that a lot of people make is writing emails as if they were sending them to a close friend. For example, "Hey man, what's up?" The moment a coach reads this, they have already pressed the

delete key. Another mistake that people make in their first contact with a coach is discussing scholarships with them. This is a big turn off because it questions your motives for joining the team. Below you will find a list of things to include in your email.

Things to include:

1. Name and age
2. Where you are from
3. Year in school
4. High School GPA
5. Have you taken the ACT or SAT
6. How long you have been shooting
7. How often do you train
8. Do you own your equipment
9. Matches you have shot
10. Your scores from matches
11. What you are interested in majoring in
12. Mailing and contact information

After receiving an email from a prospect, coaches typically spend some time trying to get some more information about you. If you do not hear back from the coach immediately, do not be discouraged. Coaches have many rules to abide by and the NCAA regulates the amount of contacts a coach can have with a prospect. They can email you back and forth as many times as they want as long as you are a junior or senior in high school. Coaches are limited to one phone call per week for seniors only, but the prospect can call the coach as much as they wish. Text messaging is not allowed.

The moral of the story is to shoot big matches and make an effort to get a coaches attention. With a decent résumé and a professional email, the chances are you will pass their interview process. Now that you are on their radar, your next step is visiting the schools and meeting the teams. In the next edition I will discuss how to choose the right school and the difference between an official and unofficial visit.

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