

Point 3 – Building Relationships & Securing Offers

Building strong relationships with college coaches is **critical to earning roster spots and scholarship offers**. At the end of the day, coaches recruit **players they know, trust, and feel genuinely interested in their program**. This section provides guidance on how high school athletes can effectively reach out to coaches (at **Division I, II, III, NAIA, and JUCO** levels), nurture those relationships over time, and ultimately secure college offers. We'll include real-world examples, a sample outreach email template, and tips on tracking your contacts.

The Importance of Relationships in Recruiting

College recruiting is about **more than talent** – it's about **fit and trust**. Coaches want student-athletes who show consistent interest, good communication, and strong character. By actively building a relationship with coaches, you distinguish yourself from countless other recruits. In fact, **sending a well-crafted introductory email and following up respectfully** can “*jumpstart a conversation with a coach about how you would fit on their team and at their school*”. Don't wait passively for coaches to find you; **take initiative** to introduce yourself and stay on their radar.

All college levels value relationships: Whether you're targeting Division I powerhouses or smaller DIII/NAIA programs, the process is similar. *Division I coaches face stricter contact rules and can't reach out until late sophomore or junior year in most sports*, but **you can email them first at any time** – they just may not reply until NCAA rules allow. **Division II, III, NAIA, and JUCO coaches** often have more flexibility and “*can reach out earlier*”, meaning you might build dialogue sooner at those levels. **Don't ignore D2/D3/NAIA/JUCO options** – casting a wide net increases your chances of finding the right fit. Many athletes who don't get immediate D1 interest find great opportunities (and scholarships) in lower divisions, or even start at JUCO and transfer up later. The key is to show *every* coach that **you're sincerely interested in their program**, not just chasing any offer.

Lastly, remember that **coaches recruit athletes, not parents**. It's essential that **the athlete takes the lead** in communications. Coaches want to get to know *you*, not your mom or dad. As one recruiting expert notes, “*college coaches aren't recruiting parents – they want to get to know their potential recruits and build a relationship with them first... A surefire way to get noticed... [is to] allow the athlete to take the lead, from sending that first email [to] picking up the phone*”. Parents can help behind the scenes (proofreading emails, brainstorming questions), but **emails and calls should come from the student-athlete**. This shows maturity, ownership, and genuine passion on the athlete's part.

Effective Outreach: Making Contact with Coaches

The first step in building a relationship is **introducing yourself to coaches**. Email is usually the best initial method for high school athletes. A great introductory email should be **clear, personalized, and coach-friendly** – think of it as your first impression. Keep it professional and relatively **short (a few concise paragraphs)**, because coaches receive hundreds of emails and will skim for key facts.

Key elements to include in your outreach email:

- **An informative subject line:** Make it easy for a coach to identify you and your value **at a glance**. Include **your sport, position, graduation year, and a key stat or highlight**. For example: “*2025 Goalkeeper – Jane Doe, All-State, 4.0 GPA, Highlight Video*”. Coaches often decide whether to open an email based on the subject; they look for name, class, position, and an intriguing detail (like a notable stat or “see video”).
- **Personalized greeting and intro:** Address the coach by name (e.g., “Dear Coach Smith,”). In the first sentence, **introduce yourself with core details:** your name, high school, graduation year, position/event, and where you're from. “*I'm [Your Name], a junior at [High School] in [City, State] (Class of 2025), and I play [position]*” gives the coach immediate context. This is also a good place to mention **2–3 standout**

qualities that make you a strong recruit (athletic accomplishments or physical traits): “...and what makes me stand out is [2–3 key stats, skills, or honors]”.

- **Why you’re interested in their program:** Demonstrate that this isn’t a copy-paste mass email. Do a bit of homework on the school or team and write 1–2 sentences about **why you admire their program**. Maybe the team’s recent championship, the coach’s philosophy, the academic reputation, or a specific major draws you. For example: “*I was impressed by your program’s defensive record last season, and I love that the school offers a top-notch engineering program.*” This shows genuine interest and that you’re not emailing every school blindly.
- **Your key athletic and academic info:** In one short paragraph, **highlight your achievements**. List pertinent stats, awards, and measurables (height, weight if relevant). “*This season I averaged 15 points per game and was named First Team All-Conference.*” Include a **link to your highlight video**, so the coach can evaluate you quickly – e.g., “*You can see my highlights on my Hudl profile here: [link]*”. **Hudl** is a great tool for this; make sure your son’s Hudl highlight reel is up to date and showcases his best plays in the first few minutes. Also mention academics: your GPA, class rank or SAT/ACT scores, especially if they’re strong. Coaches appreciate players who excel off the field too (and for NCAA D2/D3 or NAIA, academic scholarships can complement athletic aid). For example: “*I have a 3.9 GPA and scored 28 on the ACT, and I plan to study Biology.*” Academic info signals that you can **qualify for admission** and handle college coursework.
- **Next steps & call to action:** Close the email by **expressing openness to the next step** in the recruiting process. You might *ask a question* or prompt the coach to respond. For instance, **invite the coach to evaluate you further or speak with you:** “*I’d love to hear about your recruiting needs and where I might fit in your program*”, or “*I’ve attached my upcoming tournament schedule; I’d be honored if you could watch me play.*” Also, **offer to provide more info:** “*Please let me know if you’d like any additional game film or references.*” If applicable, mention that **your high school/club coach is available to chat** and give their contact info – coaches often reach out to an athlete’s current coaches for an honest reference. Finally, **thank the coach** for their time and consideration, and sign off with your full name and contact info (phone number is great to include).
- **Professional tone and accuracy:** Make sure to **proofread** everything for spelling and grammar errors before sending. An email with mistakes or an overly casual tone can turn off a coach. Use a polite, respectful tone (“Dear Coach __,” “Sincerely,” etc.), and avoid slang or texting language. This email is essentially a cover letter marketing **you** – you want to come across as **mature, coachable, and serious** about their program.

Below is a **sample outreach email** putting these pieces together. This template is written from the athlete's perspective (as it should be!), and can be adapted for any sport or level:

Subject: 2025 Forward – **John Doe**, 6'2" Forward, 4.0 GPA – **Hudl Video Attached**

Dear Coach Smith,

My name is John Doe and I am a junior at **Lakeside High School** in Texas (Class of 2025). I'm a 6'2" forward on our varsity basketball team, and I'm very interested in the **University of XYZ's** basketball program.

I've been following your team's success I saw you made the conference finals last year, and I'm impressed by the fast-paced offense you coach. I believe my playing style could fit well in your system.

Athletic Highlights: This past season I averaged **18.4 points, 7 rebounds, and 3 assists per game**, and I earned First Team All-District honors. I've attached my latest highlight reel showcasing my skills (you can also view it on my Hudl: [Hudl link]).

Academics: I carry a 4.0 GPA and scored 1300 on the SAT. I'm dual-enrolled in two college-level courses, and I plan to major in Business.

I'd love to learn more about your recruiting needs and how I might contribute to your team's success. I will also be at the Dallas Showcase camp on March 3–4; **if you're attending, I'd be thrilled to meet you there**. Please feel free to **call or text me at (555) 123-4567** – I'm always available to discuss your program. You can also contact my high school coach, **Mike Rogers**, at (555) 987-6543 or mrogers@lakesidehs.edu as a reference.

Thank you very much for your time, Coach. I know you get a lot of emails, so I appreciate you reading mine. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

John Doe

Class of 2025 – Lakeside High School (TX)

Email: jdoe25@gmail.com | Phone: (555) 123-4567

This example covers all the bases: it's personalized to the program, highlights the athlete's **unique stats and academics**, includes a **Hudl video link**, and shows eagerness for the next steps (inviting contact or a meeting). You should tailor your own emails similarly – never send a completely generic blast. (In fact, college coaches admit they rarely open the mass “recruiting service” emails that flood their inboxes – *“less than 5% of coaches open mass emails from recruiting companies”*, according to one survey. A personal email from **you** will stand out much more than an automated form letter.)

Tip: After sending an introductory email, consider filling out the team's **online recruiting questionnaire** if available (most college athletic websites have a “Recruit Questionnaire” form). This puts you in their database. Then, be patient – coaches might not reply immediately. It's okay to send a **polite follow-up** after a couple of weeks, especially if you have a new achievement or video to share. The goal is to open a line of communication.

Maintaining Communication & Building a Relationship

Once initial contact is made, the real work of **building a relationship** begins. Coaches value recruits who show **consistent, professional communication and genuine interest** over time. Here's how you can nurture your connections with coaches:

- **Stay consistent but respectful:** It's important to **follow up regularly** and keep coaches updated, without overwhelming them. A good rule of thumb is to touch base every **few weeks or months** (depending on the sport's recruiting calendar) or whenever you have **significant news**. For example, send an update email when your season starts, if you achieve a new personal best, win an award, or have new highlight footage. Let them know about **upcoming events** they might watch you in (games, tournaments, showcase camps). One recruiting guide recommends sending **monthly "update" emails** during key periods, sharing your latest stats and achievements. Coaches appreciate hearing that you're **continuing to improve** and remain very interested in their program.
- **Be responsive and proactive:** If a coach replies or starts a conversation, **answer promptly!** Treat emails or texts from coaches like important communications (don't leave them on read for days). Prompt replies show you're serious. If a coach or program sends you a recruiting questionnaire or any forms, fill them out quickly and **follow instructions** (as in the case study below, a player promptly completed a "player profile" sent by the coach). If a coach invites you to call or schedules a phone/Zoom call, prepare for it (have a few questions ready, practice talking about yourself) and **be on time**. Little things—like saying "thank you" after a call or campus visit—go a long way to show maturity and appreciation.
- **Provide updates and honesty:** Keep coaches in the loop about your athletic and academic progress. For example, if you retake the SAT and improve your score, let them know. If you make All-State or have a big tournament performance, share that news (*briefly* and modestly). These updates serve two purposes: they **remind the coach you exist (staying on their radar)** and they **build your case** as a recruit by showing continuous improvement or consistency. Always be honest in your updates – never embellish stats or make up interest from other schools. Trust is fundamental; coaches do talk to each other, and a lie can burn a bridge.
- **Show you care about them:** Building a relationship is a two-way street. You can deepen it by occasionally showing interest in the coach's team. For instance, after the season starts, you might send a short note congratulating a coach on a big win, or wishing them luck in playoffs ("Good luck against [rival] this week, Coach – I'll be following the game online!"). This must be done sparingly and sincerely (don't overdo it), but it demonstrates that you're truly interested in **their** program, not just any program. Coaches love to see recruits who are already acting like part of the team's family.
- **Use multiple channels (appropriately):** While email is the primary mode for formal communication, you can also **utilize other channels** as the relationship grows. Many coaches are active on **social media** – follow the team's official account and maybe the coach's account if it's public. "*Engage with posts appropriately*" (like or congratulate the team on big news) but **keep your own social media clean**. Coaches *will* glance at your social profiles to gauge your character. If recruiting rules allow, some coaches might DM you or accept direct messages – just keep it professional and use those sparingly. Additionally, if a coach gives you their cell number, texting can be a quick way to share a quick update or ask a simple question (always start with a polite greeting and identify yourself in texts). Make sure to abide by contact rules (for example, Division I coaches can't return calls or texts before a certain date – but **you** can always leave them a message or email). If you're unsure, stick to email and calls at designated times.
- **Show appreciation:** Good manners never go out of style. Whenever a coach takes time to talk with you, shows you around campus, or watches your game, **thank them** afterwards. A short thank-you email to the coach after an unofficial or official visit, for instance, can reinforce your interest and leave a positive impression. Even thanking a coach for reviewing your video or considering you can set you apart because it shows maturity. Coaches want to recruit **good people** who will be positive members of their team.
- **Stay persistent (but not pesky):** There's a fine line between persistence and pestering. It's okay to send a follow-up if you haven't heard back in a while, but avoid bombarding coaches with daily or weekly messages if they haven't responded. As a general guideline, sending an update every 3-4 weeks in the offseason, or every few games during the season, is reasonable unless the coach has indicated otherwise. If a coach tells you explicitly, "We will get back to you after we evaluate at camp" or "please update me after

your semester grades come in,” then make a note to do that and **stick to it**. Each communication should have a purpose – either providing new info or responding to something. Over-communicating without substance can turn coaches off, but **under-communicating can let the relationship fizzle**. Find a balance and continue to show them you’re motivated.

Case Study: How Relationship-Building Leads to an Offer

To see these principles in action, let’s look at an example of a hypothetical (but typical) recruiting journey. This case study illustrates how consistent outreach and relationship-building can eventually secure an offer:

Case Study – “The Consistent Communicator”: *A soccer player, let’s call him Alex, started emailing a Division II coach in the spring of his junior year.* In his first email, Alex introduced himself, shared his stats and a Hudl video, and explained why he liked that college’s program. The coach sent back a generic response with a recruiting questionnaire and camp brochure. Alex filled out the **questionnaire within a day** and mailed it back, then sent a short thank-you note. He also signed up for the college’s summer ID camp as suggested.

Over the next few months, Alex emailed the coach **monthly updates** about his progress. For example, one month he wrote that he scored a hat-trick against a rival team and earned **All-Conference honors**. He kept these notes brief but enthusiastic, often highlighting one new achievement or key upcoming event. Each time, the coach didn’t always reply – but Alex noticed the coach **opened his Hudl link** and watched his new clips.

That summer, Alex attended the college’s **on-campus camp**, where he finally met Coach Smith in person. Having already exchanged emails, they already knew of each other. Alex played well at camp and introduced himself to Coach Smith afterwards, thanking him for the opportunity. The coach gave positive feedback and said, “We like what we see – keep us updated on your fall season.” This was a good sign.

Alex continued to stay in touch through the fall of senior year. He sent a September update with his first few game results and an October update with an updated highlight reel. He also made sure to **call the coach** once in mid-October (after checking it was a good time in the recruiting calendar). On that call, Coach Smith mentioned he’d seen Alex’s recent game film and was impressed, and he invited Alex for an **official visit** in November.

During the November visit, the coach spent considerable time with Alex and hinted that they saw him as a fit. Shortly after, Alex received a phone call from Coach Smith: **he was being offered a roster spot and partial scholarship**. The coach literally said “*I really like what I’ve seen, and we’d love to have you – I want you to apply to XYZ College*”. Alex’s consistent communication – from emails, to updates, to calls and visits – had built up enough trust that the coach was ready to make an offer.

This scenario is drawn from common patterns in recruiting. Notice how **persistence and relationship-building paid off**: the athlete’s timeline included an intro email, completing a profile, continuous follow-ups, attending a camp to meet the coach, and subsequent calls/visits, *before* an offer came. Not every case will require so many steps, but it shows that **recruiting is often a long game**. By engaging with the coach over several months, Alex stayed on the coach’s radar and proved his genuine interest, ultimately securing the opportunity he wanted.

Takeaway: You may need to **proactively nurture relationships** with several programs in parallel. Some coaches might show strong interest quickly; others might be lukewarm until they see you play live or get new test scores, etc. Don’t be discouraged by a lack of immediate offers. Often, the recruits who end up with offers are the ones who **kept the conversation going and showed continued improvement**. This holds true at all levels – a Division III coach, for example, might not “offer” athletic scholarships, but they will prioritize players who have shown sustained interest and will support their admission if they feel it’s a mutual fit. **Consistency and genuine communication can truly set you apart** from other athletes who might start strong but drop off if they don’t get an instant response.

Securing Offers: From Interest to Commitment

“Securing an offer” can mean slightly different things depending on the level, but it generally refers to **earning a spot on the team (often with scholarship or roster guarantee)**. How do you turn a coach’s interest into a concrete offer? A lot of it comes down to the strength of the relationship you’ve built and how you handle the **later stages** of recruiting:

- **Keep performing and keep the coach updated:** As coaches move closer to decision time, they will typically be watching your performance and academics closely. Continue to **do your best on the field and in the classroom**, since an offer can hinge on both (they might be waiting to see fall semester grades or a final time in track, for instance). Communicate any **major improvements**. If you run a new personal best or your GPA jumps after junior year, let them know – it might push you over the edge in their evaluations.
- **Ask where you stand:** If you’ve been talking to a coach regularly and it’s getting late in the recruiting cycle (e.g., summer before senior year or early senior year) without a clear outcome, it’s reasonable to **ask tactfully about your status**. For example, you could email or call and say, “*Coach, I’m very interested in your program and currently considering my options. I wanted to ask if I am still being considered for a spot on your team? Is there anything else you need from me as you make your decisions?*” Coaches appreciate honesty. The answer might give you clarity – maybe they’ll say “Yes, you’re on our short list, we just need to see your first senior games” or maybe “We have limited spots and are waiting on another recruit’s decision.” Knowing this can help you plan (and perhaps focus more on other schools if needed).
- **Official visits and offers:** For Division I and II programs, coaches often make *official scholarship offers* during or after official visits (official visits are visits paid for by the school). An **official offer** might be verbal at first. It could sound like, “We’d like to offer you a scholarship to join our program,” or “We have a roster spot for you if you want it.” In Division III (and Ivies which are D-I without athletic scholarships), coaches can’t offer athletic aid, but they can offer you a “*supported*” admission (meaning if you apply early decision, they will support you through admissions) – effectively a roster slot. NAIA coaches can offer athletic scholarships and often do so on a timeline similar to D-II. **JUCO coaches** may offer you a spot and possibly a scholarship even quite late in the process (spring of senior year or summer) because junior colleges often fill rosters after seeing who didn’t land at four-year schools.
- **Handling multiple offers:** If you’re fortunate to get offers from multiple schools, **take time to compare** them on key factors: scholarship amount (if any), academic fit, campus life, team competitiveness, your rapport with the coaching staff, and so on. It’s often a family decision as well. Be courteous and **honest with coaches** – if you need a few weeks to decide, thank them and tell them you’re evaluating all options carefully. Most coaches will understand and give you a *reasonable* window (but keep in mind, no coach will hold an offer open indefinitely; they have their own timelines). If one coach pressures you like “you must commit in 48 hours or the offer is gone,” that’s a tough situation – it does happen. In that case, communicate with any other program that is close to offering you and see if they can accelerate their process or give you at least a sense of where you stand. Never make a promise or commitment to more than one program.
- **Announcing your commitment:** Once you’ve decided to accept an offer, it’s polite to first **call the coach** who offered and verbally commit (express your excitement and gratitude). For D-I/D-II scholarships, the formal step will be signing a **National Letter of Intent (NLI)** during the signing period, which seals your scholarship. For D-III or NAIA, you might simply apply and then announce your commitment to the team (NAIA has its own letter of intent system too). When you commit, also consider informing other coaches who were recruiting you that you have decided to commit elsewhere, thanking them for their interest. It’s a small world, and showing that courtesy keeps doors open (and who knows, if something falls through with your chosen school, you haven’t burned bridges).
- **What if an offer doesn’t come?** Not every hard-working recruit secures an offer by senior year – there’s a lot of competition. If you don’t have the offer you want, consider **expanding your options**: late-bloomers sometimes find opportunities by looking at another division or a different route. For example, some athletes walk on to teams (joining without scholarship initially) and later earn scholarships. Others go to a junior college for a year or two and develop, then transfer to their dream school. **NAIA and D3 schools** often recruit later into senior year; if you focused only on D1 earlier, you could still reach out to strong D2, D3, or NAIA programs in fall of senior year and find a home. The key is, keep those relationships you built

positive – even if you have to say “no” to one school or haven’t heard back, always be professional. Coaches move around and talk to each other, so a good impression can indirectly help you down the line.

In summary, **securing offers is the result of the groundwork you’ve laid in building relationships.** By communicating effectively, showing continued interest and improvement, and being honest and respectful, you maximize the chances that one of those coaches will say, *“We want you on our team.”* At that point, all the emails, calls, and hustle will have been worth it!

Tracking Your Outreach: Templates & Tools

Managing recruiting communications across multiple schools can become overwhelming, especially when you’re targeting Division I, II, III, NAIA, *and* JUCO programs all at once. Staying **organized** is vital. Here are some tips on tracking contacts and leveraging tools like Hudl to streamline your recruiting process:

- **Maintain a contact spreadsheet or tracker:** Create a simple **College Contact Tracker** to log every school and coach you’re in touch with. This can be a Google Sheet or Excel file. Include columns such as: **College Name, Division (I, II, III, etc.), Coach Name and Title, Email/Phone, Date you first contacted them, Dates of any responses or follow-ups, Next action/date,** and a “Notes” section. For example, you might record that on *“4/3/2025 – Sent introductory email to Coach Smith”* and *“4/26/2025 – Coach Smith replied, invited me to summer camp”*, then *“7/1/2025 – visited campus unofficially”*, etc. One sample **college search spreadsheet** suggests tracking details like *school location, division, coach contact info, date of last contact, camps or visits attended, possible major, and even your thoughts after a visit.* By logging this data, you ensure no school falls through the cracks. Before you email a coach again, you can quickly check when you last did and what was said. It also helps you tailor each communication (e.g., *“Thank you for answering my question about admissions on our call last month...”* shows you remember your last conversation).
- **Save correspondence and notes:** Create an email folder (or just a main folder on your computer) for recruiting. Some experts advise saving every email **sent or received** in an organized way (for example, save copies of important emails as *“2025-03-01 SchoolX CoachJones email.pdf”*). This might be more detail than you need, but the idea is to keep a record. You can also jot down notes after each call or meeting with a coach – what did you discuss? any impressions? – and file those with the school’s name. This prep will shine when you have future interactions (you can reference prior talks, or be prepared to answer if a coach from School A calls unexpectedly, you can quickly refresh what you talked about last).
- **Leverage Hudl and other tools:** You mentioned your son is using **Hudl**, which is excellent for showcasing video. Keep using it to your advantage:
 - **Update highlight videos regularly.** After every few games or at least each season, edit or add to the highlight reel with **new clips that show your best recent performance.** Coaches are more likely to watch a fresh video link you send mid-senior year, for instance, than the same video they saw junior year.
 - **Monitor Hudl insights if available.** Hudl’s platform sometimes allows you to see which coaches or schools have viewed your video (if the coach has a Hudl account and you share via Hudl, you might get view notifications). While you shouldn’t obsess over this, it can provide motivation or a hint – e.g., if you notice the University of X viewed your profile, maybe it’s worth a follow-up note to that coach (*“Coach, I hope you had a chance to see my recent highlights. I’m very interested in X University...”*). If Hudl doesn’t show you this info, you might politely ask coaches if they had a chance to watch your film when you follow up.
 - **Academic and athletic profiles:** In addition to Hudl, some recruits use free online profiles (like on NCSA, FieldLevel, or even a personal website) to compile all their info (transcripts, test scores, full game videos, etc.). These can be useful as a one-stop link to include in emails. Since your focus is Hudl, make sure your Hudl profile has not just videos but also your basic info (height, weight, school, contact) filled out accurately. **Coaches will use any info they can get** – so double-check that your Hudl profile name, grad year, and contact email are correct.
 - **Social media and email for updates:** Many athletes create a sports-focused Twitter or Instagram where they post big news (e.g., *“John Doe – new PR 10.9s 100m!”* or *“Game film vs. Central HS*

uploaded”). Some college coaches actually browse Twitter for stats and video clips, especially in sports like track, baseball, etc. If you’re comfortable, you can tag coaches or use hashtags – but be careful to keep it professional. This can complement your direct emails. Similarly, using email tools like read receipts or just a simple “high importance” flag isn’t necessary, but some athletes like to know if an email was opened. Don’t overthink it – if you have good content and timing, assume coaches are reading it.

- **Contact scheduling:** Consider using a calendar or the spreadsheet to schedule when to follow up with each coach. For instance, after sending an email, mark a date 2-3 weeks out to send a gentle follow-up if you got no response. Note periods like NCAA **dead periods** (when coaches can’t talk) so you don’t send fruitless emails then. Also, if a coach says “I’ll come watch you at Tournament Y next month,” set a reminder to email them a week before that tournament with your game schedule and a thank-you after the event. This level of organization will prevent missed opportunities.

Staying organized and using these tools will reduce stress and help you present yourself professionally. Coaches have remarked that recruits who are organized in their approach often impress them – it reflects maturity. And practically speaking, a good system ensures you don’t inadvertently email the same coach twice with the exact same wording (or worse, address one coach with another coach’s name!). It also lets you track your progress: you’ll start to see which schools are showing more interest and which ones might not be, so you can prioritize accordingly.

In conclusion, building relationships and securing offers is a journey that requires **initiative, patience, and persistence**. By reaching out thoughtfully to coaches at all college levels, **leading the communication as a high school athlete**, and staying organized using tools like Hudl and a contact tracker, you’ll put yourself in the best position to succeed. Remember to be **authentic and passionate** in every interaction – when a coach sees that you’re not only talented but also truly excited about their program and responsible in your dealings, that’s a recipe for winning an offer. Good luck, and happy recruiting!