



RECRUITING PACKET

USA PRIME BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

2026-2027 SEASON

A family guide to how college baseball recruiting actually works today — NCAA, NAIA & JUCO rules, the new scholarship landscape, eligibility, recruiting technology, and social media.

USA PRIME BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

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HOW TO USE THIS PACKET

Read it once as a family, then keep it close through the season. The rules, the calendar, and the numbers all changed recently — the sections here are built to be returned to as your athlete moves from freshman year through signing day.

01

SECTION ONE

The Recruiting Landscape Has Changed

The House v. NCAA settlement rewrote the rulebook in 2025, and the NCAA overhauled its eligibility clock in 2026. Scholarship caps are gone, roster caps are new, and the calendar itself works differently now.



SECTION 01

What Actually Changed

On June 6, 2025, a federal judge approved the House v. NCAA settlement, and the new rules took effect July 1, 2025. A year later, the NCAA overhauled the eligibility clock itself. For baseball, four changes matter most to a recruit's family.

Scholarship caps: gone

The old 11.7-scholarship limit for Division I is gone at schools that opt into the settlement. Coaches can now fund every roster spot at any level they choose — including full rides.

Roster caps: new

Opted-in D1 programs are capped at 34 total roster spots — down from rosters that often ran 35–45. Walk-on paths at D1 have mostly closed.

NIL goes mainstream

Athletes have earned NIL money since 2021. The settlement adds revenue-sharing (mostly football/basketball) and a clearinghouse reviewing deals over \$600.

A new eligibility clock

As of June 23, 2026, D1 replaced the old "5 years to play 4" model with a 5-year, age-based clock that starts at enrollment or the year an athlete turns 19 — whichever comes first. See Section 03.

What this means for your family

- **Every roster spot is more competitive.** A 34-man cap with full-scholarship funding means D1 coaches can be pickier, earlier.
- **Don't plan on a D1 walk-on spot as a fallback.** Build a real plan at D2, D3, NAIA, or JUCO alongside it — not after D1 falls through.
- **Opportunity is shifting down the ladder.** Players who don't land a D1 spot are pushing into D2 and NAIA rosters, which raises the bar there too.
- **Reclassifying or a prep year now has real eligibility risk.** Under the age-based clock, pushing full-time enrollment past age 19 can quietly burn a season before a player suits up.

BOTTOM LINE

The programs, dollars, and roster spots are all still there — but the math changed. Being proactive, well-measured, and realistic about level and timeline matters more now than it did even two years ago.

SECTION 02

How Recruiting Works: Basics & Terminology

Recruiting is a process, not an event. It runs on ten overlapping habits — keep all ten going at once rather than checking them off in order.

01 Scouting — coaches and scouts attend travel tournaments, showcases, and high school games to identify talent.

03 Academic performance — grades open doors. Coaches at every level prefer recruits who won't be an eligibility risk.

05 Showcases & camps — live, in-person opportunities to be evaluated by multiple programs at once.

07 Campus visits — official and unofficial visits let both sides evaluate fit beyond the field.

09 Commitment & signing — verbally committing, then formalizing with a National Letter of Intent or written offer.

02 Player development — travel ball is where most exposure happens; coaches track improvement over time, not just a single event.

04 Highlight & skills video — your calling card. A clean, honest video is often the first thing a coach reviews.

06 Direct communication — emails, phone calls, and DMs with coaches, expressing specific interest in their program.

08 Offers — scholarship or roster offers, which may be full, partial, or a preferred walk-on invitation.

10 Continuous improvement — the process doesn't stop at commitment. Keep developing on the field and in the classroom.

Terms every family should know

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
Unofficial visit	A campus visit paid for by the family. Can happen at any time, in any number.
Official visit	A campus visit the college may pay for (up to certain limits), available starting January 1 of junior year for D1/D2.
Verbal commitment	A non-binding, informal agreement to attend a school. Common, but not official until signed.
National Letter of Intent (NLI)	A binding signed agreement between athlete and school, tied to an athletic scholarship offer.
Preferred walk-on	A roster spot without a scholarship, but with the coach's backing heading into tryouts — increasingly rare at D1 under the new roster caps.
Recruiting questionnaire	An online form on a program's athletics website used to enter your information into their database. Simple, free, and worth doing for every school of interest.

SECTION 03

Eligibility Center & Academic Requirements

Grades don't just help with scholarships — they're a hard gate. Every association runs its own eligibility system, and the paperwork is due long before senior year.

NCAA (D1 & D2)

Register for a Certification Account at eligibilitycenter.org — ideally by the end of freshman year.

Complete 16 NCAA-approved core courses (English, math, science, social science, plus additional academic electives).

Earn a minimum core-course GPA: 2.3 for D1, 2.2 for D2, calculated only from approved core classes — not your overall transcript GPA.

SAT/ACT scores are no longer required for NCAA eligibility (test-optional since 2023), though individual schools may still want them for admission.

Falling short doesn't always end the road — partial qualifiers may still practice or receive aid as freshmen depending on division and current rule.

NCAA D3, NAIA & NJCAA

D3: no NCAA-mandated GPA/test minimums — eligibility is really just campus admission, though D3 schools are often academically demanding on their own.

NAIA: register at the NAIA Eligibility Center (naia.org); generally requires meeting two of three standards — a minimum GPA, a minimum ACT/SAT score, or a high school class-rank threshold.

NJCAA (JUCO): eligibility is handled through the enrolling college's compliance office rather than a national clearinghouse; core-course rules are far more flexible than the NCAA's.

Every level still expects continuous full-time enrollment and satisfactory academic progress once you're on campus.

NEW IN 2026: THE AGE-BASED ELIGIBILITY CLOCK

Division I replaced the old "5 years to play 4 seasons" model with a 5-year window that starts at first full-time enrollment or the academic year after an athlete turns 19, whichever comes first. Incoming freshmen this fall and returning athletes with eligibility left can choose the new model or the old one; every athlete enrolling in 2027–28 falls under the new rule automatically. Practical impact: a reclassification year, a prep-school year, or a longer JUCO stop can now quietly cost a season of eligibility — talk through any non-standard timeline with your USA Prime coaching staff before committing to it.

DO THIS EARLY

Pull an unofficial transcript each fall and count core courses against the 16-course list. Most eligibility problems are late paperwork, not failed requirements — register at eligibilitycenter.org before it becomes a senior-year emergency.

SECTION 04

Recruiting Tools & Technology

None of these replace direct outreach, film, and grades — but the right two or three, kept current, make it far easier for a coach to find and evaluate a USA Prime athlete.

VIDEO · FREE/PAID

Hudl

The universal standard for game film. Nearly every college program already uses it — when a coach asks for video, a Hudl link is what they expect.

PROFILE · FREE/PAID

FieldLevel

A recruiting marketplace with strong verified college-coach adoption and two-way messaging across D1, D2, and D3 — often distributed free through a school or club.

GUIDED SERVICE · PAID

NCSA

The largest recruiting network, with a large coach database and advisor-guided support. A paid service, with stronger coach-side engagement at the D3 and NAIA level.

SHOWCASES · PAID EVENTS

Perfect Game / PBR

Perfect Game and Prep Baseball Report run the country's largest verified showcase circuits — velocity, exit velo, and 60-times recorded live and published to a searchable database coaches trust.

PROFILE · FREE/PAID

BeRecruited / CaptainU

Lower-cost profile platforms worth setting up as a free supplement alongside a primary tool like FieldLevel or NCSA — coach engagement tends to be more passive.

STATS · FREE

GameChanger

Live-scoring app used by most travel and high school teams; keeps a public, verifiable season stat line coaches can check against your profile.

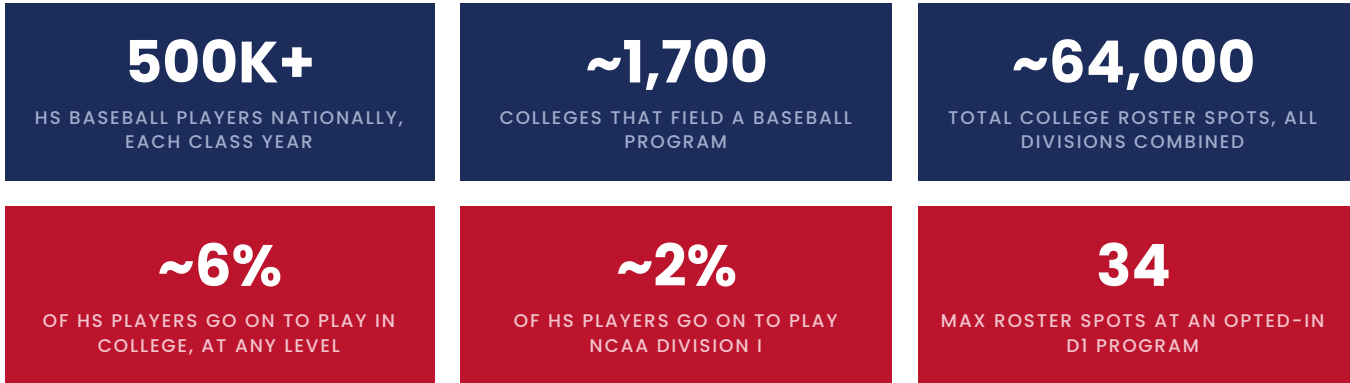
HOW TO USE THESE WITHOUT WASTING TIME

Pick one video home (Hudl), one or two coach-facing profiles (FieldLevel and/or NCSA), and let GameChanger carry your in-season stats automatically. Keep every platform current — an outdated, half-filled profile does more harm than no profile at all. Self-reported numbers get real weight only once they're verified at a live showcase or on video.

SECTION 05

Recruiting By The Numbers

The odds are real, but so are the opportunities — especially once a family looks beyond Division I. Use these numbers to build a realistic, motivating target list.



Scholarship & roster snapshot by level

LEVEL	ROSTER / SCHOLARSHIP MODEL
NCAA D1 (opted-in)	34-player roster cap; scholarships can be funded at any level up to a full ride, at the program's discretion.
NCAA D1 (not opted-in)	Legacy model: 11.7 equivalency scholarships split across the roster, no roster cap.
NCAA D2	Up to 9 equivalency scholarships per program, split across the roster; rosters typically run larger.
NCAA D3	No athletic scholarships, but strong need- and merit-based aid — about 80% of D3 athletes receive some non-athletic aid.
NAIA	Athletic scholarships allowed and program-controlled; often competitive with mid/high-level D2 offers.
JUCO (NJCAA)	Division 1 JUCO offers full athletic scholarships; Division 2 offers partial aid; Division 3 offers none.

READ IT RIGHT

A "low" percentage isn't a reason to give up — it's a reason to be honest about level, cast a wide net across divisions, and let grades and video do real work.

SECTION 05, CONTINUED

Know Your Numbers: Measurables By Division

Verified measurables are what let a coach place a recruit on a board without ever seeing them live. These ranges are aggregated from current recruiting-analytics sources across D1-JUCO — treat them as directional, not official cut lines, and always get numbers verified at a showcase or on video.

LEVEL	FASTBALL VELOCITY	EXIT VELOCITY	60-YARD DASH (PITCHERS)
D1	88-95+ mph	88-92+ mph	6.8-7.2 sec
D2	84-88 mph	84-87 mph	7.0-7.4 sec
D3	80-86 mph	80-83 mph	7.2-7.6 sec
NAIA / JUCO	82-88 mph	82-87 mph	7.0-7.5 sec

Catchers: pop time

Roughly 2.0 seconds and under draws serious D1 attention; 2.0-2.2 covers most D2/NAIA/JUCO catching recruits; consistently over 2.3 becomes a real limiting factor regardless of bat.

Velocity is trainable — say so

The average pitcher gains 3-5 mph between freshman and senior year. A short follow-up — "fastball up from 82 to 86 since the fall, video attached" — restarts more conversations than a first introduction email.

Position players

Infielders and outfielders are read on the same exit-velo scale above, plus a position-specific 60 (well under 7.0 for D1 middle infielders and outfielders) and throwing arm strength. Corner power bats can carry a slightly slower 60 if the exit velocity and arm are well above the range for that level. Get every number verified at a Perfect Game, PBR, or other live showcase (Section 04) — a self-reported number with no source behind it carries little weight with a coach.

THE HONEST SELF-SCOUT

One number never makes a recruit — coaches read velocity and exit velo next to position, speed, arm, defense, and grades. But a player who is a verified 83 mph arm and a 7.4 sixty is not an SEC prospect, and knowing that early saves months of outreach to the wrong level. JUCO in particular is a legitimate development runway: plenty of pitchers arrive throwing 82-85 mph, add strength for two years, and transfer to a D1 roster throwing 90+.

SECTION 06

NCAA, NAIA & JUCO: Know Your Divisions

There is no single "college baseball." Five distinct pathways offer very different levels of competition, scholarship structure, and school size — and the right target list usually spans more than one.

THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF COMPETITION

NCAA Division I

- Elite competitiveness and the most media exposure; most likely path to pro scouts' attention.
- Best-funded facilities and staff, but the largest time commitment — some estimates put it near 40 hours/week in season.
- Under the House settlement, opted-in programs carry a 34-man roster cap with flexible, full scholarship funding.
- Tends toward large campuses and class sizes.

A STRONG ATHLETIC/ACADEMIC BALANCE

NCAA Division II

- Competition just below D1; talent is concentrated more heavily in warm-weather regions (West Coast, South).
- Up to 9 equivalency scholarships per program, split across the roster.
- Smaller campuses on average — about half of D2 schools enroll fewer than 2,500 students.
- MLB alumni include J.D. Martinez, Yan Gomes, Stephen Vogt, and Kevin Pillar — the path to the pros is real from here too.

ACADEMICS FIRST, NO ATHLETIC AID

NCAA Division III

- The NCAA's largest division; mostly smaller private liberal-arts colleges, concentrated in the Midwest and Northeast.
- No athletic scholarships — but about 80% of D3 athletes receive need- or merit-based aid.
- Nearly 90% of D3 athletes graduate; academics are the clear first priority.
- Recruiting typically starts later (junior year) and coaches have smaller travel budgets, so proactive outreach from the athlete matters even more.

SECTION 06, CONTINUED

NAIA & Junior College Baseball

SMALLER CAMPUSES, REAL SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS

NAIA

- Competitive level compares to mid/high-tier D2; often means a more realistic path to consistent playing time.
- Far less regulated recruiting process — no NCAA-style contact restrictions, and high school tryouts are permitted.
- Athletic scholarships are allowed, unlike D3.
- Smaller class sizes and a more relaxed social atmosphere suit athletes who want a tighter-knit college experience.

OPPORTUNITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND A SECOND SHOT

Junior College (NJCAA)

- Rosters lean heavily on freshmen and sophomores, so incoming players often get real playing time immediately.
- Two extra chances at the MLB Draft — JUCO players are draft-eligible after year one and year two, versus waiting until junior year (or age 21) at a four-year school.
- Three internal divisions: JUCO D1 offers full athletic scholarships, D2 offers partial aid, D3 offers none.
- A second chance academically for players who need to raise a GPA before transferring to a four-year program — credits generally transfer.
- Most JUCOs don't offer on-campus housing, which can mean real savings while living at home for two years.

THE TAKEAWAY

A mixed target list — a few reach schools, a strong core of realistic targets, and a couple of safety schools across two or three of these five pathways — gives every USA Prime athlete the best odds of landing on a roster that's actually the right fit.

SECTION 07

Recruiting Rules: Who Can Contact You, and When

One rule holds at every level: a student-athlete (or their travel/HS coach on their behalf) can reach out to a college coach at any time. What differs by division is when a coach is allowed to respond or initiate contact.

LEVEL	WHEN COACHES MAY INITIATE CONTACT
NCAA Division I	Calls, texts, emails, and DMs may begin August 1 before junior year. In-person, off-campus contact follows the official recruiting calendar (see next page).
NCAA Division II	Phone calls, texts, and emails are permitted at any time — there is no August 1 restriction at the D2 level.
NCAA Division III	No NCAA-mandated dead periods; contact is effectively year-round. Athletes may take unlimited unofficial visits, and official visits open January 1 of junior year.
NAIA	No recruiting calendar at all — the NAIA does not restrict contact, communication, or even high school tryouts.
NJCAA (JUCO)	No restrictions on when a coach can contact a recruit, though most JUCO coaches focus their heaviest recruiting on junior and senior year.

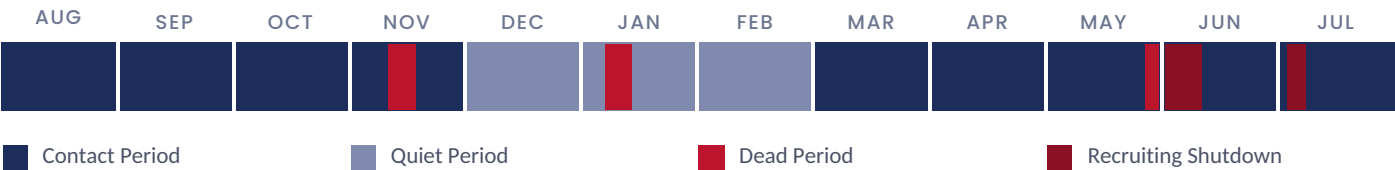
Recruiting period definitions (NCAA D1)

Contact period Coaches may make in-person, off-campus contact and evaluations: home visits, watching games, attending showcases.	Evaluation period Coaches may watch and assess athletes in person, but may not make off-campus, in-person contact.
Quiet period In-person contact allowed only on the college's own campus. No off-campus contact or evaluation.	Dead period / recruiting shutdown No in-person contact anywhere. Calls, texts, and letters may continue.
A NOTE ON EARLY RECRUITING Since 2023, NCAA rules have blocked any recruiting communication between D1 coaches and a recruit (or anyone speaking for them, including a travel coach) before August 1 of junior year. Athletes may still email or call a coach as freshmen — the coach simply cannot respond with recruiting material until that date, though many read and remember every message.	

SECTION 08

2026–27 NCAA Division I Baseball Recruiting Calendar

Official NCAA calendar, August 1, 2026 – July 31, 2027. Applies to Division I programs; D2/D3/NAIA/JUCO are governed by the simpler rules on the previous page.



Key dates to put on the family calendar

DATE	WHAT IT MEANS
Aug 1, 2026	D1 contact opens for the Class of 2028 (current sophomores)
Nov 9–12, 2026	Dead period
Nov 11, 2026	Regular signing period opens for most sports, Class of 2027
Dec 4, 2026	Football early signing period opens (reference point for families with multi-sport athletes)
Jan 7–10, 2027	Dead period
Mar 1 – Jul 31, 2027	Extended contact period through the spring baseball season and summer travel ball
May 31–Jun 7, Jun 19–21, Jul 3–5, 2027	Dead periods around Memorial Day, mid-June, and Independence Day

ALWAYS VERIFY

Recruiting calendars are published annually by the NCAA and can be adjusted mid-year. Confirm current dates at [ncaa.org](https://www.ncaa.org) before relying on any specific date.

SECTION 09

Your Recruiting Timeline, Grade by Grade

Built around the 2026–27 calendar and the post-settlement reality that rosters fill earlier and tighter than they used to. Start early — even freshman year work compounds.

FRESHMAN

SOPHOMORE

JUNIOR

SENIOR

Freshman Year — Build the foundation

- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center once high school coursework begins.
- Research broadly — aim for a running list of 75–100 schools across multiple divisions.
- Film a first skills video; it doesn't need to be perfect, just honest.
- Send brief introduction emails to a handful of programs of real interest — coaches read them even if they can't reply yet.
- Take a few unofficial visits when convenient (family trips, nearby campuses).
- Attend one or two camps or showcases after the high school season ends.

Sophomore Year — Get evaluated, start narrowing

- Update the skills video and have it evaluated by a third party (a USA Prime coach or a service like Hudl).
- Continue researching and start narrowing your list toward realistic target schools.
- Keep building relationships — calls, emails, and event visits with coaches from programs that fit.
- Fill out recruiting questionnaires on program athletics websites.
- By June 15 after sophomore year, D2 coaches may begin contacting you directly.

FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE PRIORITY

You cannot out-email a bad body of work, but you also can't get discovered doing nothing. The single highest-leverage habit in these two years is simple: play up in competitive travel ball reps, get on video regularly, and keep the grades where they need to be so nothing closes a door later.

SECTION 09, CONTINUED

Junior & Senior Year

FRESHMAN

SOPHOMORE

JUNIOR

SENIOR

Junior Year — The most important year

- **August 1:** D1 coaches can begin calling, texting, and emailing directly.
- Update the skills video again and get it re-evaluated with fresh, current measurables.
- Respond to every coach who reaches out — promptly and personally, even schools you're unsure about.
- Ask coaches directly where you stand on their board. It's a fair, expected question.
- Continue filling out questionnaires and taking unofficial visits.
- **January 1:** official visits become available. Narrow your target list to the schools you'd genuinely commit to.

Senior Year — Decide and commit

- Take official visits at your top remaining schools.
- Keep following up with coaches in a timely, professional manner.
- Apply to schools and for financial aid (FAFSA and school-specific forms) even alongside an athletic offer.
- Sign and commit — verbally, then formally with a National Letter of Intent or written offer.
- Ask about the summer workout program and any incoming-freshman expectations before you arrive on campus.

Multi-sport & late bloomers

Not every recruit follows this exact clock. Late-developing players, multi-sport athletes, and JUCO-bound players often see their biggest jump junior or senior year — and JUCO coaches recruit later, right up through the spring of senior year, by design.

Signing windows, class of 2027

Most divisions open a regular signing period on November 11, 2026. D2 spring signing typically runs through mid-April 2027, while NAIA and JUCO commitments commonly wrap up by May 1, 2027. Always confirm exact dates with each program.

SECTION 10

Building Your Target School List

A good target list is a living document, organized into three tiers. Update it all season — a favorite school can fall out of the picture, and a "Cinderella school" can rise to the top.

5-10 SCHOOLS

Safety Schools

Programs where the athlete comfortably exceeds both the academic and athletic bar. Reach out to these coaches early to build a relationship, so you always have a strong option if reach or target schools don't work out.

10-15 SCHOOLS

Target Schools

Solid athletic and academic matches — the heart of the list, and where most of your time and follow-up should go. These are your realistic, exciting outcomes.

5-10 SCHOOLS

Reach Schools

Dream schools that would be a stretch financially, academically, or athletically. Worth chasing — just don't build the whole plan around them.

Worksheet: start your list

TIER	SCHOOL	DIVISION / LEVEL	COACH CONTACT
Safety			
Safety			
Target			
Target			
Target			
Reach			
Reach			

WHERE TO RESEARCH

Every NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA program maintains a public athletics website with roster, schedule, and a recruiting questionnaire. Use each association's official school search — [ncaa.com](#), [naia.org](#), and [njcaa.org](#) — to build an accurate, current list rather than relying on older printed rosters.

SECTION 11

Creating a Recruiting Video

Think of your video as a hook, not a highlight reel of your whole career. It's what gets a coach to keep reading your email — not a replacement for live evaluation.

Coaches care about what you can do on the field. A video that's overproduced with special effects, dramatic music, and rapid-fire editing usually makes a worse impression than a simple, clean one.

What to include

- Basic drills: live BP, tee work, front toss
- Fielding: catching, receiving, and blocking as position-appropriate
- Footwork, arm strength, and release
- 8–10 reps shown from multiple angles (back, side — anything that shows the mechanics clearly)
- Total length: 1–2 minutes

TITLE-CARD FORMAT

Open with a simple, text title card:

Name

Grad year / position(s)

High school & travel team

GPA & class rank (optional)

A real example



A clean opening title card from an actual USA Prime recruit's video — name, grad year, position, high school, travel team, and academics, all visible in the first three seconds.

WHERE TO HOST IT

Host the finished video on Hudl or as an unlisted YouTube link, then put that link in every recruiting email, every coach DM, and every social bio. A video a coach has to hunt for is a video that doesn't get watched.

12

SECTION TWELVE

Social Media & The Modern Recruiting Process

Coaches are researching your online presence before they ever pick up the phone. Used well, social media is one of the most powerful — and free — recruiting tools a family has.



SECTION 12

Why It Matters

In surveys of college coaching staffs, the large majority say they research a recruit's social media before or during the evaluation process — most commonly on Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram. Coaches use it to find and evaluate prospects, follow programs to gauge fit, and get a read on character beyond the stat line.

X (Twitter)

The primary channel for direct, informal contact with coaches. Use it to post highlights, announce camps/showcases you're attending, and engage with program accounts.

Instagram

Best for showing personality alongside highlights — a place coaches look to understand who you are off the field, not just your numbers.

Hudl / YouTube

Host your full skills video and game film here, then link out from every other platform and every recruiting email.

TikTok

Optional, but useful for reach with a younger coaching generation — keep the same standards of content and tone as everywhere else.

Build a recruit-ready profile

- Use your real name as your handle wherever possible; add position, number, or grad year if your name is common.
- Keep profiles public, not private — a private account is invisible to the coaches evaluating you.
- Include grad year, position, key measurables, GPA, high school, and travel team in your bio, plus a link to your video.

SAMPLE BIO FORMAT

2027 RHP/3B | 6'2" 185 | 88 MPH FB | 3.8 GPA
Orchard Lake St. Mary's | USA Prime 17U

SECTION 12, CONTINUED

What To Post — And What To Avoid

Content that works

- Game highlights and skills clips, 15–30 seconds, posted consistently rather than all at once
- Training and progress updates — velocity gains, new PRs, offseason work
- Camp, showcase, and tournament schedules so coaches know where to find you
- Academic achievements — honor roll, test scores, awards
- Genuine engagement with target programs' accounts

What to avoid

- Posting offers publicly before you commit — it can read as "shopping" an offer, which coaches view negatively
- Political or social commentary, trash talk, or "Twitter wars" of any kind
- Tagging multiple coaches on the same post, or bombarding a program with messages
- Inflating stats or measurables — coaches verify everything, and it costs trust fast
- Going silent on a coach who reaches out, even to say "not interested" — a respectful no is always better than no response

Direct-message etiquette with coaches

- Keep DMs open so coaches can reach you directly.
- Respond promptly and respectfully — treat it like a professional email, not a text with a friend.
- Be honest. Everything you say gets checked, and a reputation for straight talk travels fast in a small recruiting world.
- It's fine to ask questions back: playing time, roster plans, how the coaching staff develops your position.

THE SIMPLEST RULE

Assume anything you post is permanent, public, and being read by a coach right now — because it usually is. Keep it clean, keep it consistent, and let your on-field work speak the loudest.

13

SECTION THIRTEEN

Frequently Asked Questions

The questions USA Prime families ask most often, answered straight.



SECTION 13

Frequently Asked Questions

When can college coaches actually start talking to my athlete?

It depends on the division. D1 coaches can call, text, or email starting August 1 before junior year. D2, D3, NAIA, and JUCO coaches are far less restricted and can often reach out anytime. Your athlete can email any coach, at any level, at any age — coaches just can't always respond right away.

How many players actually go on to play in college?

Roughly 6% of high school baseball players play in college at some level, and about 2% reach NCAA Division I. That's real competition — but it also means the other 94% still have four other pathways (D2, D3, NAIA, JUCO) worth pursuing seriously.

What actually changed with scholarships this year?

The House v. NCAA settlement replaced D1's old 11.7-scholarship cap with a 34-player roster cap at opted-in programs. Coaches can now fund scholarships far more flexibly — including full rides — but there are fewer total roster spots to go around.

Is a walk-on spot still a realistic backup plan?

Not really at Division I anymore. The 34-man roster cap has mostly closed that door. If D1 isn't locked in, build a genuine plan at D2, D3, NAIA, or JUCO in parallel — not as a plan B after D1 falls through.

What's the difference between an official and unofficial visit?

An unofficial visit is paid for by the family and can happen anytime, in any number. An official visit may be paid for (in part) by the college, is limited in number, and opens January 1 of junior year for D1/D2 programs.

What is NIL, and does it matter for a high schooler?

Name, Image & Likeness lets college athletes get paid for endorsements, camps, and appearances. It rarely affects high school recruiting directly, but it's part of why roster spots at the top level are more competitive — programs are investing real money in fewer players.

Does the transfer portal affect high school recruiting?

Yes, indirectly. Coaches increasingly fill open roster spots with experienced transfers rather than incoming freshmen, which can tighten opportunities at the D1 level and is another reason to build a realistic, multi-division plan.

SECTION 13, CONTINUED

More Questions, Answered

Do NAIA and JUCO programs really offer scholarships?

Yes. NAIA programs control their own athletic aid and can be very competitive with mid-to-high D2 offers. JUCO Division 1 programs can offer full athletic scholarships; JUCO Division 2 offers partial aid; JUCO Division 3 offers none but is often the lowest-cost path overall, especially with no on-campus housing requirement.

How important are grades, really?

Extremely. Every NCAA level has eligibility requirements built around GPA and core courses, and strong academics unlock merit and need-based aid that can matter as much as an athletic offer — especially at D3, where there's no athletic scholarship at all.

Do we need to pay for a recruiting service?

It's optional, not required. Every college program's questionnaire and coach contact information is publicly available on their athletics website at no cost. A recruiting service (NCSA, FieldLevel, etc.) can help with organization and exposure, but it doesn't replace direct outreach, video, and grades.

Should we attend every camp and showcase we hear about?

No — be selective. Choose events that match your current level and actually draw coaches from your target schools, rather than spreading time and money across everything available. Quality of evaluation beats quantity of events.

What's USA Prime's role in all of this?

Your USA Prime coaches provide the exposure, development, and film that starts the process. Our recruiting and college placement staff leads direct recruiting support for every high school family, with dedicated one-on-one time each offseason.

What happens if a coach leaves after we've committed?

It happens more than families expect, especially with more coaching turnover league-wide. A verbal commitment isn't binding on either side, so keep the relationship going with other staff on the coaching tree, and don't stop your process entirely until a letter is signed.

HAVE A QUESTION THAT'S NOT HERE?

Reach out to your USA Prime coaching staff any time — they'll get you an answer or point you to the right person. Full staff contact information is available at usaprimemi.com.