

Tips When Contacting College Coaches

Do's

Contact Letter

Number One: Do begin your contact letter to a college coach with his last name in the salutation. For example: Dear Coach Fleming. 95% of all letters that start Dear Coach, are tossed in the trash can.

College coaches are not impressed that you did not take the time to find out their name. Think about how you feel receiving mail addresses to "Dear Resident." They are looking for exceptional young men, players that are resourceful and mature.

Questionnaires

Always, always, address correspondence to a coach by using his name: "Dear Coach Fleming." Players should fill out their own questionnaires. This is the first chance that you have to impress a coach. Show them that you are hungry for the chance to play softball in college. This is your first impression that you make to a coach. Make it a good one! Players should return all questionnaires to ALL schools that write them. Even if you are not interested in attending a certain school, still return the questionnaire they send you. You can simply write that you are flattered that they are interested in you, however, at this time your interest leads you to other opportunities.

Why send this back? Simple courtesy. All coaches talk to each other about players they have dealt with. If the college you do want to go to asks the coach from the college you forgot to respond to, they may tell them that you never even responded to the questionnaire. This makes you look bad in two ways. One, you appear irresponsible. Two, they believe you have no interest in college and in turn mark you off their list. Either way, both results are not good. Players should call the softball office themselves to make sure that the information arrived.

First Communication

Mom and Dad are nice and I am sure they will have a great relationship with the coaches. However, the player is the person the coaches are most interested in meeting. Your phone skills and how you communicate will give them a basis to begin to formulate an impression of you. Make sure that you give them a reason to like you even before they meet you "face-to-face."

Don'ts

Office Hours

Do not contact college coaches at their home. There is a reason they have an office. In the office they have a system set up to handle your call and to make sure you are put into the active file. Besides being rude, a call to a coach's house is not necessary and will be starting out on the wrong foot.

Contact Letter

Do not write a novel. Keep your contact letter brief. Write a letter, not your life story. The initial contact letter is simply the means to start the ball rolling. Do not address your letter simply "Dear Coach." Junk mail is addressed to "Dear Resident." That is what a letter that begins with "Dear Coach" is -- junk mail. If you will not take the time to find out what the coach's name is you obviously have no idea what type of program this school has or what type of expectation of skill level is necessary to play there. Do the research and address the letter correctly ("Dear Coach Fleming").

Application

Do not send your school application to the coach to be processed. The softball office is not the admission's office. They do not walk all applications over to the admission's office. After you apply and are accepted at that school, notify the coach on your acceptance. If a problem arises, then contact the coach and let him know about it. Let the postal service do its job by sending applications to the admissions office, unless the coach specifically requests that you send the application to him.

Mislead or Lying

Do not stretch the truth about your academic standing, athletic abilities, or accomplishments. Realize there is a difference between highlighting a player's skills and misleading and lying to a coach. There is no quicker way to lose credibility with a college coach or pro scout than to misstate the facts (miles per hour readings for a pitcher, and running and throwing times).

Your Responsibility

Do not have parents fill out any questionnaires that are sent. A college coach is looking for mature young men who are responsible and ready to be put in an environment where they will have to depend on themselves to succeed. Mom or Dad's handwriting on anything shows that the player is not ready or is not accepting responsibility and gets that application or letter thrown in the trash pile. This is a major turn off for college coaches. This shows that you are not ready for the next step.