



## Recruiting Trips (Senior Year) and Preparation:

It is almost “romantic” to be recruited for college athletics. And in many ways, recruiting trips are the single best way for you to learn about a school and for the school to learn about you. Recruited student athletes are very lucky as they actually get an actual sneak peek at what their future could be: training, living and socializing with the team they could be a member of for the next four years. Per NCAA rules, athletes are allowed to take up to five “official” visits (lasting no longer than 48 hours each) to five different Div 1 or 2 campuses (unlimited official visits to Div 3). There is not a limit on the number of unofficial visits that an athlete takes nor when they take these visits. Depending on the college and their recruiting budget, they may pay for all or none of the costs of an official visit or somewhere in between (ie half the airfare).

Depending on your time line for applications, it may be in your best interest to go on recruiting trips early in the fall to allow you enough time to compare and contrast different schools/programs. Typically you will stay in the dorms with a member of the team, attend class, go on a college admissions tour, meet with the coach(es), socialize with the team, etc. A recruit should try to make sure to find the time to **meet with the coach** to confirm their interest in joining that program. While on the visit, it is important to take a notebook to record thoughts, impressions and questions in addition to the names and contact information for some of the team members. It is important to do this so that you are able to compare your thoughts on the various campuses and programs that you have visited. NCAA rules prohibit potential student athletes from practicing with the team but they may offer you an opportunity to practice on your own.

Do not be nervous about the recruit trip. Recruit trips are an incredible opportunity to almost live and breathe 48 hours of what it could be like the following year. Enjoy it and **BE YOURSELF** as that is the best way to see if YOU fit in or not. While visiting, **be attentive, act interested, be curious and cognizant, always be honest and ask a lot of questions and DO NOT SPEND A LOT OF TIME TEXTING OR ON THE PHONE with your friends**. If you are lucky, you may leave the campus with a clear impression of whether it works for you, or just as important, if it doesn't. That is a good thing as it narrows the search or fine tunes what your criteria are!

### **Finer Details: What should you wear and what should you bring with you?**

It is very important to look neat and clean on your trip. For guys, it is recommended they wear a collared shirt, nice jeans or khakis and to be clean shaven. Also avoid hats and hoodies and jewelry. For girls, a skirt or slacks or jeans is appropriate. The skirt shouldn't be too short or tight! It goes without saying to limit the amount of cleavage showing too. The goal is to look respectful and as though you care enough about this particular team to make the extra effort. Make sure you bring a pen, paper, a list of questions that you want to ask, the contact person's information including dorm room/address, an extra copy of your transcript and your resume and perhaps some of your homework if you need to get work done, and some pocket change for the airport, student union, etc.

Most colleges will schedule the recruit trips so that potential student athletes are on campus during a school day. Make sure you attend a class that might be of interest to you and observe different activities on campus. Here are some things you might want to consider or while on the trip:

- Is the professor capable? Do you like this learning situation?
- Ask the swimmers how hard it is to balance swimming, academics and social life.
- Ask about the training regimen.
- Ask the swimmers if they are enjoying the program and how they feel about the coach and the assistant coach.
- Who do you think you would be training under?
- How does the coaching staff interact with each other and with the team? Do they respect them?
- Do you like the athletic facility? You will be spending a LOT of time there
- Does the team socialize together?
- Do the teammates enjoy each other?
- Do they live together?
- Will you be able to have a complete collegiate experience?
- Is there fallout from team? Why do swimmers quit swimming at this school?

As a recruit, you want to determine if you will have a good relationship with everyone as they will become your second family for four years and maybe for the rest of your life. Make sure that the team is friendly and fits your personality and that you will be able to make friends with them. It is also recommended that you ask the swimmers which other programs they had applied to and why they ended up at that program. Talk to the first year swimmers but remember that if it is a fall recruit trip, they are totally new to the team themselves and may have only just started team practices. They may only be able to address the first couple of months of their new experience ie captains practices, orientation and initial dorm life. It is therefore important to get the perspective of the older swimmers too.

**Here is a sample itinerary:**

Friday:

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|--------------|--|
| 12:00 pm     | Arrive at the Airport where you are met by the Assistant Coach |
| 1:00 pm      | Meet your host and head to their dorm room                     |
| 1:30 pm      | Attend a class on campus                                       |
| 3:00 pm      | Observe afternoon workout and team meeting                     |
| 5:30 pm      | Dinner in the dorms with other recruits and their hosts        |
| After dinner | Free time, sporting event, party with the team                 |

Saturday:

8:00 am        Wakeup call  
9:00 am        Breakfast  
10:00 am       Admissions Department Informational Session followed by College Tour  
12:00 pm       Lunch at the Student Union  
2:00 pm        Attend Football game  
6:30 pm        Team Barbecue with coaches  
8:00 pm        Free time with upper classmen host

Sunday:

8:00 am        Wakeup Call  
9:00 am        Breakfast with the Coach  
9:45 am        Leave for the airport  
12:00 pm       Flight home

Some things to consider or ask first hand when meeting with the coaches:

It is important to ask the coach what the average GPA and test scores of the team are as they may be different from the overall school average. This will give you an indication of whether or not you could handle it. Inquire as to what percentage of the swimmers stay on the team for four years. Determine if you like the coaches' style, goals, philosophy and reputation. Is it a good fit? You should feel comfortable asking the coach where he/she sees you fitting in on the team. Do not ask questions that should have already been researched on the website ie enrollment in the school, breaks, majors, etc.

Check out the other recruits on the trip! While you need to formulate your own opinion, talk to them and get their impressions of not only that team but other teams they have visited and what their impressions are. Why did they choose this particular recruit trip? While not all of them will choose this school, could you see yourself with them for four years?

If you feel very positive about the team while you are there, make sure you let the coach know that the team feels like a "fit" to you. Depending on the coach, they may or may not make you an offer while you are there or soon after returning. They may ask you to verbally commit, but you should not feel any pressure to do so. You can say, "I really like this school and it feels like a fit and it is definitely one of my top 2 choices". Or, you can turn the school down, give them your verbal or tell them that you want to go home, think about it and discuss it with your parents and your coaches.

No matter what decision you are making, immediately after each trip, a potential student athlete should contact the coach and thank them for the opportunity to come on an official visit. A recruit should always write a thank you note to the coach after the visit (it will go in your file!). For many campuses, the number of visits a coach is allowed is extremely limited. It is a privilege and an honor to be invited on a trip. Take it seriously. Conversely, do not go on a trip if you know upfront that you would not choose that team, as it could be the end-all team for

someone else. Be respectful of the process. But, if you have the opportunity to go on 5 recruiting trips to viable choices, it is in your best interest to do so as it will help you to compare and contrast to make the most informed decision.

If after a visit, you decide that you are not interested in their program, as hard as it is, be honest and upfront with the coach. They want to be liked as much as you want to be liked and you are both looking for the right fit. If it isn't a fit, then graciously move aside for the swimmer for which it is a "dream" school. If the coach makes it difficult for you, then that alone might solidify your decision!

### **Examples of Questions to Ask Coaches:**

- What is your philosophy? What are the goals for the team?
- What is your track record on student athlete acceptances ie "tags" that are admitted?
- How would your swimmers describe the team culture?
- What does weekly training look like? Dryland? Weight training? Is it flexible?
- Do swimmers continue to improve over their four years?
- Do you have a Winter Training trip? If so, how much does it cost?
- What is the summer training requirement?
- What are you looking for in a recruit?
- How does the coach see you fitting into the team? Could you make the travel team?
- What is the profile of the swim team on campus?
- What kind of support does the school offer the athletes? Training, meals, tutors, course registration?
- What is the average team GPA?
- How would you differentiate your team from other college teams?
- What is the biggest change you would like to make to the team?
- What percentage of the swimmers stay on the team swimming for four years? Why have some swimmers left the team?
- What percentage of the swimmers graduate in 4 years?
- Are there any plans for the facility?
- Are there any concerns about potential loss of funding for the program?
- How would the swimmers describe you?
- How many athletes will you invite on recruit trips? Historically, how many of those are admitted to the school and how many accept?
- Are the swimmers allowed to "go greek"? study abroad? do internships during the school year?