

Schellas Hyndman's Do's and Dont's of College Recruiting

Who is Coach Hyndman? The US Youth Soccer Show recently sat down with Schellas Hyndman, head coach of FC Dallas in Major League Soccer, to talk about the do's and don'ts of college recruiting.

In addition to being a former collegiate and professional player, Coach Hyndman is one of the most successful college soccer coaches in American sports history, compiling a 466-122-49 record as the head coach at Southern Methodist University.

Here's what Coach Hyndman had to say about college recruiting:

Do: Narrow down your list (When to start thinking)

- Sophomore year: Start thinking about colleges
- Junior year: Have your list to 5-6 colleges and do research and visits on schools (meet players, coaches, attend camps)
- Senior year: Have your list down to 3-4 school, and you might even be contacted by a team outside of that list because of your play

Don't: Get your heart set on one school before you do any research

- Make sure you take into account all the factors (Academic, social, athletics, etc.)
- It's a huge mistake to choose a school because of someone else's recommendation. What do you want (academics, social environment and athletic environment)?
- You need to investigate:
 - Does the coach want you?
 - Will you make the team
 - The roster (If you're a goalie— do they already have that position filled?)

Do: Know the rules

- NCAA doesn't give you any leniency for ignorance. You really need to do your homework and the best place to start is to learn the NCAA rules. If you are uncertain of something you can always contact the NCAA for more information.

Don't: Be obnoxious or over-attentive

- Coaching is a full-time job. There is a difference between contacting, showing interest, and the other side, which is being a little obnoxious and overbearing.
- NCAA has a rule that coaches can only contact you once a week
- Once you're a freshman in high school you can be recruited. Everything you do from then on has an effect on you being eligible. What you're doing at freshman year and what you're doing at senior year has an effect.
- If you contact a coach more than once a week you're starting to overbear.
- Easiest way to contact a coach is through e-mail (you don't want coaches to start avoiding your calls)

Don't: Be under attentive

- Every 10 days, maybe twice a month contacting. If you really want to have a relationship with the coach, then have a relationship with the coach. Make personal contact (don't make mom or dad call). Follow up on the season; ask about experiences with the team. Doing this shows real interest.

Do: Introduce yourself

- An introduction letter is very important and not a reproduced one. Make this letter something personal.

Don't: Send a fill-in-the-blank mass e-mail

- Make sure you introduce yourself even if it is through a letter. Seeing a face makes you easier to identify and is more personal. You have to remember the coaches will identify the players they want.

Do: Let them know why you want to be there

- Let them know why you want to attend the school (e.g. coaching style, academics... this is why I think I would be a good fit for the team..)
- Talk about why you personally would be a great addition and what you would bring to the team

Do: Get out your video camera

- One of the best ways to see a player play is video. Some coaches want videos showing your best moments, and some want full games.
- Think about giving a little bit of a teaser (highlights and adding on a game at the end). Important thing is when you get into the game portion of the video you identify yourself. (I'm on the Blue team, center midfield and I'm wearing number 8). Identify key moments in the video to see— this helps coaches who may have time restraints.

Don't: Let your mom send your 6th grade championship videos

- Go to your coaches and ask them to send most recent games to a school and to put in a recommendation letter. High school coaches want to help you the best they can and reach your dream.
- With YouTube, you can put it in an easier format for a coach. It's easier for the coach to handle an e-mail link over receiving a huge collection of videos.

Do: Have three positive references

- Get the right people to write your recommendation letters. Think about what these people are going to say about you.

Do: Keep your grades up

- Players forget this. A lot of people think that just because they're athletes someone will bend the rules or give them a break. The NCAA is very concerned about student-athletes, academics and graduation rates. Today there is more pressure on coaches to make sure their student athletes graduate from colleges. Why would a coach recruit a player that has bad grades when it could affect the coaches' number of scholarships or job stability?
- Coaches are looking for students who have a sincere concern about their academics and they want people who are doing well on their testing (ACT and SAT).
- Soccer will get you to the door but you won't get in if you don't have academics

Final Thought:

- Would you come to this university if you didn't make the soccer team? If the answer is no, don't go to that university. If you would go to the university even if you didn't make the team, this could be the right university for you. Enjoy this time, investigate and prepare yourself to make the right decision. It will be one of the biggest decisions of your life.

College Planning by The Sport Source®

www.TheSportSource.com

US Youth Soccer and The Sport Source® have partnered together to provide college planning quick tips, making the path to college an easier one to follow. Whether you are pursuing academic endeavors only, or dream of playing soccer at the college level, find out how to realize your potential and get a start on planning for your future.

NCAA Schools that Sponsor Soccer

One of the most important choices a student will make up to now is where to go to college. Whether attending college for strictly academics, and or pursuing aspirations to play a sport at the collegiate level, organizing your search, understanding academic and athletic standards, and knowing exactly what options are available to you are a key focus.

When beginning your college search, think about the following items that may influence your decision to attend a particular school, or not:

- Local vs. Distance
- Urban vs. Rural
- Commuting vs. Residential
- Large Campus vs. Small Campus
- Student life – campus activities
- Meeting admission standards
- Majors - area of academic interest
- Expense

Cast a wide net when considering the types of colleges and universities that might be available, this is especially important as a high school freshman or sophomore. As you progress through your high school career and refine what it is you do want in a college, you will find your idea of the perfect college fit becomes more concrete, and your list of schools more concentrated. By the time you are a senior, you most likely will have a defined list of 5 to 7 serious schools of interest.

Consider the different types of Colleges and Universities available

- Public
- Private
- Service Academy
- Military
- Junior College

Campus Visits

Campus visits can never start too soon, and if you have yet to take one, now's the time. Take the opportunity to establish dialogues with admissions counselors early in the college planning process, and request media packets from those schools that you want to learn more about. Connect with the Department Head in your projected major to find out about the depth of the degree program you are considering, as this can be a good indicator of whether a college or university will satisfy your academic pursuits.

Arrange visits prior to, and well before your desired date to make a campus tour. This gives admissions a chance to organize an itinerary so that you can sit in on a class, speak with current students, visit a dorm, dine in the cafeteria, and maybe even stay the night on campus.

Be sure to check out student bulletin boards, posters, the school newspaper, message boards, and find out what is going on in and around campus. Make a mental note of what campus groups are available, student concerns if any, and upcoming social activities. These can offer a wealth of information and give you insight into student life and the social side of college.

Tuition, Scholarships, and Paying for College

Tuition will vary depending on whether the college is public or private, and if you live in state or out of state. Service Academies are tuition free, but do require a military commitment after graduation. Although public universities are traditionally less expensive than private ones, consider all factors that may impact your total tuition expense.

For example, if you are a resident of the state of Texas and are accepted to the University of Texas, tuition will be much lower for an in state resident, than for one who is not. Tuition fees for non-residents can often be on par to private college cost, so consider which is the best option for you, your family, and financial situation.

While private college tuition is consistent in expense for all students whether they are from in state, out of state or even out of country, private colleges can also have a very selective admissions process. Admission standards usually apply to both public and private institutions, where a minimum GPA/ test score(s) are in place and must be met in order to be considered for acceptance.

The majority of colleges and universities will offer academic scholarships, with many having athletic scholarship opportunities as well (Ivy League schools will not have athletic scholarships). When thinking about the expense of, and how to pay for college, consider this; a great high school GPA, advanced or honor courses, SAT and or ACT scores can reap dividends when you begin applying for college.

Your grades = Money

College and universities will offer academic and merit scholarship money awards dependent on your high school GPA and SAT/ACT test score(s). The better your GPA and test scores, the more money you could receive in scholarship monies. Have a GPA of 3.5+ and an SAT of 1800+? You could earn a Presidential or Provost Scholarship!

What's even better? The amount awarded will usually be offered for each year you attend (up to 4 years total), as long as you maintain the designated GPA set forth by the college to keep the scholarship. This means your college education, or a good part of it, could be paid for due to the great grades you earned in high school.

Additional opportunities to garner scholarship monies can often come from these categories:

- Community Service work
- Religious affiliation
- Athletics
- Work Study

- Endowments and Grants
- Departmental Opportunities
- Fine Arts
- Leadership
- Environmental or Green Club
- ROTC

Each college or university web site will have information on the scholarship/grant opportunities they offer, guidelines for eligibility, and the process for application. Be mindful of application and scholarship deadlines, so you don't miss out on money to help fund your college education.

College Soccer

If pursuing collegiate soccer, there are well over 1300 men's soccer programs available, and approximately 1400 program options for women. Athletic scholarship awards will vary by affiliation, division of play, and the individual funding that each college provides to the coach for that particular athletic program(not all will be fully funded). You will need to check with the coach of each program you are interested in to determine the number of athletic scholarship options available to you.

Keep in mind, that the coach will use his or her available scholarship funds to cover freshman through seniors for the upcoming year. In addition, student athletes awarded athletic money usually only receive those funds for a one year period of time. This means that at the discretion of the coach, he or she can do the following for your return to the program the following year; renew your scholarship for the same amount, withdraw the scholarship altogether, increase or decrease it.

Connect with the Coach

If your path does include college soccer, connect with the coaches of the programs you feel would be both a good academic and athletic fit with, as soon as possible. Although athletic affiliation, division of play, and your age will impact what communication can or cannot take place with a particular college coach, being identified as a potential recruit early on is important.

Opportunity abounds everywhere, if you know where to look - consider all affiliations, the divisions within each, and what they have to offer:

- NCAA
- NAIA
- NJCAA
- USCAA
- NCCAA

An introduction of yourself via a cover letter along with your player profile is ideal. If you are participating in an upcoming showcase or tournament where college coaches may be attending, provide your game schedule as soon as possible. This gives those attending coaches you contact a good indication of your interest in their school, an opportunity to see

you play, watch you develop as a player, and determine if your abilities could fit well with their program.

The 4 components a College Coach will look for in a potential recruit

- Tactical ability
- Technical ability
- Physical ability
- **Psychological ability**

If the goal is to capture the attention of a college coach, it is critical to be excellent in at least one area. As you size yourself up in ability, consider your strengths, and areas that may need improvement.

If you are interested in playing either NCAA DIV I or DIV II, and or NAIA athletics, you must register with the eligibility center for each one and pay the required fee(s).

NCAA-

- The NCAA Eligibility Center registration fee is \$65.00
- The registration fee is \$95 for international college-bound student-athletes
- Fee waivers are available to those student – athletes who meet the criteria set forth by the NCAA – refer to the NCAA web site for specifics
- Students should register for the NCAA Eligibility Center at the beginning of their Junior year of high school