

Guideline for College Visits & Questions to Ask the Coach

VISITING SCHOOLS

There are two different types of visits to colleges that a player can make—official and unofficial. Official visits are when the college pays for all expenses of the player for a 48 hour stay at the college. Each player is only allowed 5 official visits, total, among all of the schools that she is considering. This is true even if you player plays multiple sports. So use the official visits wisely. Do not waste them.

UNOFFICIAL VISITS

Unofficial visits are when the player visits the school at her own or her family's expense. There are no limits on the number of unofficial visits that a player can make. Make good use of this. Taking into consideration time and money, I would suggest visiting a school at least twice before any consideration of having an official visit there.

ANNOUNCED UNOFFICIAL VISIT

On one of the visits you should let the coach know you are going to be there and ask for a tour of the school, the athletic facilities and a face to face meeting with the coach. This should be done by telephone and not email or letter. Your request will be granted, schedule the time and then confirm it in writing either in hard copy or by email. Be on time.

MEETING WITH THE COACH

- The meeting with the coach accomplishes a lot of things:
- You get to learn about the softball program
- You get a gauge of the interest the coach has in your player
- The coach gets to put a person with the name and the profile
- The coach gets a sense of your player
- It shows the coach a high level of interest by your player

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MEETING

- The coach is interested in talking to the player
- In every circumstance that I am aware, the coach conducting the meeting sat directly in front of the girl and only had direct eye contact with her. I believe that this is done for a couple of calculated reasons.
- The coach is evaluating your player's ability to communicate and her maturity level
- The coach wants to see your reaction to being ignored.
- The parent should only participate in the meeting if asked to by the coach.

IMPORTANT TIP FOR PARENTS:

It is important to be self aware as to your personality. I will use myself as an example. I have a rather intense personality and am very curious by nature and know that I can come across as intrusive or rub people the wrong way at times. Because I am aware of this, I intentionally did not go on any of the recruiting visits (except the official visit) that my daughter had. Instead, my wife, who is much more laid back than I am, took my daughter on all the trips. You must be aware of how you may come across to a college coach and take that into consideration.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

Have your player come to the meeting prepared with a number of questions that are important to her concerning the softball program but that are not directly related to any potential recruitment of her. Think of this as a first interview.

Questions to Ask

- How do you run your practices?
- How long are they?
- Would the players consider them hard?
- How many players do you carry?
- What is your approach to the game, meaning are you aggressive offensively, stealing bases, hit and runs, etc?
- How do you deal with the relationship between class and athletics?
- How do you accommodate classes and exams that conflict with practices and games?
- Do you let freshman play?
- What about academic support?
- Meaning do the school provide tutors for the players if needed.
- What is the team GPA?
- What is the team graduation rate?
- What are some of the majors of team players?
- How many assistant coaches are there?
- Where do you see the program in next 3-4 years?
- Do players stay in the same dorms as other students or are there separate dorms for players?
- Same question for the dining halls.
- What percentage of freshmen end up being on the team for all four years?

UNANNOUNCED VISITS

The other unofficial visit you should not inform the coach of. Pick a date when the team is playing and go watch the game from the stands. The team's schedule can be found on the website. Watch the coach in action; watch the team play. Do both match the style of the player? What are the other parents saying about the coach? Watch. Listen. Learn.

OFFICIAL VISITS

If your player gets offered an official visit it means that the school is seriously interested in her as a player. Consider this the second interview. All offers for official visits should be accepted, in a manner of speaking. Because your player is only allowed five, I would not advise her to waste an official visit on a school that is close to home. Under these circumstances I would advise her to make the visit, but to keep it as an unofficial one to preserve the official ones for more expensive trips. But **ANY TIME** a college shows enough interest in your player to offer an official visit, a meeting between the coach and the player should be set up unless the player has eliminated the school for some reason prior to the offer being made.

PREPARING FOR MEETING

This is the second interview. This is when your player should ask more pointed questions about recruiting:

- How many players are you recruiting?
- How many in my position?
- What number am I on that list?
- What do you expect my role to be if I come here?
- RED SHIRT PROCEDURES? WILL I BE REDSHIRTED IN FIRST YEAR?
- WILL SCHOLARSHIP COVER A FIFTH YEAR?
- WHAT IS THE DEPTH CHART AT MY POSITION?
- WHERE AM I ON RECRUITING LIST?
- WHAT ARE MY SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES?
- ADVICE

It is possible that your player will be offered a position on the team and a scholarship at the official visit or at any unofficial visit. One thing that will probably come up at this meeting is what other schools you are considering or have offered you a scholarship. I only have one piece of advice. Do not say anything that cannot be verified. You do not want to lose credibility with the coach. Please note that offers can and often are made prior to the official visit.

I also strongly recommend that you and your daughter watch practices if possible at all. This will give you a better idea of how the team is run by the coach than anything else you will ever see.

A player spends far more time practicing than playing. The practice style has to fit the temperament and style of the player in order to assure a successful fit.