

The Recruiting Roadmap – Journey towards a scholarship

By Dan McElhinny, Founder of Innovative Athletes

Also in video format: [The Triple Threat Show: Recruiting Roadmap](#)

DO YOU ENVISION SIGNING ONE OF THESE?

LETTER OF INTENT

NAME OF STUDENT-ATHLETE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

GRANT AWARD: Athletic \$ Fall Grant In Aid
 Other Financial Aid \$ _____
 Total \$ Fall Academic Year 2008-2009

The Office of Admissions has notified us that the above named prospective student-athlete meets the requirements for admissions thus far, and will be accepted to _____ for the Fall, contingent upon their successful completion of all required graduation requirements as well as receiving initial eligibility clearance by the NCAA Clearinghouse. The University would like to award a grant for the above amount. Upon receipt of the signed Letter of Intent, formal notification of the terms and conditions of this grant will be provided by the _____ Office of Admissions and Office of Financial Aid. All offers of Admissions and Financial Aid are conditional pending receipt of official documents and upon successful completion of any work in progress.

The period of the scholarship is for one year. The limiting of this aid to one year is in accordance with the NCAA Constitution which binds all member institutions. The award also conforms to and is subject to the rules and regulations of _____ and the Atlantic 10 Conference. The continuation or non-renewal notice of the scholarship will be made on or before July 1 prior to the academic year.

Introduction:

If you want to put yourself in a position to be recruited, first comes the hard work, skill development and dedication needed to even be considered for one. Constant self-evaluation, proper teacher, a trustworthy relationship network, successful decision making and laser focus is vital to reaching that point in your career.

If you have handled your business on the court, congratulations! Now it's time to harness this wonderful opportunity and get the attention of college coaches and be rewarded with a full athletic scholarship and have the rare experience of getting a free education.

3% of high school seniors will receive a collegiate basketball scholarship next year; this statement is not made to scare you off, but to motivate you so you can receive a very special reward. The players that embrace the lifestyle of a committed basketball player put themselves in a position for this opportunity.

It's so important to know that recruiting is the lifeblood of college sports. It's how coaches retain their jobs; they need to find the best talent that fits perfectly for their system, not an easy task at all so you see they must invest their few scholarships the best they can. Each off-season a coaching staff will sit down and evaluate the needs they need to fill for the future, each decision is thought out and evaluated closely.

Step 1: Stepping onto the roadmap

You should know what college coaches will be looking for:

- A post player with long range shooting ability
- A wing player – 'slasher '
- Pure shooter
- A point guard with great playmaking abilities
- A defensive stopper

It all depends on the school and their needs. So first things first, ask yourself which one of these are you. Know exactly who you are as a player, and the tricky part is that it could be someone different on the college level. So this takes some deep self-evaluation as a player, ask yourself these questions:

- 1.) What type of player am I now, in high school?
- 2.) Can I play this style in college?
- 3.) What type of player do I envision being in college?
- 4.) What do I need to work on to be that player?
- 5.) How can I best use my talents to maximize my abilities and reach my potential?
- 6.) Why am I indispensable to a team?

The answers to these questions should give you a great understanding of where you are now as a player, and where you want to be. If you are still in flux on how to maximize your abilities as a player, send me an email – dannym@innovativeathletes.com and we'll work together on this.

Step 2: Collaborate with Trust

Next, is to collaborate with your current High School coach, parents/guardians, anyone else that is in your trust circle (please note: you can always add Innovative Athletes to this list).

I cannot stress how important it is to have everyone on the same page with the same strategy and vision; this helps you maximize your recruiting efforts. Think about it, if the people you trust most are collaborating and working hard together with the best interest of you the player in every decision making occurrence; great things will come from that.

Also, your current High School coach may have contacts in the recruiting circles; if you have a great relationship with your coach he will place phone calls and emails to the necessary people to get your name in the recruiting talk circle. Having your coach extend a helping hand and do some great networking for you, it's a powerful resource to utilize.

Here are things to establish in your trusted circle meetings:

- What's our goal?
- Make lists:
 - Top 5 ideal schools
 - Top 5 realistic schools
 - Backup schools
- How can we reach that goal?
- What schools can I play for? (what level)
- What schools do I want to play for?
- How can I promote myself?
 - Send Game tapes
 - Social Media
 - Letters/emails
- What is the first thing I say to coaches when describing my abilities?
 - Smart PG?
 - Shooter?
 - Lock down defender?

Note – please contact me: dannym@innovativeathletes.com when preparing your game tape, email – I can help direct you on what to say.

Step 3: Establishing Relationships

Selecting the right AAU team/coach is a vital part in your recruiting process. Make sure your AAU coach has the experience of coaching college talent, has worked with college coaches and has your best interest at heart. Keep all lines of communication open with your AAU coach as well. A lot of AAU coaches will tell you they have many college contacts and relationships, some lie. Make sure you do your research and ask who they have helped in the past and how they plan on helping you. Always know who is around you and make them gain your trust. Also, it's important to play on an AAU team that fits your style of play, don't get on a team that already has 2 players at your position. Get on a team where you can really showcase your talent.

Step 4: Grades and Test Scores

One of the first questions recruiters will ask is: "What your GPA is, and what is your test score (SAT or ACT)." Do your research and check school's web-sites for requirements per school. It is best to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse by the beginning of your junior year. Your high school should provide you this form, if not go to the NCAA website: www.ncaa.org. College coaches will not waste their time or yours if you are struggling with your grades; it's a hassle they can't afford.

Make sure you're taking care of business in class, take this serious now – your future depends on it! Show up on time for class, turn in assignments on time, study hard and really focus on your education. To many times, I have seen so many talented players not be eligible for college because they slacked off in school, doesn't make sense! Don't let that be you!

Contact me: dannym@innovativeathletes.com if you are confused about the eligibility process.

Step 5: Promote yourself on the web

Take advantage of all the free resources now available online. Use the web to promote yourself and send a positive message to college recruiters. You can create a free blog site (wordpress.com) and really promote yourself on the web, in your email's you can direct coaches to visit your site.

Take this serious, this is not your Facebook page; do not put pictures up doing anything you're not supposed to be doing or one that portrays a negative light towards you and

your family. This is business, be the CEO of your career. Place highlight video's of yourself, give some background information about yourself, clearly state your goals, stats and test scores.

Step 6: Research

Time for you to do some research, what do I mean? Research teams that you think you can play for and see if they have seniors playing at your position, why? Because, those seniors will be graduating this year and there's a roster spot open at your position. If you want, send the assistant coach an email: ask him where he will be recruiting this summer, let him know where you will be at and if you're at the same tournament, I bet he stops by and checks out your game.

Also do team research, study the teams you wish to play for:

- What type of offense do they run?
- What type of defense do they play?
- When's the last time they made the NCAA tournament?
- Can I thrive in this program?
- What type of facilities do they have?
- Can I adapt well and live in that city?

Think about how confident you will be when you're in a conversation with that coach, you can leverage your knowledge and really portray a huge interest in their program. This makes the college coaches aware of how much you care, that you are a student of the game with a high basketball IQ and it also makes them feel good that you think their motion offense is great, it boosts their ego!

Also, you can tell them why you think you would really fit in nicely to their 4 out 1 in set offense, give examples. They will be very impressed with your knowledge. You will definitely make a lasting memory with them. You are trying to build relationships, you will be around these coaches for the next four years, they will be your new family, it's vital that you get off on the right foot.

Think about it from this angle, maybe they don't have a roster spot for you but their old assistant coach who just got hired as a head coach in a different conference is looking at your position, don't you think he places a call to them and says "hey, you might really like so and so, he's got great talent, and a high basketball IQ, give him a call." Things happen in crazy ways, build your relationships and network with a strategy.

The New Paradigm in youth basketball

The NCAA just established a new rule stating that college coaches are not allowed to recruit at any April AAU events. In the past, they were allowed to do this – which meant high school players who ended their season in March, just moved right on to AAU play, without focusing on their skill development.

Now, it's really only July that a college recruiter is allowed to actively watch you play at AAU/Club event tournaments.

What does this mean to you?

I view this as a great opportunity for players to improve their skill sets. Now this is the time to get in the gym and be a gym rat. Work on all your weaknesses, strengthen your strengths and really start to improve your game. Get a workout plan together, it's important to have a structured game plan on working out, have goals and a disciplined approach. Basketball is a game of habits; make sure you develop the correct habits. The games will come in July but make sure you utilize this time wisely! The dividends will really pay off.

The new model for youth basketball off-seasons: (timeline)

- ✓ High School Season ends in early March
- ✓ Take 2 weeks off, light stretching and little shooting.
- ✓ 6 Weeks of hard basketball training.
- ✓ 1 week of rest
- ✓ 4 weeks of hard basketball training
- ✓ July –AAU games, camps and tournament play.
- ✓ 1 week of rest
- ✓ August – October: (12 weeks left) hard basketball training before the start of the season.
 - 2 - 5 week intervals
 - 1 week of rest

Get in touch with me: dannym@innovativeathletes.com regarding a customized workout plan –we can develop a great 6-week program for you.

What do coaches want to see when they watch you play?

It's pretty simple what coaches look for when they watch players play, but it seems to be really difficult to execute by players.

Simple techniques players can do on the floor:

- 1.) Play hard all the time: coaches want to see you hustle, dive on loose balls. A lot of effort.
- 2.) Play defense: so many players relax on the defensive end, coaches notice players who play hard on both ends, stay in a stance, talk, box out – know the defensive positions well.
- 3.) Show leadership skills: communicate while on the floor; always make sure your team is on the same page. Coaches are always looking for leaders.
- 4.) Be unselfish: Even if you are a scorer, show them you are able to make the extra pass to win games. They will automatically know if you can score or not, make them notice your ability to pass and do the little things.
- 5.) Positive Attitude: Never show signs of a bad attitude, don't roll your eyes at the ref's or your coach, don't yell at your teammates and don't start fights with your opponents.
- 6.) Play at game speed with game intensity: Many college scouts will get to the game early to see how you warm up, be up-beat and focused.
- 7.) After the game: Control your emotions, whether you win or lose. One thing many student athletes don't realize is that most college scouts ask the **opposing** coach what type of kid you are. If you go out of your way to be respectful toward the opposing coach and his team it will increase your stock tremendously.

Notice that I did not mention things like: “**score a lot of points**” or “**make a 360 dunk**” or “**throw a fancy pass.**” College coaches are really good at their jobs, and they can spot talented players very easily and they see a lot of players on the recruiting trails, so they will know if you have the ability to score. You only have their attention span for a very short time, make the most of it. Embrace this awesome opportunity and thrive when it matters most, that's why you put all this effort into getting to this positive, time to get rewarded because you have earned it.

Conclusion:

So how do you stand out?

Be yourself, show basketball intelligence, control your emotions, conduct yourself in a positive light and always make the right basketball plays.

Be very proactive in your recruiting process, there is no harm in letting college coaches know who you are and why you think you would be a great fit for their program, what's the harm?

Get your trusted circle together, create a plan, work your strategy and make sure you take care of your business in the classroom and always feel free to contact us here at Innovative Athletes.

If you do these things, plus put the necessary hard work in the off season, you will maximize your recruiting efforts and give yourself a great opportunity to receive a very precious and rewarding gift of a full athletic scholarship to play basketball.

Good luck and always feel free to contact us,

Dan McElhinny

Founder

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www.innovativeathletes.com