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COLLEGE BOUND

Contacting college coaches - nuts and bolts

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Now is the time of year for high school student-athletes to contact college coaches if they have not done so already, it's all about networking, begin in ninth grade.

* Be realistic about your level of play. Do not contact programs that are way above your ability. Similarly, be realistic about your academic capabilities.

* Make your first contact in writing. Write a personal letter, indicating why you are considering that particular school. Include athletic and academic information, make it like a resume, and include soccer references (use weighty references, people who played the game)

* Follow up with a phone call, an e-mail and a visit. Be aware that while the NCAA restricts the type and number of contacts a coach can initiate with a player, players are not restricted in calling or visiting coaches.

* Include a schedule of your upcoming games, tournaments and college showcases that you will be competing in.

* Attend a summer camp at a school that you plan to apply to. At the end of the week ask the coach if you are a player he would recruit for his program.

* Do not hesitate to contact a coach outside your geographic area. Most coaches know people all over the country who can watch you play, even if they cannot get to a match personally.

* When you receive a player profile sheet from a coach, fill it out and return it immediately. Do not worry if you do not have all the information requested, such as SAT or ACT scores, fill out as much as you can.

* Try to visit as many campuses as you are interested in as possible. This shows the coach that you are seriously in his or her school. Call before you visit, set up a meeting in admission, take the campus tour and let coach know of your visit, stop by his office.

* Stay in contact with the coach after the initial contact. Keep coach apprised of your interest, and any changes in your situation (new SAT's, personal and team honors).

* Realize that many coaches are extremely busy—but if you do not hear back from a coach after repeated attempts to reach him or her, recognize that the coach probably is not interested in you. That is why you should never put all your college eggs in one basket.

Every week Pat Grecco will write about another subject about high school student athletes finding the right college. She is the College Bound Athlete Advisor at www.collegeboundathlete.com. She can be reached at soccervol@aol.com.