

HOW DO I KNOW IF A COLLEGE COACH IS INTERESTED?

BY SWIMSWAM 1

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Michelle Lombana created [College Swimming Guide](#) to help parents like her whose children want to swim in college. Download the [summary of NCAA Recruiting Rules](#) and [NCAA Calendar](#) for helpful information.

One of the hardest things to figure out during the recruiting process is whether or not a coach is interested in you. Just like anyone, swim coaches have varying styles of communication so there's no one-size-fits-all answer and coaches are assessing the talent pool at the same time [swimmers are researching college swim programs](#).

Some coaches are very straight-forward and will clearly say "we're officially recruiting you". This is helpful although it should never be taken as any type of guarantee or offer. Until the National Letter of Intent is signed, both swimmers and coaches can change their mind. This is rare but it does happen from time to time.

Coaches are trying to recruit the highest caliber of swimmer they can attract. I like to use the tongue-in-cheek analogy that they are trying to ask the prom queen out on a date but end up realizing that the captain of the chess team is more attainable. I have seen coaches tell swimmers that they only invite swimmers with certain qualifications on Official Visits in the fall. At the end of the recruiting season, several of the kids who commit to some of those schools don't have the desired cuts. Chances are the coach relaxed his standard as he got further into the recruiting period.

Build a Rapport via Email

Swimmers and coaches often will establish an email chain prior to the date when the coach is allowed to call recruits. The tone of these emails can give clues about the level of interest from a coach.

- If the coach tries to get to know you by asking personal questions and explaining a lot about the swim program, that is a good sign.
- If the email feels "canned" or like a copy and paste job that is sent to every recruit, it's not necessarily a bad sign but it's not as positive.
- If a coach asks for updates from your meets and wants to continue to hear how you're doing throughout the year, he wants to build a relationship which is the first sign of interest.

Questions to Ask

[Swimmers can ask questions](#) that help gauge how interested the coach may be, such as:

- what events are you looking to fill this year?
- do you need swimmers who specialize in my events?
- how many swimmers are you talking to who swim my events?

A straight-forward way to find out is to ask where you fall on the list of potential recruits. If the coach says you're near the top, that's great and the school should remain on the list. If the coach hems and haws and says he's talking to many swimmers, or something similar, then make sure you have several other options on your list of schools.

If you are a butterflyer and the coach replies that they need breaststrokers and sprint freestylers for the upcoming year, you know you won't be able to help the team and that it's unlikely they will have a need for your skill set.

Show Interest

One of the most important things you can do is show that you're interested in the school. This appeals to the coach as he does not want to waste time on a swimmer who has no real interest in their school. He would rather focus his time and energy on swimmers who are likely to accept an offer and attend the school. If you're definitely not interested in a particular program, let the coach know. Coaches are used to hearing "no" and would rather know upfront so they can look for other potential recruits.

Coaches also may ask you how many schools you are planning to visit or are talking to. Just like you, they are trying to assess your true interest.

Don't take anything for granted and pursue several schools. If possible, it's a good idea to develop a relationship with more than one coach at a school although this is sometimes difficult if only one coach handles recruiting. Typically, you will develop a "gut feel" for whether or not a **coach is interested** based on the tone, frequency and quality of the communication. In order to ensure the best possible result, you should:

- be open in your communication with the coach
- look at the tone of the communication
- look at the times to be sure you fit into the program

About College Swimming Guide

College Swimming Guide simplifies the process of being recruited to swim in college. We've compiled college and conference championship times in a quick and easy format and created a *Directory of all college swim programs* to make finding the right fit quicker and more accurate. We also provide sample emails to coaches, lists of questions to ask coaches, *checklists*, *NCAA Rules Summary*, *NCAA Calendar*, expert advice, a forum and more. We'll walk you through the process and let you know what to do and when to do it.