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# COLLEGE SOCCER RECRUITING GUIDE

Insider information and recruiting secrets from college coaches, national team staff, and scouts.

## CORONAVIRUS EDITION

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## TopDrawerSoccer.com Recruiting Guide: Coronavirus Edition

The Coronavirus pandemic and its spread throughout the United States has left a trail of uncertainty and unpredictability in all aspects of life.

Of course, navigating the new normal is still important for those seeking college soccer opportunities for the class of 2021, 2022 and beyond. There's no way of knowing how long until things more closely resemble pre-pandemic recruiting tendencies.

Working through these issues obviously adds an extra challenge and is a completely new part of the recruiting process. There are several factors to keep in mind as the year continues and soccer begins to ramp up (or not) around the country.

Below are some of the key points to remember during this time.

- **Be Safe.** First and foremost, protecting yourself, friends and family from the spread of the virus is the most important thing. Wear a mask, follow local guidelines and help stop the spread of the coronavirus. The sooner that the country can get ahead of this disease, the more likely it is that returning to the field is as safe as possible and college recruiting can restart. Even if younger people are far less likely to experience a negative outcome of COVID-19, that doesn't mean that it won't have any impact on you. Learning to live with the risk is important, which means wearing a mask, social distancing whenever possible and taking extra care.
- **Do your research.** This is dependent on where you are in the recruiting process. If you've had the chance to see some schools in person already, this may not be as relevant. But the time off the field, or playing a lighter schedule, offers opportunities to dig deep and look at various schools, levels and programs that could be a good fit. That can allow 2021 and 2022 graduates to start reaching out to coaches and sending a highlight video.
- **Communicate.** Communicating over the next few months could be even more important, since coaches will have a bit more time on their hands and willingness to look at more videos that hit their inbox. When emailing a coach, make sure to include the relevant information about yourself - GPA, SAT, current club team, current coach's contact information. If you have a player profile sheet done already, include that too ([you can also create one on TopDrawerSoccer.com](#)). Adding a personal touch to the email will go a long way too. Say what you enjoy about that school or why you believe you would be a good fit for that program. If you find a school you really like and start to plan a visit, be sure to check and see what is the policy of each school in terms of official or unofficial visits.
- **Stay sharp and ready.** No matter what exactly is safe and permissible in your area, whatever work you put in now will pay off when games resume. Being sharp and in shape, doing ball work on your own, will not only help your club or high school team, but will show the kind of willingness to work that could catch the attention of a college coach.

- **Put together a highlight reel.** If you haven't put together a video yet, then now it's essential. Work with your club to try and obtain access to old games. If your training sessions are recorded and uploaded to Hudl or InStat, and your team has been on the field, figure out ways to use newer clips. Most coaches won't make a final decision or offer based on video, but it's a must-do at this point. It's important that you work on your video yourself. You know your strengths better than anyone and should focus on highlighting that in your reel. The best highlight reels we see are the ones that focus on specific aspects of your game (passing, dribbling, defending, finishing, etc.). Use clips against good competition to show your strengths in those facets of the game. Keep in mind that college coaches are being slammed with a wave of emails that include highlight reels, so brevity is best (three-four minutes) for your main reel but feel free to include a link to a longer highlight too.

## **Women's Recruits**

For 2021 women's recruits, expand your search. Many of the college coaches already have a firm grasp on this class from previous events and finalized their recruits for that group a couple of years ago. Spots at your dream school might still open up as players re-evaluate their options - especially considering the different view on travel we have now compared to six months ago. Expanding your search at this point could help you find a new dream school or program.

If you are a 2021 graduate and you are just getting started on this process, it's not too late, but you need to speed up some decisions and put in the work in the next few weeks. Get your reel in order and start composing some emails to schools that you could see yourself attending for the next four years. Also, take a look at the [college needs list on TopDrawerSoccer.com](#) to help know which schools might be looking for players in your best position.

For 2022 recruits, communication with college coaches resumed in June and plenty of coaches were active during that time in reaching out to potential student-athletes. Women's soccer typically recruits earlier so many programs have already done a lot of work for that year.

There are still spots available at most programs, so don't be discouraged. Spend more time cleaning up your highlight reel. Follow the guidelines above on your emails to coaches, but make sure to proofread before you send anything out. First impressions make a big difference.

For the other classes, this is a great time to work on all of these things and be diligent about planning for the future. There is no need to rush to make a decision or commitment. Take your time and weigh your options. Figure out the best plan for you.

## **Men's Recruits**

Recruiting happens later for the men's college soccer than for women's college soccer, but the coaches have the same grasp on the pool of potential student-athletes. Many of the top targets

for programs from the 2021 class have already committed or been in communication with college coaches during this time. If you are just starting the process or haven't narrowed down a list, there is no reason to panic. This is the perfect time to devote your attention to that process.

Make a list of schools you would like to attend. Figure out which of those schools might be looking at 2021 recruits right now (probably all of them) but consult with the [TDS Needs List](#) and also look at the Commitment Tab on the program's profile page. Use this information to help introduce yourself and say why you would be a good fit at that school. Come armed with knowledge so the coaches know you care about that team and are not just sending a generic email to 50 schools.

For 2022 recruits, there is plenty of time to make a decision. This time is crucial in your first official communication with coaches. June 15 was the start of college coaches reaching out to prospective student-athletes and the communication is on-going from here. Some programs have locked down verbal commitments for that class while others are waiting to see more players in person before making any commitments. When you speak to a coach, it's important to know what your goals are and how you plan on achieving them - in the near and long term.

Top recruits should be honest, especially if they are playing at MLS academies, about professional ambitions. For the vast majority of players, spend time getting to know coaches and learning about their programs and how you can fit into that dynamic. These first months of communication are key to finding the right fit for you in the future. Ask questions and learn as much as you can so when you make your decision you are fully informed.

For all classes, be open to different levels. Finding the right fit is more important than trying to fit in at a certain level. There are good programs in all divisions of college soccer. Keep that in mind as you search for the right school for the next step in your playing career.