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This investigation examined the role of high school coaches during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Data were collected using a self-report survey administered to 214 current NCAA Division II student-athletes representing four private institutions located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the country. Four sports were represented in the study – men’s basketball, women’s basketball, men’s soccer, and women’s soccer. Results indicated that, overall, student-athletes do not rely heavily on the high school coach for advice during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Further, when ranked against other potential advisors, high school coaches are not viewed as primary sources of information for their students who are being recruited. Advice from high school coaches was most influential in areas related to athletics participation, but group mean scores were below the Likert-scale mid-point of 3.0. Advice from the coach related to academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and other college enrollment issues was deemed less important. Parents / guardians and college coaches were reported as the most influential advisors during the recruiting process. Athletes in different sports rated reliance on the high school coach differently. Consistently throughout the study, men’s and women’s basketball participants rated assistance from the coach during the recruiting process much higher than did soccer participants. Because of their potential influence on the lives of their students, it would be beneficial for the high school coach to learn more about the overall recruiting process and develop strategies to better serve the young men and women under their guidance.

THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL COACHES IN THE INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETICS RECRUITING PROCESS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since James Elkin's recruitment of James Whiton in 1852 to organize intercollegiate athletics' first competition, a rowing meet between Harvard and Yale (Smith, 1988), the process of recruiting young men and women to compete in intercollegiate sports has developed into one of the most controversial areas faced by higher education today. In response to the increasing popularity of college athletics and rising pressures from external constituents to succeed, colleges and universities have allowed a complex recruiting system to develop that engulfs a number of key stakeholders. The most important member of this group is the prospective student-athlete. One of the participants in the process who is situated to play a critical advisory role is the high school coach.

At its best, the current intercollegiate athletics recruiting system functions as a process that helps place prospective student-athletes in colleges and universities where they can succeed both athletically and academically. At its worst, contemporary recruiting resembles a business transaction where athletes are virtually bought and sold. No incident provides a more telling example of the challenges to control the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process than the case of Albert Means, a former Parade All-American high school football player from Memphis, TN. At the conclusion of a highly publicized federal government investigation and trial, Means' high school head coach, an assistant coach, and a prominent booster from a major NCAA Division I

institutions were convicted of what amounted to the sale of Means' services for participation in intercollegiate athletics. Former Trezevant High School head football coach Lynn Lang and prominent University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa booster Logan Young were found guilty of deciding Means' college destination by brokering a deal in which Young was charged with paying Lang \$150,000 to ensure Means attended the University of Alabama to play football. Means signed a National Letter of Intent with Alabama and subsequently enrolled in the university for the 2000 Fall semester (Buser, 2005). Although no member of the University of Alabama coaching staff was charged in the incident, the United States District Court indictment (2001) against Lang and his assistant coach, Milton Kirk, alleged that Lang asked coaches from eight NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision schools for payments as high as \$200,000 to steer Means toward their respective institutions to participate in football. During coverage of the trial, Associated Press reported that Means, who was not charged in the case, testified he allowed Lang to decide which college he would attend (2005).

While the Means' incident is an extreme case, it is a sign that high school coaches can exhibit a great deal of power and influence during the recruiting process. These factors have not escaped the concern of high school administrators. In a 2004 report on athletics and achievement in high schools, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) responded to concerns that interscholastic athletics continues to drift further and further from its intended educational purpose. Among their recommendations, the NASBE commission strongly encouraged that a system similar to teacher licensure be mandated for coaches to ensure educational goals remain part of the

interscholastic athletics experience. The NASBE proposed a standard of ethics reflecting the values of responsibility, honesty, and respect be followed by all coaches to better meet the role model expectation of the high school coach.

Today's youth are used to influential adults in their daily lives. In their work *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Howe and Strauss (2000) describe this era of youth as "the most watched over generation in memory" (p. 9), pointing to the presence of increased structure and adult supervision in their daily lives. Among those involved in attentiveness toward the Millennial generation are coaches, whether on the fields or courts of interscholastic competition or through other community or privatized sport programs. Howe and Strauss believe that Millennial youth are, among other things, both sheltered and pressured by adults. These traits set the stage for a Millennial youth to struggle making the 'right' decision on issues like what college to attend. Because the Millennial youth are also used to a strong adult presence in their lives, they may also be more likely to seek advice from those elders they trust. It is certainly feasible that a young male or female high school athlete may desire input from their interscholastic head coach when trying to decipher the current process of intercollegiate athletics recruiting and, ultimately, make the best college decision for their future.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and describe the role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletic recruiting process. The role of the coach will be defined using descriptive data collected from recruited student-athletes currently participating in NCAA Division II. By gathering critical information from the most

important stakeholders in the recruiting process, the students themselves, it is hoped the results of this study can be used to assist high school coaches in providing sound guidance to their prospective student-athletes and, in turn, improve the quality of the recruiting experience for the student.

Terms & Definitions

The primary focus of the study is on the relationship between the high school coach and the prospective student-athlete being recruited by an NCAA Division II institution. Specific terms related to the study will be defined in the following manner:

1. NCAA Division structure. The NCAA operates under an autonomous federated governance structure comprised of three divisions – Division I, Division II, and Division III. While only student-athletes currently competing in Division II participated in this study, all Divisions are referenced in this document and are defined for reader clarification.

- 1a. NCAA Division I. Division I is the highest competitive level among the NCAA Divisions and the second largest by membership. Division I institutions traditionally have the largest budgets and are allowed by rule to provide the most athletically-related financial aid among the three Divisions. Typically, Division I institutions have larger enrollments than members of the other two Divisions. However, this is not always the case.

- 1b. NCAA Division II. Division II is the smallest of the three NCAA Divisions by membership. Like Division I, Division II institutions are allowed to award athletically-related financial aid to their student-athletes.

Financial aid equivalency limits in Division II are much lower than those in Division I. Division II members are typically smaller enrollment state-supported institutions or private colleges and universities.

1c. NCAA Division III. Division III is the largest of the three Divisions by membership. The primary difference between Division III and Divisions I and II is that Division III institutions prohibit the awarding of athletically-related financial aid to its student-athletes. Similar to Division II, Division III members tend to be smaller state-supported or private institutions.

2. Recruiting. Any solicitation of a prospective student-athlete or prospective student-athlete's relatives or legal guardian(s) by a staff member or representative of athletics interests from an NCAA member institution for the purpose of securing enrollment and participation in the institution's intercollegiate athletics program by the prospective student-athlete (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.9, 2006).
3. High School Coach. The person charged with and compensated for the overall management and operation of a specific interscholastic sports team representing a particular public or private secondary school and recognized by a respective state high school athletics association.
4. Prospective Student-Athlete. A student who has started classes for the ninth grade. A student remains a prospective student-athlete until one of the following occurs: a) the student registers and enrolls in a full-time program of studies and attends class in any term of the regular academic year, excluding summer, of a

four-year college or university, or b) the student participates in regular practice or competition at a four-year college or university (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.8, 2006).

5. Recruited Prospective Student-Athlete. A prospective student-athlete subject to one of the following actions by an NCAA member institution staff member or athletics representative: a) providing the student with an official visit; b) having an arranged, in-person, off-campus encounter with the prospective student-athlete or the athlete's relatives or legal guardian(s); c) initiating or arranging telephone contact with the prospective student-athlete or the athlete's relatives or legal guardian(s) on more than one occasion; d) issuing a National Letter of Intent or an institutional written offer of athletically-related financial aid to the prospective student-athlete (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.9.1, 2006)
6. Contactable Prospective Student-Athlete. What a prospective student-athlete becomes on June 15 immediately prior to the student's senior year in high school. A contactable prospective student-athlete is one who can receive telephone calls or in-person, off-campus recruiting contact from an NCAA member institution staff member or athletics representative (NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.1, 2006)
7. Contact. Any face-to-face encounter between a prospective student-athlete or the student's relatives or legal guardian(s) and an NCAA member institution staff member or athletics representative during which dialog occurs beyond a simple exchange of greetings. Any face-to-face encounter that is prearranged or takes place on the grounds of the prospective student-athlete's educational institution or at the site of organized competition or practice involving the prospective student-

athlete shall be considered a contact, regardless of whether any conversation occurred (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.2, 2006).

8. Official Visit. A visit by a prospective student-athlete to an NCAA member institution which is financed in whole or in part by the member institution (NCAA Bylaw 13.02.12.1, 2006)
9. Unofficial Visit. A visit by a prospective student-athlete to an NCAA member institution made at the student's own expense. Prospective student-athletes making an unofficial visit may receive a maximum of three complimentary admissions to an institution's home athletics event and a meal in the institution's on-campus dining facility. An off-campus meal may be provided should all on-campus dining facilities be closed (NCAA Bylaws 13.02.12.2, 13.7.2.1, 13.7.2.1.1, 2006)
10. Recruiting Calendars. Official NCAA timelines limiting contact and evaluation periods for basketball and football and establishing dead periods in the annual recruiting cycle. A dead period is a mandated time during which no in-person on- or off-campus contact or telephone contact of a prospective student-athlete can be made by an institutional staff member or athletics representative (NCAA Bylaws 13.1.4, 13.02.3.4, 2006). Dead periods normally occur during the 48-hour period immediately preceding a National Letter of Intent signing period (Collegiate Commissioners Association, 2006).
11. NCAA Eligibility Center. Formerly known as the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse, the NCAA Eligibility Center is a subsidiary of the NCAA charged

with determining the initial-eligibility of all NCAA Division I and II student-athletes. Initial-eligibility is traditionally determined between the conclusion of the prospective student-athlete's senior year of high school and the beginning of his or her first year of collegiate enrollment (NCAA Bylaw 14.1.2.1, 2006)

12. Freshman Academic Requirements / Qualifier. A qualifier is a prospective student-athlete who has been cleared academically to participate in intercollegiate athletics at an NCAA member institution based on the determination of the NCAA Eligibility Center. In NCAA Division II, a qualifier is a high school graduate who earned a minimum 2.0 grade-point average in a core curriculum of 14 courses encompassing areas in English, mathematics, natural or physical sciences, social sciences, and other academically-oriented courses such as foreign languages, philosophy, or non-doctrinal religion. The student must also have earned a minimum Scholastic Aptitude Test score of 820 in the verbal and mathematics sections or a minimum sum American College Test score of 68. Test scores must be achieved under national testing conditions on a national testing date (NCAA Bylaw 14.3.1.1, 2006).

13. Privatized Sport. Non-scholastic sport programs such as Amateur Athletics Union (AAU), club, or travel team programs. These programs traditionally require dues or participation fees, in part, to pay coaching salaries. Privatized sport teams normally compete during seasons outside traditional high school athletics calendars (example – AAU basketball competing in spring and summer).

Statement of Research Questions

To best understand the role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process, four general areas where high school coaches are in a position to advise the prospective student-athlete will be explored – 1) issues related to athletics; 2) issues related to academics; 3) issues related to NCAA rules and procedure; and 4) other college-related enrollment and attendance issues. Questions pertaining to each area are as follows:

Research Question 1. During the recruiting process, what advisory role does the high school coach play for the prospective student-athlete on issues concerning athletics?

Research Question 1a. How helpful is the high school coach's advice concerning issues such as the appropriate level of play for the student, opportunities for playing time at various institutions, knowledge about the reputation and tradition of intercollegiate athletics programs, and knowledge about intercollegiate athletics coaching staffs?

Research Question 1b. Pertaining to athletically-related issues arising during the recruiting process, is the high school coach proactive in the advising role, such as initiating conversation with the prospective student-athlete, or reactive with discussions normally initiated by the student?

Research Question 1c. What level of assistance do other primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, such as high school guidance counselors and parents or legal guardians, provide concerning athletically-related issues for intercollegiate participation?

Research Question 2. During the recruiting process, what advisory role does the high school coach play for the prospective student-athlete on issues concerning academics?

Research Question 2a. How helpful is the high school coach's advice concerning issues such as college entrance requirements, available degree programs, and the academic reputation of various institutions?

Research Question 2b. Pertaining to academically-related issues arising during the recruiting process, is the high school coach proactive in the advising role, such as initiating conversation with the prospective student-athlete, or are discussions normally initiated by the student?

Research Question 2c. What level of assistance do other primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, such as high school guidance counselors and parents or legal guardians, provide concerning academically-related issues for college attendance?

Research Question 3. During the recruiting process, what advisory role does the high school coach play for the prospective student-athlete on issues concerning NCAA rules and procedures?

Research Question 3a. How helpful is the high school coach's advice concerning issues such as NCAA rules pertaining to contacts and evaluations, official and unofficial visits, and the recruiting calendar?

Research Question 3b. How helpful is the high school coach in advising on areas such as NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse procedures and NCAA rules pertaining to freshman academic eligibility?

Research Question 3c. Pertaining to NCAA-related issues arising during the recruiting process, is the high school coach proactive in the advising role, such as initiating conversation with the prospective student-athlete, or are discussions normally initiated by the student?

Research Question 3d. What level of assistance do other primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, such as high school guidance counselors and parents or legal guardians, provide concerning NCAA-related issues for intercollegiate participation?

Research Question 4. During the recruiting process, what advisory role does the high school coach play for the prospective student-athlete on other issues concerning college enrollment and attendance?

Research Question 4a. How helpful is the high school coach's advice concerning issues such as the non-athletic financial aid process, the locations of various schools, social development opportunities for the student, and career goals?

Research Question 4b. Pertaining to general college-related issues arising during the recruiting process, is the high school coach proactive in the advising role, such as initiating conversation with the prospective student-athlete, or are discussions normally initiated by the student?

Research Question 4c. What level of assistance do other primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, such as high school guidance counselors and parents or legal guardians, provide concerning other general issues related to college attendance?

Each research question should help gain information needed to provide a comprehensive description of the advisory role high school coaches play in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Educators have a responsibility to assist in the growth and development of their students. This includes serving in a mentoring capacity in specialty areas coinciding with specific responsibilities held in the educational structure. Mentoring connects experienced professionals with those in need of guidance (Lough, 2001). For example, a student interested in college degree programs in history or biology might seek advice from their respective high school instructors in these areas during the information gathering and decision making process. Similarly, as the competitive sport specialist on campus, the high school coach should be able to assist the student in making decisions related to participating in intercollegiate sport. While explaining how to mentor female athletes toward the coaching profession, Lough (2001) states that coaching is a natural mentoring profession with roles that include providing guidance to one's students, instilling motivation, and serving as a career advisor.

Rationale

In *A Call to Action*, The Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2001) refers to recruiting as “the bane of many a coach’s existence” (p. 32), but the effect of the recruiting process spans broader than the college coach. The evolution of recruiting has created a network of stakeholders who actively participate in the decision by a young male or female prospective student-athlete to attend a particular institution and compete in intercollegiate athletics. These stakeholders include the student, parents or legal guardians, and the institutions involved in the transition – the

high school that provides the student and the college or university that recruits and enrolls the student. But, as pointed out in The Knight Foundation report, the primary representatives of each institution's respective sport programs, the coaches, also play a key role in the process. High school coaches serve as important mentors during a critical growth and development stage when teenagers mature toward adulthood. Also during this time, college coaches are actively seeking young prospective student-athletes who meet appropriate physical and academic standards to fill institutional sport rosters and either build or perpetuate the success of their programs. As the Means' case showed, however, it is a process susceptible to scandal.

High school and other youth sport coaches are in a position to play an important role in the lives of the young people they instruct by helping shape their growth and development. In his book entitled *Successful Coaching*, Rainer Martens (2004) refers to coaching as "a helping profession" (p. 442) and notes three primary goals coaches tend to set for their careers: 1) producing winning teams; 2) fostering an atmosphere in which the student has fun; and 3) the physical, psychological, and social development of the athlete. Martens' work is geared primarily toward youth sport coaches, but the common goals he mentions are certainly appropriate for high school coaches as well. In addition, a relationship can be made between these coaching goals, particularly as they pertain to success on the field and the overall development of the student, and the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. As one responsible, in part, for the social, psychological, and physical development of the student, the high school coach is an important catalyst in the preparation of young men and women who seek to be successful competitors in

intercollegiate athletics. Success in the physical development of capable young athletes can lead to success in competition and, ultimately, the development of a winning team. Winning teams attract college recruiters. For example, one of the most successful high school sport teams in the country, the football program at Independence High School in Charlotte, NC, won six consecutive state interscholastic football championships in their division while at one point amassing a winning streak of over 100 games. When the 2006-07 school year began, 28 former Independence High School football players were on intercollegiate football rosters around the country (<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/sports/colleges/15466670.htm> , 2006).

While some of the coaching principles Martens presents span the broader coaching community, there are certain distinctions between coaches at different levels or classifications of competition as well. For example, the high school coach, as opposed to the privatized sport coach, is in a position to serve as a link between the prospective student-athlete's athletic and academic life. In his or her role as teacher, the high school coach is an educator with the opportunity to nurture and empower their athletes (Naylor, 2007). Their assistance in the student's growth and development process could certainly include an advisory role during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. As sport offerings by colleges and universities increase, the role of high school athletics as a reservoir to fill new squads and boost enrollment also becomes more important (Sage, 1990). With more teams come more roster spots and growing numbers of parents, coaches, and students see the athletics scholarship as a viable route to subsidize college costs (Pennington, 2006; Sage, 1990; Watts, 2002). Although the NCAA estimates only

around three percent of high school senior boy's and girl's basketball participants earn roster spots as freshmen on NCAA teams, that percentage equates to slightly more than 9,000 student-athletes. In addition, the NCAA estimates that over 8,000 and 5,500 freshman roster spots exist in baseball and men's soccer, respectively (NCAA, 2007). One must also remember that NCAA estimates do not include students participating at NAIA institutions or junior and community colleges. As these thousands of young people face college and athletics participation decisions, the high school coach, as a member of the education community, can play a vital role.

Gaps in the current literature and limits in the research population provide additional rationale for the study. The focus of contemporary recruiting and college choice literature targets two specific topics. First, trade publications offer assistance to coaches, parents, and guidance counselors serving in advisory roles for young student-athletes as they prepare to attend college. This assistance tends to appear in the form of 'How to' articles, typically listing what one should or should not do to have a successful recruiting experience, and is generated primarily through the opinion and experiences of college or high school coaches and administrators. Second are research-based studies focusing on influential factors considered by prospective students when choosing a college. While each of these respective collections provides important information, few articles and studies are generated using student input to describe the quality and importance of the assistance they receive.

High school coaches are in a position to greatly impact the lives and futures of the young people they guide through interscholastic athletics. As students reach the end of

their high school participation, many find themselves in the midst of the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process, some being courted by multiple colleges and universities from a wide range of competitive levels and from many different locations. Under these circumstances, high school coaches can provide valuable information to students, parents, and college coaches. As a resource for the colleges and universities, the high school coach can serve as an evaluator of a student's athletic and academic abilities. In serving the student, high school coaches can provide a buffer from overzealous college coaches, give advice on quality and reputation of college athletic programs, and counsel students and parents on issues dealing with levels of competition, athletics award funding, and academic eligibility. Thus, proper research and analysis is needed to appropriately determine the current and desired role high school coaches maintain during this tense process for their students.

Collecting data from NCAA Division II athletes provides additional rationale for the study. Many student-related intercollegiate athletics studies exist, but the vast majority of these inquiries generate results from two primary sources – participants in NCAA Division I or Division III. The prominence of these two data sources in current literature is understandable. First, many NCAA Division I members are large, research-oriented institutions with graduate programs and faculty geared toward performing extensive studies and contributing to disciplinary literature. NCAA Division III institutions are unique because, unlike NCAA Divisions I and II, Division III members cannot award athletically-related financial aid. Collecting data from NCAA Division II institutions also is a viable research direction. Over 80,000 student-athletes from 282

active member institutions participate in Division II (NCAA, 2007). Additionally, while athletically-related financial aid is allowed, scholarship limits for NCAA Division II institutions virtually ensure that the majority of team members in most programs receive only partial athletic scholarship assistance and in lower amounts than their Division I counterparts. Because of these scholarship limitations, NCAA Division II programs also regularly carry a number of non-scholarship team members, commonly referred to as walk-ons. Although some Division II participants may have been recruited by NCAA Division I programs, many end up at Division II institutions because size or skill has been determined to be a step below Division I caliber. Normally, when a student decides to attend an NCAA Division II institution, they are not lured by the financial and publicity perks available in Division I programs. And yet, many are still rewarded for their participation by receiving an athletic scholarship.

Materials exist to help high school coaches who wish to provide better assistance for their student-athletes during the recruiting process. However, few of these reports provide student-generated information, nor do they present knowledge gained through appropriate research. Whether through former or current administrators or specialized news features, the current practices recommended to high school coaches are compiled primarily from opinion and everyday experiences. Thus, the goals of this study are to provide critical information from student-athletes who have navigated the contemporary recruiting process that can be examined and offered to both improve the experiences of the prospective student-athlete and assist high school coaches in providing sound guidance to their students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tensions in higher education between intercollegiate athletics and their sponsor institutions are well documented. As colleges and universities continue to search for ways to improve the quality of academic instruction, they are met with rising costs magnified by struggling state and federal government budgets trying to keep pace with support through operational, grant, and loan programs. All the while, the dynamic of the intercollegiate athletics arms race increases the burden on college boards, presidents, faculties, and students to absorb costs drifting further and further outside the traditional educational experience. In many cases, the student is asked to supplement vast cost increases in athletics through higher fees, commonly referred to as student activity fees or student athletic fees. A *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* report stated that student fees accounted for 73 percent of the \$13.8 million athletics department budget at Florida International University in 2004-05 and would contribute an equal portion of the \$10.9 million budget for athletics at Florida Atlantic University in 2005-06 (Hutton, 2005).

If one scans the library shelves for information about intercollegiate athletics, a number of contemporary titles can be found. Works such as James Shulman and William Bowen's *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (2001), Murray Sperber's *College Sports, Inc.: The Athletic Department vs. The University* (1990), and Walter Byers' *Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Exploiting College Athletes* (1995) all pointedly discuss the tenuous relationship between academe and athletics in higher

education. And yet, the issues raised and discussed are not contemporary at all. The problems plaguing intercollegiate athletics today date back to the 19th century inception of intercollegiate sport competition. From the first intercollegiate athletics event in 1852, when railroad magnate James Elkins recruited Yale College's James Whiton to organize a rowing meet between Harvard and Yale (Smith, 1988), through the litany of contemporary scandals involving college and university athletic departments at all levels of competition, higher education has been faced with pressures and challenges to manage what has become, at its highest level, a multi-billion dollar entertainment business. Intercollegiate athletics' historic initial contest on the waters of Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, was a little noticed sign of things to come. To stage the event, which encompassed eight days and culminated in a Harvard victory, Elkins absorbed the travel and competition expenses for both institutions (Smith, 1988). This financial underwriting of an intercollegiate sport competition by an outsider to higher education set the tone for the development of a competitive structure that had very little in common with the normal operation of academe.

Recruiting – A Brief History

The era between 1890 and 1910 in the United States was one of great social and economic change. During the early 1900s, when widespread corruption in the business world was being exposed by a new breed of journalist dubbed 'Muckrakers' by President Theodore Roosevelt (Bailey & Kennedy, 1979), intercollegiate athletics came under scrutiny as well through a two-part article in *McClure's* magazine by Henry Beach Needham (1905). Since the late 1800's, charges of growing commercialism in

intercollegiate athletics had been made. Needham's articles explained many of the commercialization and operational issues plaguing intercollegiate athletics at the time – payment and inducements for athletes, professional coaching, the financing of athletics, the brutality of play in football, and recruiting.

Needham's investigative reporting seemed to confirm that the issues and controversies surrounding intercollegiate athletics recruiting paralleled the growth and development of athletics in higher education. Needham's work identified recruiting practices as one of the ills of intercollegiate athletics. Needham referred to recruiting as the "process of proselyting" (Needham, 1905, p. 0_004) and went so far as to declare the process the most deplorable aspect of intercollegiate athletics at the time. Others seemed to agree with Needham, who quoted a preparatory school principal as remarking, "the proselyting evil is one of the most corrupting influences to which a young boy can be subjected. It acts not merely on his athletic standards; it undermines his whole moral make-up, and gives him false and superficial views of life and his position in the world" (Needham, 1905, p. 0_004). Needham detailed a number of recruiting issues prevalent in the day such as financial offers, specialized student recruiters, and the fraudulent administration of college entrance exams. He admonished parents for not emphasizing the insulting nature of inducements for athletics to their sons. "He should learn before entering preparatory school that his athletic skill is something to be cherished as a precious possession; that under only the most urgent need should it be parted with for money or 'indirect' compensation – and then done openly and with the manliness to sacrifice amateur standing" (Needham, 1905, p. 0_004).

The work of Needham and others helped fuel President Roosevelt's reform agenda and, ultimately, the founding of the NCAA in 1905 as an administrative body to oversee intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 1988). Over time, some improvements were made in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. In its famous three-part study on intercollegiate athletics, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching acknowledged that alumni involvement and the subsidizing of college costs for athletes remained a concern. However, the report also confidently stated that the recruiting problem was improving (Cowley, 1930). Although some saw improvements, concern regarding recruiting practices never fully diminished. In a 1958 article for *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled "College Athletics: Their Pressure on the High Schools", Eugene Youngert expressed alarm over what he considered the dangerous professionalization of college sport and the subsequent exploitation of high school athletes through the recruiting process. Professionalization was also the issue in *The Atlantic Monthly* article "The Scramble for College Athletes" (1965) written by then Hamline University President, Paul Giddens. Giddens spoke out against the concept of athletics scholarships and, although his prediction that intercollegiate athletics could not exist under such a structure and would soon be eliminated did not come true, his concerns over the intensifying race by colleges and universities to secure the best athletic talent for their respective teams were warranted.

Modern-era recruiting was shaped in large part during the months following World War II. In an effort to avoid the problems suffered after World War I when thousands of soldiers returned to an economy that could not provide enough jobs,

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act in 1944. Commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, the legislation created an avenue for returning servicemen to attend college by subsidizing tuition and book costs as well as providing subsistence allowances (Leckie, 1992). While the G.I. Bill was not intended to impact intercollegiate athletics specifically, the effects on recruiting, particularly in the sport of football, were great (Reimann, 2004).

Many entered World War II as boys in their late teens, only to return to the states as hardened war veterans in their early 20's. Some of these returning servicemen had a year or two of college football experience prior to their military service, while others simply sought to take advantage of the federal government's educational benefits. Regardless, colleges and universities looking to quickly re-establish football programs decimated during the war years due to the shortage of college-aged men actively encouraged these veterans to attend their respective schools. And attend they did. Hundreds of thousands of young men entered higher education in the year immediately following the war and the trend continued as more and more veterans ended their service (Andrews, 1984). To support the allowances of the G.I. Bill, the NCAA allowed returning servicemen who had participated in college football for a year to attend any school of their choice without losing a year of eligibility. The influx of returning veterans and the ease with which they could attend the college of their choice began a recruiting period dubbed by Andrews (1984) as "college football's all-time shopping spree" (p. 24). The bidding war between colleges for top returning players coupled with the veterans' willingness to peddle their services transformed the intercollegiate

recruiting process from the largely regional competition of the pre-war years to a national search for talent among the country's largest and most powerful institutions of higher learning. On the heels of this transition from a regional to national endeavor, the recruiting process received an additional jolt when the NCAA legalized the awarding of athletics-specific financial aid to college and university student-athletes in 1952 (Rooney, 1980). Thus, the national search for talent and awarding of scholarships solely to compete in intercollegiate athletics became the norm.

Although the intercollegiate athletics recruiting issue continued to worry both coaches and administrators, little objective reporting about the process itself had been done. Rooney's work *The Recruiting Game: Toward a New System of Intercollegiate Sports* (1980) provided both an informative, comprehensive history of the growth of intercollegiate athletics recruiting and a helpful guideline revealing what college coaches had established as a basic recruiting process. Although focusing primarily on the recruiting practices of major university football programs, Rooney painted a clear picture of recruiting during the 1970s and 1980s. Particularly emphasized in the process was the importance of relationship building between college and high school coaches, who were seen as important sources of information concerning the high school athlete's athletics abilities.

In 1984, the next great change to the intercollegiate athletics recruiting climate occurred with the advent of "recruiting networks" (Zimbalist, 1999, p. 138), the commercially-grounded recruiting structure developed by major athletics apparel companies. With the help of the NCAA, the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) had

created a summer camp program designed to showcase some of the nation's top male high school basketball players to college coaches. Since the camps brought together a large number of the nation's top recruits in one competitive setting, the events were extremely popular with college coaches. The camps grew and so did commercial interest in the events. In one of the first acts of commercialization to develop in the recruiting process, Nike began to sponsor the camps in 1984. Adidas soon followed. The shoe companies hoped to develop advertising links and relationships between top high school players, coaches, and schools as potential future product endorsers. Coaches, in this case, were those of the non-scholastic administered AAU, not a prospect's high school, and were in most cases paid handsomely by the shoe companies. The impact changed the recruiting process for top-level basketball talent, which had traditionally been grounded in relationships between college and high school coaches. Robert Gibbons, noted national recruiting analyst, stated that "public schools are literally being stripped of their best players to go to Nike or Adidas-sponsored schools – and there is a strong correlation of what shoes these kids wear and where they go to college" (Zimbalist, 1999, p. 140). Gibbons went on to state that AAU coaches paid by the shoe companies regularly advise young athletes to leave their current high school programs to play for a shoe-sponsored school (Zimbalist, 1999).

As the role of athletics in higher education changes, additional challenges in the area of recruiting emerge. As pointed out by The Knight Foundation's Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in its report *A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education* (2001), changes in intercollegiate athletics are a direct result of a

cultural change in American sport from that of an educational tool that promotes amateurism to what is, in essence, a subset of professional sport. In this increasingly professional market, intercollegiate athletics coaches face growing pressure to recruit a product that will lead to success on the field or in the gymnasium. There are over 1,000 member schools in the NCAA (NCAA, 2007). In addition, hundreds more colleges and universities participate in athletics ranging from National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) institutions to a vast array of junior colleges. Each participates in an annual search for the best athletes available in a wide range of sports. With competition fierce and the emphasis on winning as a definition of success in intercollegiate athletics growing, it is not unreasonable to believe intercollegiate coaches would step outside the boundaries of acceptable ethical and moral conduct to convince a prospective student-athlete to attend a certain institution. A review of the NCAA's Legislative Services Database on major and secondary rules infractions supports this belief. In a three-year period between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2006, over 2,800 major and secondary recruiting infractions by Division I and Division II institutions were investigated and reported by the NCAA (<https://goomer.ncaa.org/wdbctx/LSDBis/lbdbi.home>) .

The Continuing Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics Recruiting

Recent studies have shown that emphasis on student-athlete recruitment continues to change the dynamic of college campuses across the country. In their work *The Game of Life* (2001), James Shulman and William Bowen use data from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the College Board, and UCLA's Cooperative Institutional Research Program to identify a number of trends in contemporary intercollegiate athletics. Data

related to recruiting revealed evidence that intercollegiate athletics alters the process by which students are recruited to college. Shulman and Bowen pointed out that in 1999 a student-athlete seeking admission to an institution not offering athletic scholarships, whether a member of NCAA Division III or the Division I Ivy League, had a 48 percent greater chance of being admitted to the institution than a non-athlete. While much of the data used in Shulman and Bowen's work was over 10 years old at the time of publication, recent reports indicate that admissions advantages for prospective student-athletes at non-scholarship institutions still exist. In Bill Pennington's *New York Times* series entitled *The Athlete's Edge*, the recruiting and admissions practices of Haverford College, a selective, private, liberal arts college located outside Philadelphia, PA, were critiqued. In the opening article of the series, *In Recruiting, a Big Push from Small Colleges, Too* (9/11/2005), Pennington reports that since 40 percent of Haverford's student body participate in intercollegiate athletics, interested high school juniors and seniors view sport participation as an additional advantage to gain admission. Prospective student-athletes hoping to enroll at Haverford jockey to earn a position on a coach's recruiting list, a ranking of preferred athletic recruits sent to the admissions office by the head coach of each team. While earning a spot on the coach's list does not guarantee admission, it is seen as an advantage.

At an institution such as Haverford College, where admission standards remain high regardless of athletic ability and scholarships based on athletic ability are not awarded, the percentage of athletes in the campus population may not cause great disruption in the academic culture. However, Shulman and Bowen (2001) caution

against the growing practice of placing high emphasis on athletic ability when determining admission to the institution, stating that the academic environment of a campus may ultimately be compromised. This trend could be particularly dangerous for less selective, small, private colleges who rely heavily on tuition revenue to supplement annual operating budgets. Teams may be asked to carry roster numbers much higher than needed for competition simply to generate more tuition income. Shulman and Bowen voice concern for any small, liberal-arts college with half the student body recruited for athletic purposes.

While the audience *The Game of Life* (Shulman & Bowen, 2001) and its companion title, *Reclaiming the Game* (Bowen & Levin, 2003) addresses is narrowed to primarily elite liberal arts institutions and a handful of academically respected major research universities, the titles provide a glimpse of current problems and trends in the recruiting process. Using dated but comprehensive, general descriptive data, each work presents sound arguments about the dangers of increased recruiting costs, the advantages recruited student-athletes hold in the admissions process, and the changing dynamic of student bodies made up of increasing numbers of enrollees brought to colleges to fill sport rosters. Bowen and Levin (2003) also discuss the evolution of recruiting as a primary coaching responsibility, the rise and effects of sport specialization on the recruiting, and propose changes in the process itself.

The Recruits – How do they choose?

Concerns about the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process and the effect of its end result on colleges and universities are well documented. Accusations that the process

mirrors a business transaction can still be defended and higher education has reason to remain vigilant to the challenges athletics recruiting present. Engulfed in the much criticized, and often maligned, process is the primary stakeholder in the entire sequence of events – the student or, as defined by the NCAA, the prospective student-athlete.

Pressures on college and university admission staffs and administrations over enrollment have always existed. Subsequently, much research has been done in the area of student college choice. A number of studies focusing on the college choices of specific demographic groups employ the conceptual framework of Hossler and Gallagher (1987), which proposes that college choice exists in three separate and distinct phases – predisposition, search, and choice. In the predisposition phase, students make the basic decision whether or not to pursue postsecondary education. During this time, students may rely on significant persons in their lives to help reach a decision. These could be family members, teachers, or other adults the students respect. Should a student decide to pursue college attendance, the search phase begins. The search phase is a time in which students begin to identify key characteristics that may be important to them in choosing a college, then searching for institutions that meet a set of self-created criteria. Students may search for schools offering a certain major or located in a specific state or region of the country. Following the search phase, in which a list of attendance possibilities is developed, the choice phase begins. Here, students will ultimately choose the college they will attend.

Although the end result of the student's journey toward college attendance, actually choosing and enrolling in an institution, is the primary interest of most higher

education administrators, research exploring the predisposition and search phases has also been conducted. Pope and Fermin (2003) sought to discover what factors were most influential to students when choosing whether or not to attend college. Using the results of survey data generated from 28 five-point Likert-scale questions and collected from 219 students at a large research institution, Pope and Fermin learned that the overwhelming factors in deciding college attendance were personal and career goals, along with socioeconomic advancement. Results of the survey showed that the possibility of achieving a personal career goal (4.87), meeting the personal goal of earning a college degree (4.82), better job options upon completing a college degree (4.80), and the chance to make more money with a college degree (4.77) as the top four factors in student choices to attend college. Personal goals were not, however, the only factors guiding student decisions. Rated among the top 10 responses were items directly related to high school attendance. Completing a high school academic program that prepared the student for college and support and encouragement from teachers were additional items deemed important by students. Other influences included the support and encouragement of high school guidance counselors or other school personnel. The study reports a variety of variances based on ethnicity of the participants, but also notes this path as a weakness. The study had no specific scholastic athletics component in its methodology and, although it is not out of the realm of possibility respondents may have identified a coach as either teacher or other school personnel, no such designation is made.

Although not focusing specifically on athletics, studies conducted by Christiansen, Davidson, Roper, Sprinkles, and Thomas (2003), Baksh and Hoyt (2001)

and Hodges and Barbuto (2002) provide insight into the search and choice factors considered by high school students. Christiansen et al. compare the differences in how high school juniors, traditionally in Hossler and Gallagher's search phase, and high school seniors who have narrowed college choices and been admitted use the internet to obtain college information. The approach Christiansen et al. take provides interesting background on what students see as important information during the middle and final stages of Hossler and Gallagher's model (1987). In the study, 406 students divided into two groups – juniors (n=185) and seniors (n=221) – were surveyed during their attendance at separate admissions events at a large research university in the Midwest. Areas of review included frequency of institutional web site use, communication options through the web, and important web topics in the college selection process. The comparison of college selection factors clearly separated juniors and seniors into search and choice categories. Juniors were more interested in finding out admissions requirements, information about academic major options, monitoring application status, or learning more about campuses through tools such as virtual tours. These categories indicate students are looking for various options and trying to establish a set of criteria to look for in a college. Seniors, on the other hand, were done looking for options and seemed ready to choose. Instead of showing interest in monitoring their applications online, seniors were more interested in finding out financial aid and housing information. While juniors deemed communication with admissions counselors as important, seniors were more interested in personal contact. This indicated seniors were seeking more

specific details about particular campuses to judge fit, clearly identified as a factor of choice.

For admissions staffs around the nation, the student's choice phase is most important. Hodges and Barbuto (2002) chose to explore student decisions based on demographic variables, while Baksh and Hoyt (2001) tested the effect of one common choice factor and its relationship to college selection.

Hodges and Barbuto used structured telephone interviews to collect data identifying key factors in college choice decisions. The demographic variables tested were centered on whether students were from urban or rural settings. Each student interviewed (n=49) was a non-resident of the state in which the college was located and also a recipient of merit-based scholarship assistance determined by standardized test scores and class rank. Descriptive results between the two groups were similar. Both urban and rural students placed high importance on financial aid, value, career preparation, faculty quality, and program quality as factors determining college selection. Among the top factors identified, facilities, ranked highly by students from rural backgrounds, and academic reputation, favored by students from urban areas, were the only that differed. When comparing means for significance, however, only one category, the significance of the campus visit, differed statistically with rural area students deeming the item more important than urban students. While the study revealed little of statistical importance and the sample was small, Hodges and Burbuto were able to provide a basic description of factors influencing college choice.

The most important factor identified by students in the Hodges and Burbuto study was financial aid. This item was explored in more detail by Baksh and Hoyt (2001) in their study on the effects receiving academic scholarships had on college attendance. Using information gathered from institutional research obtained during the student recruitment process and student information surveys administered by American College Testing (ACT), 1,288 freshman applications for academic merit scholarships were compared. Results showed that for students identified as academically-gifted, receiving financial aid in the form of merit scholarships was the most significant factor used in deciding college choice. While the location of the institution and academic ability of the student were also identified as influences, the study discovered that students were more than twice as likely to attend an institution when offered a merit scholarship.

A number of studies have been completed identifying factors student-athletes find important when choosing a college. Comprised of primarily descriptive studies using survey data, research in this area focuses heavily, although not exclusively, on participants in NCAA Division I and has resulted in a body of knowledge that identifies no single factor as the predominant decider in students' college choices. Doyle and Gaeth (1990) surveyed 605 Division I baseball (n=344) and softball (n=261) participants using a data collection tool comprised of 32 choice sets based on the principles of Information Integration Theory, a mathematical approach in which information gathered is averaged after each item is assigned a weight and value (Anderson, 1973). Results of the study showed that athletic scholarship amount carried the most weight overall for the sample when choosing which college to attend. The area of greatest difference was that

of academic program, with women placing far more value on the academic attribute than men. The authors hypothesized that male players, having far more professional opportunities in baseball than women did in softball, felt making a professional team was possible and, thus, placed less emphasis on academic factors. Doyle and Gaeth stated that their results were far different than those of previous studies, suggesting that financial need had a much greater impact in college choice than many thought. While the study's sample size was large, the sports surveyed, particularly baseball, traditionally have less scholarship money per player at their disposal. For example, with squad sizes averaging over 30 players, baseball currently is allowed to award a scholarship equivalency maximum of 11.7 grants. Division I Bowl Series Subdivision football teams are allowed 85 full financial counters (NCAA, 2006).

Although the data collection tool resembled a traditional survey, the manner in which Doyle and Gaeth constructed and analyzed their data was unique. In a method similar to this, Klenosky, Templin, and Troutman (2001) utilized means-end theory to examine what attributes of the college chosen were important in selecting that particular school over others under consideration. Means-end theory assumes that individuals make choices based on values, referred to as an end-state of existence, and that consumers will identify a variety of attributes that meet the needs of a certain value (Gutman, 1982). Using a data organization model known as laddering, commonly associated with means-end theory, Klenosky et al. collected responses from 27 Division I football players. Analysis resulted in the identification of seven attributes deemed important in each student's respective college choice – the head coach and coaching staff, the competition

schedule of the team, facilities, the opportunity for playing time, location of the school, academic programs, and acquaintances on the team. By integrating the consequences and values of specific attributes, the researchers could determine the importance of each. For example, the head coach and coaching staff related to three positive consequences students desired – improvement, playing time, and feeling comfortable on the team. Each consequence ultimately related to a set of values – security, achievement, a sense of belonging, and having fun. While Klenosky et al. chose a unique method of data collection and analysis, the sample size is small and limited in its ability to make generalizations to a larger population.

As could be expected, the survey method gleaned descriptive data is also a common tool chosen to study factors in college choice for prospective student-athletes. Garbert, Hale, and Montvalo (1999), Slabik (2002), Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, and Palmer (2003) and Pauline, Pauline, and Stevens (2004) all use more traditional survey data collection and analysis in their respective studies. However, the sample sets in these studies differ greatly, as do the results.

Letawsky et al. (2003) present strictly descriptive analysis and results in their study of 135 first-year participants at a Division I research institution. Using the Intercollegiate Student-Athlete Questionnaire, a variation of the 30-item Student-Athlete College Choice Profile Scale (Garbert et al., 1999), data reveal that degree programs were the highest rated factor of choice for the students, followed by the head coach, academic support services, the community in and surrounding the institution, and athletics heritage and tradition. No financial aid-related factors, such as athletics scholarship or non-

athletics aid, were found to carry high importance. This differs a great deal from Doyle and Gaeth (1990) who reported athletics scholarship as the most important fact for over 600 Division I baseball and softball participants. While the sample size of the Letawsky et al. study is moderate, its results are limited in their generalization to Division I institutions, possibly even research institutions.

Pauline et al. (2004) move a couple of steps further in their data analysis by surveying and comparing college choice factors among intercollegiate baseball players from Divisions I (n=105), II (n=102), and III (n=113). Data were collected from 320 participants enrolled at 12 Midwest colleges and universities using the 32-item Influential Factors Survey for Student-Athletes. Descriptive analysis showed that whether or not the college had a winning program was the top overall factor among the three divisions. However, when compared against each other, each division exhibited a unique choice factor. The Division I respondents mirrored the overall finding by identifying a winning program as the most important factor when choosing a college. However, Division II and Division III participants differed in their opinions. Division II respondents stated that financial aid was their top concern while Division III participants listed academics as their most important factor. It is understandable why these results occurred. Division II participants are eligible to receive athletically-related financial aid by NCAA rule. However, the equivalency limits allowed are lower than those given in Division I. Baseball squad sizes tend to be similar, so a Division II team must spread fewer scholarship dollars to team members than those in Division I. Division III institutions are

not allowed to award athletically-related financial aid and are traditionally viewed as more academically-focused institutions.

The Pauline et al. (2004) study shows strength in its sample size and the effort to produce results from each of the NCAA Divisions. However, the study is limited to participants in one sport – baseball – and therefore cannot be seen as a descriptor of college choice factors for a broad range of intercollegiate student-athletes.

Garbert et al. (1999) seem to present the most comprehensive study when considering the depth and extent of sample size. After developing the 30-item Student-Athlete College Choice Profile Scale, data were collected from 246 freshmen student-athletes from NCAA Division I, II, and NAIA institutions. The study included male (n=177) and female (n=69) participants and also had a mix of athletics scholarship and non-scholarship recipients (n=158, 88). Similar to the Klenosky et al. (2001) findings, the Garbert et al. study determined the college head coach as the number one overall factor in college choice decisions. However, Klenosky et al. reported solely on Division I football players. Further analysis by Garbert et al. through isolation and comparison of groups revealed results different than those of Klenosky et al. Descriptive analysis by Garber et al. found academic support services as the top deciding factor for Division I participants. Division II participants listed school location as their top choice, while NAIA student-athletes mirrored the overall result by identifying the college head coach as the primary factor of choice. When comparing gender using MANOVA procedures, Garber et al. learned that male and female responses were similar. While Gabert et al. provided strength to their study by using a broader research population between three

different competitive classifications and using both male and female sports, one noticeable omission was made during data collection. Pauline et al. (2004) discovered in a later study that financial aid considerations were a top choice factor among Division II baseball players. In the Gabert et al. study, however, no variable related to financial aid was tested. Since Division II and NAIA institutions operate under athletics scholarship restrictions, athletically-related aid to student-athletes is limited. Omitting this simple variable from consideration weakens the results of Gabert et al.

Slabik's study (2002), while not reported in a peer-reviewed journal, exhibited processes of a formal research project. Focusing specifically on NCAA Division III participants, Slabik obtained completed surveys from 281 subjects providing information identifying the most important factors considered in choosing a college. Results indicated the opportunity to play was the most important determinant of college choice. Also ranking highly were the academic rating of the institution, financial aid received, and a low faculty-student ratio. The study is presented as an introduction to an article advising stakeholders about best practices in the recruiting process. The study results do give some insight into a specific demographic of the NCAA student-athlete population, the Division III participant.

Although Garbert et al. (1999) do not provide a breakdown of survey subjects by competitive division or sport, their use of a large sample size of males and females from three levels of competition helps them provide the best overall view of the factors important to prospective-student athletes when choosing a college. Still, when considered as a body of work, studies considering college choice factors for future

intercollegiate student-athletes show little similarity. Few studies report on a population beyond NCAA Division I (Garbert et al., 1999; Pauline et al., 2004; Slabik, 2002). In addition, the overall findings are scattered. Depending on one's study of choice, the most important choice factors for Division I student-athletes could be athletics scholarship (Doyle & Gaeth, 1990), academic support services (Garbert et al., 1999), the head coach and coaching staff (Klenosky et al., 2001), degree programs (Letawsky et al., 2003), or a winning program (Pauline et al., 2004). Even among the few studies that included data from smaller competitive divisions, results varied. Garbert et al. (1999) found that school location was the most important factor for Division II participants, while respondents to Pauline et al. (2004) listed financial aid. NAIA participants identified the head coach as the most important factor (Garbert et al., 1999). Division III student-athletes responded differently in separate studies. Pauline et al. (2004) identified academics as the top choice factor in his study of baseball participants while Slabik (2002) listed the opportunity to play as the number one determinant.

Recruiting Advice

Concerns exist among some in higher education that the current direction of intercollegiate athletics recruiting and administrative focus on enrollment numbers could dangerously change the demographic of today's student body from a majority of primarily academically-focused students to one where 50 percent or more of the students must balance the demands of intercollegiate athletics participation with their studies, thus lessening the long-term impact of higher education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Pennington, 2005; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Yet, as institutions continue to add new sports and,

subsequently, new participation opportunities, the quest of the high school student to use athletics as an advantage to gain admission will increase as well. With literally thousands of available roster spots to incoming freshmen each year (NCAA, 2006), what are prospective student-athletes doing in high school to catch the eyes of college recruiters?

There is a noticeable lack of research-based evidence documenting the important steps prospective student-athletes should take to be successfully recruited. However, a number of ‘helpful hint’ articles do exist directed specifically toward the primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, including both high school and college coaches, prospective student-athletes, high school administrators and guidance counselors, and parents. These articles tend to appear in trade publications with an audience that includes coaches, athletics administrators, educators, and other persons involved with interscholastic, intercollegiate, and privatized sport. In the area of recruiting, trade publications provide a short, quick source for advice on how a student can initiate and manage the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Advice typically comes from current or former college coaches, usually from small institutions, or high school athletics administrators. There rarely seems to be much change in the advice given or the target audience of these articles and a common thread of general hints usually is forwarded to students, parents, and high school coaches.

Although these articles are primarily opinion- rather than research-based, the fact that the authors are traditionally involved in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process give the works some merit. There is virtually universal agreement on the recruiting hint lists supplied by these sources, particularly with advice that prospective student-athletes

be prepared academically, initiate contact with colleges of choice, and visit a variety of campuses (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999; Klungseth, 2004; O'Donnell, 1997). High school coaches are encouraged to initiate and remain in contact with college coaches, respond to college questionnaires, provide additional athletic and academic information, and counsel the athletes under their watch (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999; Klungseth, 2004; O'Donnell, 1997). Other hints to parents, students, and coaches include being familiar with NCAA rules (Klungseth, 2004), not eliminating schools too early in the recruiting process (O'Donnell, 1997), and exploring different financial aid options (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999).

What trade publications present in a short, bulleted-item approach is expanded on in a unique work by Becker (2002), which focuses on the current intercollegiate athletics recruiting process in women's basketball. Becker outlines the major components of the recruiting process, including providing a general lesson in recruiting basics, delineating the talent levels for the three NCAA divisions, and giving insight into the experiences of student-athletes, parents, and coaches involved in the process. Presented in journalistic style with the majority of information coming from the informal interviews of a variety of recruiting stakeholders, Becker's book contains some technical inaccuracies concerning NCAA recruiting rules and procedure and the author seems to forward opinion as fact at times. However, the work does provide a more specific, detailed account of recruiting for the casual reader interested in intercollegiate athletics and adds to the 'helpful hint' options available to intercollegiate athletics recruiting stakeholders.

While some of Becker's suggestions to current prospective student-athletes facing the recruiting process are similar to those forwarded in recent trade publications, her work seems to focus more on competitive preparation for being recruited and less on academic preparedness. Becker encourages prospective student-athletes to be involved in summer competition programs, either through camps or clinics held on college campuses, and to be realistic in their own talent evaluation. Consistent with other advice (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999; Klungseth, 2004; O'Donnell, 1997), Becker encourages students to research the colleges they are interested in and make multiple campus visits.

While the primary audience for helpful hint articles tends to be prospective student-athletes, some sources provide tips for specific stakeholder groups, such as high school coaches (Becker, 2002; Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999). Whether presented through commentary from current or former high school and college coaches or in list fashion, the message seems consistent - it is important for high school coaches to provide advice to their students concerning the recruiting process and communicate with college coaches, serving as a liaison providing information concerning academic and athletic ability.

Some publications have chosen to provide more detailed coverage of the recruiting process and issues related to student-athletes, putting themselves in a position to be successfully recruited. Two themes are the importance of communication during recruiting and an emphasis on prospective student-athletes balancing athletic and academic commitments.

Hoch (2005) emphasizes communication and summarizes a series of informational sessions conducted for high school athletes and their families designed to

help answer questions about the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. One primary focus of these sessions was to address two inaccuracies Hoch felt saddled the high school student-athlete and his or her parents during the recruiting process. First, Hoch erased the financial aid fallacy that an athletic scholarship covering the entire cost of school, commonly referred to as a full-ride, is the norm, not the exception. Hoch also emphasized the importance of academic progress and performance for the high school student-athlete to counter the popular belief that college coaches seek the best athletes regardless of any other factor.

Hoch's call for better academic performance was echoed by Smith (2005), who stressed the importance of communication between high school and college coaches concerning both a recruit's academic ability and his or her character. New NCAA academic monitoring procedures, such as the Academic Progress Report (APR), necessitate that college coaches gain a clearer understanding of a recruit's potential to succeed in the classroom as well as on the playing field. Character issues are also receiving more attention during the recruiting process. Clear and accurate assessments from high school coaches can help college coaches avoid student-athletes who may not fit their institution's academic culture or the team's personality.

Prospective student-athletes, parents or guardians, and high school coaches who wish to find information about the best ways to navigate the intercollegiate recruiting process have a number of sources at their disposal. The disturbing problem, though, is two-fold. First, information is predominantly opinion based, coming primarily from the past experiences of coaches. While experience is a source for knowledge, those involved

as stakeholders in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process would benefit from more accurate, research-based evidence of the appropriate steps for a prospective student-athlete to be recruited. Second, virtually none of the information available is provided by the primary stakeholders in the recruiting process, the prospective student-athletes themselves. It is possible the source of some trade publication information is student driven. However, there is no such indication. Information provided by students about their experiences certainly deserves a place among the information providing recruiting advice.

The Role of a High School Coach

High school students interested in attending college have many decisions to make. Issues such as cost, possible degree programs, and distance from home have all been identified as factors important in a student's choice of college. An even more stressful situation exists for the prospective student-athlete, who must make a college choice not only meeting academic goals, but also those as a sports participant. The decision to pursue competitive opportunities as an intercollegiate athlete simply adds pressure on the student. During this important time in their lives, who helps high school students, particularly prospective student-athletes, make decisions about their future in higher education?

For all high school students, guidance counselors can play an important role in helping plan and develop career interests (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004). For example, using social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 1996), Gibbons and Shoffner (2004) conducted a case study focusing on how high school guidance counselors can serve as

career development resources for prospective first-generation college students. Results indicated that guidance counselors are in a position to dispel students' inaccurate beliefs about college that may have otherwise been addressed by college-experienced parents or guardians. It was also suggested that guidance counselors offer learning programs for prospective first-generation college students and their families to discuss issues such as the college application process, financial aid, and choosing the right institution. Bailey (1993) specifically addresses counseling high school athletes and calls on school counselors to take the lead in implementing programs that assist prospective student-athletes balance the rigors of academics and athletics. The author offers six components to include as a model for helping high school student-athletes understand the balance between academic and athletic achievement. Bailey believes a student's ability to perform academically, maintain a balance between academics and athletics, personal characteristics, development of specialized academic skills, meet both academic and athletic expectations, and consideration of the future must all be addressed when counseling the high school athlete. Bailey's proposal is not without weakness. A great deal of generalization is made as the author seems to propose treating all student-athletes the same, not taking into account academic capabilities or other factors. Bailey's references to 'coach' appear to mean only the student's high school coach, not considering the role a privatized sport coach may play. Of course, the age of the work could explain this omission as privatized sport was not as prominent on the athletics landscape in the early 1990s.

Bailey (1993) notes that high school coaches must be involved in the recruiting process. Miller (1993) reinforces this by promoting stronger working relationships between high school coaches and guidance counselors to ensure a positive mentoring environment. Miller also emphasizes the importance of communication and suggests that effective communication between coaches, students, and parents is vital for the total development of the student-athlete.

The role a high school coach plays in the recruiting process is veiled by the dilemma between two specific coaching responsibilities. The high school coach is traditionally a teacher, not only licensed to instruct in a specific academic discipline, but also charged with helping the prospective student-athletes in their care develop and master the skills necessary for athletics competition. The high school coach is also asked to be successful as the overseer of an athletic team. Although debate is endless on the definition of success, more often than not it relates to wins in competition. Naylor (2007) refers to this dilemma as coaching to win versus coaching for learning. Ultimately, coaches are both teachers and managers asked to succeed in responsibilities that sometimes clash.

The lineage of today's high school coach is not as clear as in the past. For years, most high school coaches held teaching positions in physical education. Gradually, though, this has changed. Not only are more and more high school coaches trained in academic areas outside of physical education (Sage, 1989), but concern is growing that a greater number of high school coaches have never served as a licensed classroom teacher at all (NASBE, 2004). With all the changes occurring in the coaching profession, what

roles are expected of the high school coach, specifically in the area of intercollegiate athletics recruiting?

Most agree that well prepared, quality coaches are as important to solid interscholastic sport programs as teachers are in the classroom (NASBE, 2004). The NASBE (2004) identifies a variety of roles today's high school coach must serve, including risk manager, teacher, administrator, and skill developer. Coaches must also conduct themselves in a positive ethical manner, teaching honesty, respect, and responsibility. The proper presentation of these ethical values can have a lifelong impact on the high school athlete (NASBE, 2004). And, as exhibited by the case of Albert Means and Lynn Lang, unethical behavior can have devastating effects as well (Buser, 2005).

The case of Albert Means showed the sordid side of the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process and the influence of a high school coach could damage the future of a prospective student-athlete as well as ruin his or her own career. Considering the importance of the recruiting process for the future of the high school student-athlete, it would seem equally important that extensive research be done to identify the best ways for high school coaches to assist. Yet, little actual research has been done.

Hill (1993) established that high school coaches can play an important advising role in the areas of skill development and improved athletic performance. Surveying 152 professional baseball players participating at the Rookie League level, the study sought, as a secondary purpose, to learn more about advice given these players by their former high school coaches, specifically in terms of off-season athletics participation. Results

showed that a majority of the high school coaches encouraged summer league play (88.5%), off-season baseball skill practice (77.1%), and the pursuit of a professional baseball career (69.2%). The conclusion was reached that coaches were very proactive in promoting skill development. While the results do show high school coaches exert some influence over their players, the study is limited by its purpose and sample set. Rather than focus on the transition of prospective student-athletes to college, the study explores the experiences of professional baseball players. It is helpful, however, to get a glimpse from former students into how their athletic careers were influenced by their high school coaches.

James (2003) provides a unique look at the recruiting process by using qualitative research methods to understand the goals Canadian high school basketball players have concerning athletics scholarships from institutions in the United States. A focus group was created through which the study subjects, all African-Canadian, shared plans to continue their basketball careers, in part by gaining attention from college basketball coaches in the United States and earning an athletics scholarship. The prospective student-athletes shared the steps they took to generate recruitment, including playing at high schools with strong basketball programs and finding ways to gain exposure with United States college basketball coaches. Students indicated that their high school coaches played a significant role in helping them gain exposure to college coaches. The students expected support and accommodation from their high school coaches as they pursued athletics goals. Students also wanted their high school coaches to recognize their academic skills, not simply their desire to play a sport, understanding that an interest in

academics was important in their quest to attain an athletics scholarship. Providing opportunities for exposure to American college coaches was very important to members of the group. Although each acknowledged they individually took steps to gain exposure, such as sending out their own mailings to college coaches, the students knew the benefits of using their high school coaches to create exposure opportunities. The study participants were quick to state that if a coach appeared unsupportive of their aspirations, they would seek a transfer to another school.

Guides for the recruiting process that appear in trade publications typically explain best practices for a prospective student-athlete to follow as they work toward transition from high school to college participant. These guides sometimes address the role of other stakeholders in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting picture, including high school coaches. A common theme when emphasizing the role high school coaches can play in the recruiting process is maintaining good communication between themselves, the college coaches, and the prospective student-athletes. It is very important that high school coaches initiate and return telephone calls to college coaches and accurately and promptly fill out and return questionnaires seeking physical and academic information on their students (Hoch, 1999; Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999; Slabik, 2002). The high school coach can be the best source a college coach has to learn about a prospective student-athlete's character, academic standing, work ethic, receptiveness to coaching, and physical skill. High school coaches can even serve as a buffer between college coaches and the prospective student-athlete, including contacting the college coach for the student when a decision has been made not to attend a specific institution (Hoch, 1999). Campus

visits, whether to the high school by a member of the college coaching staff, or to the college campus by the prospective student-athlete, should be organized and managed by the high school coach (Hoch, 1999). High school coaches are also encouraged to join their students when making college visits (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999).

Matching a prospective student-athlete with the appropriate level of play for that student's skill is a delicate and important role the high school coach assumes (Slabik, 2002). Prospective student-athletes with upper level Division I talent will have much clearer options in the recruiting process than the student who is a Division II or Division III prospect. The opportunity to play is, for some, a key factor in choosing a college (Garbert et al., 1999; Klenosky et al., 2001; Pauline et al., 2004; Slabik, 2002). High school coaches should have a good understanding of their players' skill development and capabilities and be able to effectively advise students on appropriate levels of play. To do this, though, may require the high school coach to attend games and practices at various levels of competition and become better acquainted with the style and level of play, thus being in better position to advise their students (Slabik, 2002).

Much of the recruiting process comes down to timing. Because of NCAA rules, prospective student-athletes cannot receive telephone calls or in-person, off-campus contact with college coaches until June 15 immediately prior to the student's senior year of high school (NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.1, 2006). However, written communication and evaluations are allowed much earlier (NCAA Bylaw 13.4.1, NCAA Bylaw 13.02.8, 2006). As an advisor to the prospective student-athlete, the high school coach should be familiar with both the NCAA rules regarding recruiting and the standard calendar process

of operation (Hoch, 1999). And while some see the prospective student-athlete's senior year of high school as the primary recruiting time (Hoch, 1999), others strongly encourage both prospective student-athletes and their high school coaches to begin planning and working through the process much earlier (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999).

In preparation for the proposed study, a small group of high school coaches were asked to reflect on their role in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. The purpose of the inquiry was to gather information from a select group of experienced and successful high school coaches about their perceived role as recruiting advisors to their prospective student-athletes. Each coach was identified as a participant because of their longevity and success in high school coaching. Specifics concerning the demographics of the participant group and results of the inquiry can be found in the methodology portion of the proposal.

The coaches were asked to complete a survey rating their level of involvement in the recruiting process related to four general areas of focus identified through literature review. Athletically-related issues were addressed with questions about appropriate levels of play, knowledge about college coaching staffs, and opportunities for playing time. Questions related to academic issues focused on student ability and the regularity of academic assessment requests by college coaches. Other college admission and enrollment issues were gauged through questions about financial aid procedures, the character and 'coachability' of the student, and the location of schools. Coaches were also asked to identify at what point during a student's high school career they normally began to address recruiting issues and also whether or not they conducted regular

recruiting information sessions with their teams. The NCAA rules and procedures portion of the survey asked the coaches to rate their familiarity with specific components of NCAA policy directly related to the recruiting process. Coaches had to rate their familiarity with the recruiting rules from each of the three NCAA divisions. Following this, ratings were requested on issues such as NCAA Eligibility Center rules and processes and NCAA recruiting issues such as contact and evaluation regulations, rules pertaining to college coaches communicating with prospective student-athletes, and knowledge of the National Letter of Intent program. Coaches were also asked about the availability of NCAA literature concerning recruiting and the source(s) by which they receive such information. Coaches were finally asked to rate the regularity of their interaction with their school's guidance office during the recruiting process.

Survey results indicated high school coaches believe they serve as important advisors during the comprehensive recruiting process. Surveys were analyzed using mean score calculations from the Likert-scale items and a review and comparison of additional comments offered by the coaches. These comments were grouped based on relationship to each of the four general advisement categories – athletic issues, academic issues, NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues pertaining to college admissions and enrollment.

Coaches rated Likert-scale items based on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = Never Involved to 4 = Always Involved / a primary role. Detailed results can be found in Appendix A. Coaches ranked highly their student advisement on issues concerning academic ability and standing ($m=3.8$), socio-economic issues, such as financial aid and

school location (m=3.5), responding to college coaches written requests for information on prospective student-athletes (m=3.5), assisting in understanding NCAA recruiting rules (m=3.5), and assisting in understanding NCAA freshman academic eligibility requirements (m=3.5). Coaches also agreed that, when contacted by college coaches, they are regularly asked to assess students' academic ability, character, and coachability (m= 3.17). The high school coaches claimed a role in providing athletic assessments to college coaches, but not with the strength of issues pertaining to academics or character and receptiveness to coaching.

Additional comments made by the coaches reinforced the statistical findings that high school coaches play a comprehensive role in the recruiting process, particularly in areas other than the assessment of athletic ability. Two of the respondents explained their role as assessing the "total package" of a prospective student-athlete – athletic ability, academic ability and interest, citizenship and character. Three coaches also noted their ability to give insight on a student's home life or family situation. One coach even stated that during the school year, particularly the specific sport season, he spends more time with his players than the players spend with their parents. Coaches responded that because of the NCAA recruiting calendar and the increasing importance of privatized sport participation in the recruiting process, many college coaches have already made a judgment on athletics ability prior to contacting the high school coach. The opinion was expressed that privatized sport exists for an athlete's individual achievement as opposed to emphasizing strategy, team play, and team goals. One basketball coach remarked, "AAU (Amateur Athletics Union) exists for 'me'. High school sports exist for team."

The coaches expressed concern that communication with college coaches had declined during their years in interscholastic sport and were open about their desires that the trend change. Communication between high school and college coaches seems particularly important when dealing with prospective student-athletes who are not NCAA Division I prospects. One coach remarked, “You can’t hide a Division I recruit anymore. People know about him. I play a bigger role in helping that kid who might be a Division II, Division III, or NAIA player find a place to play. I think that’s an important part of what I do.” Related to this was the coaches’ agreement that honestly and fairly assessing a prospective student-athlete’s ability, particularly to college coaches, was important. Although these assessments may upset parents and students intent on participating in Division I, coaches agreed that most Division I schools target a prospective student-athlete before the student’s senior year if they are interested in the student’s talents.

Survey results and comments revealed some contradictions as well, particularly related to NCAA rules and procedures. Survey results indicated regular involvement by the coaches in helping their prospective student-athletes understand NCAA recruiting rules and freshman academic eligibility standards. However, when rating their own familiarity with NCAA rules and procedures, the coaches did not seem as confident in their knowledge of NCAA rules and policies. Knowledge of necessary grade-point averages needed by freshmen to gain initial eligibility ($m=2.83$) and the Division I sliding scale ($m=2.33$) were among the lowest rated results, reflecting a “somewhat familiar” stance related to most specific NCAA and Eligibility Center rules and procedures. Coaches noted a lack of effective and timely communication from the NCAA concerning

rules, rule changes, and Eligibility Center protocol (m=2.83). Only one respondent indicated he received any NCAA rule information because of his role in athletics. This came in the form of a NCAA rules check list distributed at an athletics directors meeting. All other coaches stated they received no direct correspondence from the NCAA. The high school guidance office was identified as the central distribution point for NCAA materials. Coaches indicated they must then take the initiative to contact the guidance office and request copies of NCAA materials. Coaches also lamented the increasing use of the Internet by the NCAA to conduct much of its administrative and communication operations. For example, students no longer submit carbon forms to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. All registration takes place on line.

Although some research has reported on the role high school coaches play in specific elements of the prospective student-athlete's career and goals (Hill, 1993; James, 2003), high school coaches receive the majority of their advice about the recruiting process from the same sources as their students – trade publication columns based on the experiences of those familiar with intercollegiate athletics recruiting. In addition, unlike the studies by Hill (1993) and James (2003), few indicate that the best practices advice offered is based on the experiences of the prospective student-athlete.

Privatized Sport

As Hurley and Hollibaugh (1999) emphasize, timing in the recruiting process is critical. With both the recruiting status of the prospective student-athlete and the calendar outlining when college coaches can evaluate and contact their recruits heavily regulated by the NCAA, it is important for the prospective student-athlete to understand

NCAA recruiting procedures. As outlined previously, a prospective student-athlete cannot receive telephone calls from or make off-campus contact with college coaches until June 15 immediately prior to the student's senior year of high school (NCAA 13.1.1.1, 2006). On the surface, it would not appear the summer months hold much importance in the recruiting process outside of traditional seasonal sports, such as baseball. However, the combination of the NCAA recruiting calendar and the presence of a relative newcomer to the recruiting stage, the privatized sport coach, have changed the landscape of recruiting and the role high school coaches play in the process.

Historically, high school coaches have been viewed by college coaches as the primary contacts in the recruiting process. High school coaches would provide standard recruiting information to college coaches, such as a player's size and physical abilities, as well as serve as liaison between the college coach and the recruit. The growth of non-scholastic competitive opportunities in sports such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball, has influenced changes in the NCAA recruiting calendar and shifted prospect evaluation emphasis to times of the year that are non-traditional for high school sport competition. These changes, in some cases, have lessened the importance of a prospective student-athlete's senior season of competition and increased the need for students to participate in privatized sport to better expose themselves and their abilities to college coaches. Pennington (2005) reported that some coaches rarely recruit prospective student-athletes during their senior seasons. Reasons for the decreased importance to some college coaches of a prospective student-athlete's senior year of competition are two-fold. The NCAA, through the National Letter of Intent program managed by the College

Commissioners Association (CCA), establishes specific periods of time when colleges are allowed to sign prospective student-athletes and contractually bind them to their programs. In sports other than football and soccer, there are two signing periods for high school prospects, one in the fall and one in the spring. Football and soccer are allowed only a spring signing period for high school students, although football is provided a separate signing period in December for junior college recruits (CCA, 2006). The early signing period has become a favorite for many college coaches, particularly in Divisions I and III. Since a prospective student-athlete is contractually committed to an institution for a minimum of one academic year when he or she signs a National Letter of Intent, Division I coaches are eager to finalize their incoming freshman recruiting classes as soon as possible. Early signing periods typically begin in early November (NCAA Bylaws 30.11.1, 30.11.2, 2006). These dates normally fall prior to the start of traditional high school basketball seasons and certainly before the traditional spring sports, such as baseball and softball. For Division III coaches, particularly those at academically-selective institutions, enrollment spots for the following academic year are typically filled by the admissions process prior to Christmas. Division III coaches who wish to replenish their rosters for the coming year must provide the admissions staff with enough academically qualified prospects to do so during the time frame of an early admission cycle (Pennington, 2005). How, then, do college coaches make talent determinations of such critical importance prior to a prospective student-athlete's senior high school season? Another segment of the NCAA recruiting calendar provides the answer.

On or after June 15 immediately prior to a prospective student-athlete's senior year of high school, he or she becomes a contactable prospective student-athlete by NCAA rule (NCAA 13.1.1.1, 2006). Coaches in all NCAA sports except football, men's and women's basketball, and men's ice hockey, are allowed open contact and evaluation periods during the summer months. While football regulations are much stricter, men's and women's basketball coaches are also allowed an evaluation window during which they can watch recruits practice and compete. These evaluation periods for men's and women's basketball typically occur over much of July (NCAA Bylaws 30.11.1, 30.11.2, 2006). Since high schools are not in session, much less sponsoring a predominantly winter sport during the summer months, privatized sport programs provide the opportunities for college coaches to evaluate talent and make recruiting decisions outside the normal academic year. This procedure has thrust the privatized sport coach into the recruiting process and greatly increased their role and influence. A great deal of concern surrounds the rapid rise of emphasis on the privatized competitive sport structure, such as club sports and Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) programs (NASBE, 2004). Many view the system as one that nurtures an entity opposite the purpose of high school sports. In fact, some believe such participation opportunities may ultimately jeopardize "the fundamental mission of high schools to develop the 'whole' student athlete" (NASBE, 2004, p. 21). Watts (2002) identifies the problem privatized sport coaches cause in the recruiting process by stating "a club sport, from the club sport coach's perspective, is the 'only game in town. Club sport coaches do not have to be concerned....with the athlete's academic demands" (p. 36). High school administrators are not the only ones concerned

with this change in recruiting influence. A report by the Working Group to Study Basketball Issues, a committee created by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors in 1998, shows that college basketball coaches are also becoming more and more wary of the influence non-scholastic sport coaches play in the recruiting process (Berry, 2002). Results of a Working Group survey revealed that both men's and women's Division I basketball coaches rated the influence of non-scholastic coaches in the recruiting process as a top concern. Concern was also raised that high school coaches were becoming less and less influential in the recruiting process (Berry, 2002). Former NCAA Division I men's basketball coach Mike Jarvis sums up the thoughts of many when he states, "...the recruiting environment has taken a turn for the worse...there are too many outside people involved in the process. The schools have become less involved and the high school coaches have become almost non-existent in the process. It doesn't make sound educational sense for that to be the case." (Catalano, 2002).

Summary

Specific examples of the effect the National Letter of Intent early signing period and the NCAA recruiting calendar have had on the role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process for some future NCAA Division I and III student-athletes have been given. However, little is mentioned of the prospective student-athlete who matriculates to a Division II institution. While some Division II recruits sign early, many are not offered athletic scholarships or opportunities to join teams as a walk-on until more traditional times in the spring and summer. Under these circumstances, the high school coach could be a more influential factor in the recruiting

decisions made by college coaches and prospective student-athletes. With their experiences developing the prospective student-athlete athletically and assisting in the growth process noted by Martens (2004), high school coaches are in a position to act as a primary advisor to the prospective student-athlete. There is little research-based knowledge, though, that identifies through the student-athletes' experiences what role their high school coaches actually played in the recruiting process. A determination of the role high school coaches play during intercollegiate athletics recruiting would be beneficial to both prospective student-athletes and their high school coaches. Properly analyzed data gained directly from students about their experience with a high school coach during the recruiting process could confirm that a valuable, athletically-knowledgeable resource exists at their school. Clearly identifying recruiting process roles would also be helpful for the high school coaches. Research information could identify best practices of proven significance for coaches to concentrate on while also pointing out areas of weakness coaches could improve to provide the best assistance possible to their student-athletes as they make college attendance decisions. In summary, there appears to be a need for research in this area.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Overview

The purpose of the study is to better understand the role high school coaches play in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. This descriptive study will use survey data to answer the research questions and determine the level and usefulness of assistance the high school coach provides as an advisor to the student-athlete during the recruiting process. Specifically, collegiate student-athletes will be asked to identify the assistance received from the high school coach during the recruiting process in four general advisory areas: a) issues related to athletic ability and participation; b) issues related to academic ability and standing; c) issues related to NCAA rules and procedures; and d) other issues related to college admissions and enrollment. Ultimately, it is hoped the results will provide critical information from student-athletes who have navigated the contemporary intercollegiate recruiting process that can be used to both improve the experiences of the prospective student-athlete and assist high school coaches in providing sound guidance to their students.

Development of Survey

Information from both literature review and the input of a select group of current high school coaches was used to construct an efficient and effective tool to answer each of the stated research objectives.

Use of Literature in Survey

Literature sources used as a basis for survey construction included those focusing on student-athlete college choice factors and recommendations of best practices for high school coaches to follow during the recruiting process. College choice literature (Garbert et al., 1999; Pauline et al., 2004; Slabik, 2002; Doyle & Gaeth, 1990; Klenosky et al., 2001; Letawsky et al., 2003) revealed a variety of issues deemed important by the contemporary student-athlete choosing an institution to attend and continue his or her sports career. Factors reported by these studies fell into three general categories: 1) issues related to athletics participation, such as the opportunity for playing time or levels of competition; 2) issues related to academics, such as academic degree program offerings, and; 3) other issues related to college admissions and enrollment, such as the availability of financial aid and location of the school. Best practices literature reviewed for the study suggested that nurturing and maintaining open lines of communication with both the prospective student-athlete and college coaches is one of the most important responsibilities of a high school coach during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Of particular importance are prompt returns of telephone calls or any written requests for information about prospective student-athletes.

College choice literature and information on best practices for advising a prospective student-athlete during the recruiting process, while informative, could not stand alone as the sole basis for survey construction. First, student-athlete choice literature is focused on identifying what factors were important in the student's decision to attend a specific institution. While considerations in determining college choice are

relevant, these studies do not identify the advisors who assist students with their decisions or the importance of that advice in specific college choice. Second, much of the recruiting practices' recommendation literature is found in trade publications and based on the experiences of those in the field, often college coaches or high school administrators with coaching experience. Two problems exist when relying on these sources. First, trade publications seldom rely on research-based evidence to guide these recommendations. Second, the recruiting recommendations tend to come from the perspective and experiences of an adult advisor and are not based on input from the prospective student-athletes themselves.

Coaches' Input in Survey Development

Because of shortcomings in the information collected from the review of literature, a decision was made to survey current high school coaches to gain an additional perspective on the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process.

Eight current high school coaches, five males and three females, representing six sports (boy's and girl's basketball, baseball, softball, girl's soccer, and girl's volleyball) were asked to participate in the survey. The selected group totaled over 100 years of high school head coaching experience. Two of the participants had coached their teams to North Carolina High School Athletics Association state championships during their careers and the group as a whole had coached numerous conference championship and playoff teams. Two of the coaches also served as athletics directors for their respective schools. The rationale for selecting these participants was that successful, winning teams were likely to include students capable of competing in intercollegiate athletics. In fact,

each coach has instructed a number of prospective student-athletes who have gone on to participate in intercollegiate athletics. For example, one of the basketball coaches chosen had 13 players in the last 10 years participate in intercollegiate athletics upon graduation from high school.

A survey was constructed with three parts - a section requesting general information about each coach, a section addressing the coaches' general role in recruiting, and a section gauging familiarity with NCAA rules and procedures. Participant information included sport affiliation, gender, years of experience in their current job and in high school coaching overall, whether or not they had college coaching experience, their involvement in privatized sport, degree(s) earned and discipline, and what additional training, particularly related to recruiting, each may have had. The portions of the survey focusing on recruiting roles and NCAA rules and procedures consisted of primarily closed-end, Likert-scale statements on the coaches' level of involvement in the recruiting process and their knowledge of NCAA rules and procedures. The survey concluded with an open-ended request to reflect on problems experienced during the recruiting process, changes in the process over time, and suggestions for change in the current procedure.

High School Coaches' Survey Results

Survey results showed the high school coaches' belief that they serve as important advisors during the comprehensive recruiting process. The coaches emphasized their advisory role as encompassing not only athletics-related issues, but also issues pertaining to each of the three additional areas targeted as the study focus – issues related to

academics, issues related to NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues related to college admissions and enrollment. The coaches ranked highly their level of involvement advising students about their academic ability and standing, financial aid opportunities, and their communication with college coaches. Coaches also saw themselves as important advisors to students concerning NCAA rules and policies, particularly relating to NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse standards and procedures. However, the group expressed frustration over their access to NCAA literature, indicating their receipt of information concerning recruiting and eligibility rules, changes in regulations, and Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse procedures was sparse and normally came to them upon request from their school guidance counselors.

Survey results corroborated the decision to test the areas of athletics, academics, NCAA rules and procedure, and other college admissions and enrollment issues. The coaches' survey was constructed based on college choice information established during literature review. Common college choice factors reported through various studies, such as the college head coach and staff, location of the school, academic issues such as available degree programs, and an opportunity for playing time were presented to the coaches as possible advisement issues. Coaches responded by professing their belief that they play an important role in each of these areas of the recruiting process.

Survey Content and Format

Using information from both the literature and the results of the high school coaches' inquiry, a survey was constructed to collect data from student-athletes reflecting their description of the high school coach's role during their own recruiting experience

(see Appendix C). The five-page survey consisted of primarily closed questions with Likert-scale responses and included statements covering general student-athlete information and demographic data and recruiting assistance provided by the high school coach in four areas related to the research questions: athletics competition, academic issues, NCAA rule and procedure issues, and other college admissions and enrollment issues.

Participant information included standard demographic identification such as sport affiliation, current season of competition, gender, age, race/ethnicity, and United States citizenship status as well as path of matriculation to the present institution – either directly from high school, as a transfer from a two- or four-year college or university, or as an international student. Students who participated in interscholastic sport in the United States were the primary participants. Those with no high school participation experience, including those with international backgrounds, were asked to skip the section of the survey focusing specifically on high school coaches.

Following the participant information section, the survey was divided into two parts. Part A focused specifically on the student-athletes' experience with the high school coach during the recruiting process. Nineteen statements asked students to rate their level of reliance on high school coaches in the four key influence areas – issues related to athletics participation, issues related to academics, issues related to NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues related to college enrollment. The five-point Likert-scale ratings were labeled – 1 as Not at all; 3 as Some; and 5 as Completely. Questions related to athletics participation addressed levels of competition, opportunities

for playing time, the reputation and tradition of specific intercollegiate athletics programs, and college coaching staffs. Questions focused on academic issues asked about advice pertaining to college entrance requirements, academic degree programs, the academic reputation of specific colleges, academic success. The section focusing on NCAA rules and procedures included questions about academic eligibility issues, contact and evaluation policies, and the NCAA recruiting calendar. Other college related statements focused on the non-athletics financial aid process, the admissions and enrollment process, location of schools, social development opportunities, and future career goals.

Part B of the survey consisted of 28 five-point Likert-scale items assessing the level of reliance placed on the advice of several persons potentially involved during the recruiting process including parents or guardians, other high school teachers or guidance counselors, privatized sport coaches, college admissions staff, college coaches, and the Internet, in addition to the high school coach. The survey concluded with three open response questions. First, students are asked to identify any other persons who served as advisors during the recruiting process. Students are then asked to reflect on their recruiting experience as a whole and identify what advice received from their high school coach was most helpful during the process, and what advice they would like to have received from the coach.

The survey draft was circulated among a panel composed of an NCAA Division II volleyball coach and four college faculty members, each with expertise in either intercollegiate athletics or survey research. The panel was asked to critique the survey

for clarity and accuracy. Other than a few minor grammatical changes, the survey was deemed clear and appropriate to meet the purpose of the study. See Appendix X for the final version of the survey.

Pilot Study

Following revisions based on the panel review, the survey was pilot-tested with current NCAA Division II student-athletes who were not included in the main study groups. The primary purpose of the pilot study was to test the efficiency of survey administration procedures and determine the clarity and readability of the data collection instrument.

Volleyball and cross country participants from one of the institutions targeted for the study met in a classroom on their respective campus at a time arranged with the head coaches of each team. Survey procedures were explained by the study administrator and each participant was provided a consent form. The study administrator reviewed the contents of the consent form with the prospective pilot study participants and clarified that participation in the pilot study was completely voluntary. All pilot prospects chose to remain for the survey administration and the study administrator made extra copies of the consent form available to all participants. Participants were then asked to complete the survey. The survey provided an opportunity for the study subjects to comment on the clarity or meaning of specific questions and provide suggestions. For reliability purposes, the pilot participants were alerted that the survey would be re-administered following a holiday break and that all would be contacted to participate in the pilot follow-up.

Procedures, results and comments were reviewed and tested in preparation for study data collection.

Pilot Sample

For the initial pilot survey administration NCAA Division II student-athletes from three programs – volleyball, men’s cross country, and women’s cross country - were asked to participate. These specific programs were chosen for three reasons. First, none were targeted as teams to be used for the primary study. Second, the teams represented the expected sample size of the primary study groups. The active volleyball roster included 12 participants, similar in size to an intercollegiate basketball team, and the cross country teams, which were surveyed together, totaled 19 participants. However, the actual response did not meet expectation; pilot respondents included the following: volleyball (n=11), men’s cross country (n=2) and women’s cross country (n=4). The final reason was the assumption that a significant majority of the participants had been through the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process and would be able to understand and accurately respond to the survey. Results confirmed that each of the pilot study participants was classified as a recruited prospective student-athlete by NCAA definition.

The pilot study group consisted of 15 females and two males. All participants were of traditional age for college attendance (ages 18-22 years old). Eight subjects (47.1%) identified themselves as either first-year participants or red-shirt freshmen. The remaining sample included three second-year participants, three third-year participants, and three fourth-year participants. Each of the 17 participants identified themselves as Caucasian or European-American, a United States citizen and a graduate from a United

States high school, and all indicated matriculation to their current institution directly from high school. Twelve of the participants (70.6%) reported participation in both high school and club or privatized sport prior to matriculation to college with five (29.4%) reporting only in high school sports prior to college attendance and none reporting only participation in privatized sport. As defined by NCAA regulations, each pilot study participant classified him or herself as a recruited prospective student-athlete upon arriving to college. Most responses (n=8, 47.1%) showed agreement with all of the recruiting designations – a college visit in which any portion of the student’s expenses were covered by the recruiting institutions’ athletics department; receiving more than one telephone call from a college coach or athletics department representative; having an arranged, off-campus meeting with a college coach or athletics department representative, or receiving an offer of athletically-related financial aid from a college. The next most prominent response (n=5, 29.4%) included identification with each of the classification areas except for an arranged, off-campus meeting with a college coach or athletics department representative. An overwhelming majority identified themselves as athletic scholarship recipients (n=15, 88.2%). Over 70% (n=12) indicated discussions between themselves and their high school coach concerning the recruiting process had occurred. Of these, more stated the discussions had been self initiated (n=8, 66.7%) than at the initiation of the high school coach (n=4, 33.3%).

Participants in the initial pilot study were contacted a second time following a holiday period during which time school was not in session. Students were contacted

both through email and regular campus mail and the students' coaches were asked to assist in encouraging participation.

The second pilot administration was consistent with the first. The purpose for the study was explained and each student was provided a copy of the consent agreement. Students were again assured that participation was completely voluntary and additional copies of the consent form were made available to the participants. Of the 17 original participants, 15 returned to participate in the follow-up survey. The two subjects who did not complete the second survey were a third-year participant on the women's volleyball team and a first-year women's cross country participant.

Three questions in the participant information section of the pilot survey were answered slightly different during the follow-up administration. In the initial survey, only two participants identified themselves as non-athletics scholarship recipients. The follow-up survey showed three subjects claiming they did not receive athletically-related financial aid. On the question concerning whether or not students had discussions with their high school coach about recruiting, 12 answered 'Yes' during the initial pilot administration and 13 answered affirmative in the second administration. In the initial survey, eight of the 12 (66.7%) indicated they initiated discussions with the coach. In the follow-up survey, 11 of the 13 participants (84.6%) stated they initiated recruiting discussions with the high school coach.

Pilot Results

Descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations) were calculated for individual Likert-scale items in both Part A and Part B of each pilot survey. In addition,

descriptive statistics were calculated for the four advisory areas from Part A (issues related to athletics, academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues dealing with college enrollment and attendance) and for each of the seven overall advisory groups in Part B. Answers to the three open-ended questions found at the end of the survey were reviewed as were any additional comments or recommendations made by the pilot survey participants. Paired samples t-test and Pearson correlations were calculated for all individual Likert-scale mean scores as well as Part A and Part B group mean scores to compare the initial and follow-up surveys.

Part A of the survey contained 19 items divided into four primary categories – issues related to athletic participation, issues related to academics, issues related to NCAA rules and procedures and other issues related to college enrollment. Likert-scale options ranged from “Not at All” (1), to “Completely” (5), indicating the advisory role of the high school coach. Complete descriptive results from Part A of each pilot survey administration are listed in Appendix X1 and Appendix X2. Responses from the first pilot survey indicated the most important advice provided by the high school coach related to future career goals (mean=2.64, SD=1.05), the academic reputation of specific colleges and universities (mean=2.58, SD=1.27), academic degree programs (mean=2.52, SD=1.17), levels of athletic competition (mean=2.52, SD=1.23), and NCAA rules pertaining to official and unofficial visits to select colleges and universities (mean=2.47, SD=1.17). Areas in which the high school coach’s advice appeared least sought or helpful included those related to high school core course selection and NCAA Clearinghouse core course requirements (mean=1.52, SD=1.00), the college admissions

and enrollment process (mean=1.82, SD=1.23), the NCAA recruiting calendar, such as contact and dead periods (mean=1.82, SD=1.33), NCAA freshman academic eligibility standards (mean=1.82, SD=1.13), and the non-athletics related college financial aid process (mean=1.88, SD=1.36).

Mean scores for the items student-athletes identified as areas in which the high school coach played little, if any, advisory role were consistent between the two test administrations. However, in the follow-up, all four of the items identified as issues related to athletic participation were ranked near the top, whereas only one, advice related to levels of competition, appeared among the top five in the initial pilot study.

Paired samples t-tests showed a significant difference in only one pair of items from Part A of the pilot study survey. In the initial pilot administration, the mean score for the high school coach's level of advice related to future career goals was 2.73 (SD=1.03), but the same item in the follow-up survey showed a mean score of 1.86 (SD=.99), which was a significant difference, $t(14)=2.57$, $p < .05$.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to measure relationships between the two pilot study administrations. Group correlations can be found in Table 1. Correlations between paired issue groups ranged from $r=.347$ to $-.013$. Four group correlations were statistically significant – the high school coach's advice related athletic issues, $r(60)=.335$, $p<.01$.), the high school coach's advice related to NCAA issues, $r(90)=.278$, $p<.01$.), overall recruiting advice received from the privatized sport coach, $r(60)=.347$, $p<.01$.), and overall recruiting advice received from college admissions staffs, $r(60)=.345$, $p<.01$.).

Table 1. Pearson r Correlation Results from Pilot Study.

Group	N	Pearson r	p-value
Athletic Issues	60	.335 *	.009
Academic Issues	60	.177	.176
NCAA Issues	90	.278 *	.008
Other Issues	75	.119	.308
Advice/HS Coach	60	.214	.101
Advice/Parents	60	.194	.137
Advice/HS Teacher	60	-.013	.924
Advice/Private Coach	60	.347 *	.007
Advice/Admissions	60	.345 *	.006
Advice/College Coach	60	.247	.057
Advice/Internet	60	.027	.839

Main Study Participants

To assess the role of the high school coach, a survey was completed by 214 student-athletes currently participating in NCAA Division II. The participant group represents four intercollegiate sports, each sponsored by four South Atlantic region institutions. All institutions participating in the study are private, church-affiliated colleges and universities ranging in enrollment from 1,000 to 2,000 students. Sample sports include men's basketball, women's basketball, men's soccer, and women's soccer, with approximately equal representation from each sport as follows: men's basketball (n=53), women's basketball (n=52), men's soccer (n=54) and women's soccer (n=53).

Procedures

Athletics directors from the respective institutions were contacted and each agreed to allow their student-athletes to participate in the study; written confirmation was received from each athletics director. Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, athletics directors who had already agreed that their institutions could

participate in the study were notified to confirm that coaches could be contacted to schedule dates, times, and locations for data collection. At the direction of the individual athletics directors, coaches of the teams participating in the study were contacted in the following manner. At two institutions, the survey administrator scheduled survey sessions through the athletics director's office. One institution designated an associate athletics director, who also served as director of soccer at the school, as coordinator for scheduling the surveys while coaches at the fourth institution were contacted directly by the survey administrator. The survey administrator explained the purpose of the study and the necessary logistics for data collection, such as approximate time commitment. Preference in data collection scheduling was given to in-season sports, in this case, men's and women's basketball. Surveys were administered on a team-by-team basis over a one-day period on each institution's respective campus. Survey administration for one men's soccer team was delayed approximately two weeks because of the sudden death of the father of a current player. On the day of the originally scheduled administration the team was off campus attending the funeral.

Prior to survey administration, the investigator explained the study to the potential participants both verbally and in writing through a cover document to the informed consent form. Participants were told that assisting in the study was not mandatory and that each was free to refuse participation. The survey administrator also explained the possible benefits of the study. Participants were informed that members under 18 years of age were not eligible to participate. Each participant was asked to review and sign a declaration of Informed Consent prior to participating in the study. Study participants

were given an opportunity to ask questions about the Informed Consent process and the overall study. Each eligible study participant chose to remain and participate in the survey. The study administrator distributed and collected the surveys, which took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, each participant was offered a copy of the Informed Consent form. Surveys were collected by the study administrator and placed in large envelopes identified by sport. Envelopes were sealed until data input and analysis took place. Following data collection, each participating sport coach and athletics director received a written letter of thanks from the study coordinator.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and group comparison analyses. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each of the 47 Likert-scale survey items. Cronbach alpha coefficient were calculated to determine reliability, and mean scores and standard deviations were reported for each of the four areas in Part A of the survey – issues related to athletics, issues related to academics, issues related to NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues related to college admissions and enrollment. Individual and group mean scores and standard deviations were also reported for items found in Part B. These scores describe the level of reliance study participants placed on each of seven potential advisors or information sources – high school coaches, parents and/or guardians, high school teachers and guidance counselors, privatized sport coaches, college admissions staff, college coaches, and the internet. Within-subjects, repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance

(MANOVA) were used to determine differences across the four advising areas (athletics, academics, NCAA, other), and also to determine differences among the seven potential advisors.

Between-subjects MANOVA were used with selected, independent variables to determine whether the general areas of assistance provided by the high school coach and the potential recruiting advisors differed by gender, race/ethnicity, sport, financial aid status, and competitive sport structure participation, if numbers permitted. Because the sample included approximately equal numbers in each of the four groups (men's basketball, women's basketball, men's soccer, women's soccer), the primary between-subjects comparison was across these four groups. Additional, exploratory comparisons were made by race/ethnicity.

Responses to the three open-ended items were reviewed, listed and categorized to determine what specific advice from their high school coaches participants find most helpful during the recruiting process, what advice they would like to have received from their high school coach, and what additional advisors played important roles for the students during their recruiting experience.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to examine and describe the role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletic recruiting process. The role of the coach was established through survey responses from current intercollegiate student-athletes participating in NCAA Division II. Study participants also provided information about the role other advisors played during their intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Lastly, the student-athletes shared thoughts about specific helpful advice received from their high school coach and made suggestions concerning important advice coaches may provide to their recruited students in the future.

Participant Information

The study survey was administered to 214 NCAA Division II student-athletes participating in the sports of men's soccer, women's soccer, men's basketball, and women's basketball. The sample population represented four Mid-Atlantic, liberal arts institutions ranging in enrollment from 1,100 to 1,800. Gender representation among the study participants was equally distributed with 107 males (50.0%) and 107 females (50.0%). Distribution among sports was also similar with 54 participants from men's soccer (25.2%), 55 participants from women's soccer (25.7%), 53 participants from men's basketball (24.8%), and 52 participants from women's basketball (24.3%). The racial make-up of the sample group weighed heavily toward two ethnic groups – Caucasian / European-American (n=135, 63.4%) and African-American (n=65, 30.5%).

Other racial and ethnic groups represented in the sample included Native American (n=3, 1.4%), Hispanic/Latino (n=2, 0.9%), and Asian-American (n=2, 0.9%). Six participants (2.8%) classified themselves as “Other” with most indicating they were of mixed race. One student did not designate a race / ethnicity classification. Eighty-seven participants (40.7%) identified themselves as freshmen / 1st-year participants. Other season of competition frequencies included 55 sophomores / 2nd-year participants (25.7%), 46 juniors / 3rd-year participants (21.5%), and 24 seniors / 4th-year participants (11.2%). Two students (0.9%) did not respond to the season of competition item.

An overwhelming number of the study participants were United States citizens (n=190, 88.8%) and attended high school in this country (n=189, 88.3%). Of the 24 students claiming foreign citizenship, 20 (83.3%) participated in either men’s or women’s soccer. A majority of students (n=167, 78.9%) matriculated directly from high school to their current institution. Twenty-three students (10.7%) classified themselves as two- or four-year college transfers. Students receiving athletically-related financial aid (n=175, 82.5%) also outnumbered those who did not (n=36, 17.0%). Three students did not respond to the athletics scholarship question. A majority of sample subjects (n=185, 87.3%) reported participation in both high school and privatized sport prior to enrolling in college. Twenty-two students (10.4%) participated only in high school sports before college enrollment and four (1.9%) students listed only privatized sport participation. Three students did not respond to the item. Participants were also asked to identify specific ways that college coaches or athletics officials contacted them during the recruiting process. Any one of the four occurrences marked by a student classified them

as a recruited prospective student-athlete by NCAA definition. Only two students (1.0%) of those responding (n=210) to the item were determined to have not been recruited athletically before enrolling in college. Four students left the recruiting designation question blank.

Data Analysis

Research findings are reported in four parts. First, the high school coach's role in each of the four recruiting issues areas – athletics, academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues related to college enrollment – is examined using descriptive data, including mean scores and standard deviations. Second, the roles of key advisors in the recruiting process, including the high school coach, are reported. Third, group comparisons are made using the independent variables of sport and gender. Finally, the interaction between the high school coach and the student-athlete is described using student responses to open-ended questions concerning helpful advice received from the high school coach during the recruiting process and information or guidance students wish they had had. A summary of advisors other than those identified specifically in the survey is also presented. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is used to determine significance differences based on gender and sports and to examine differences across recruiting issues and advisory groups. MANOVA testing using high school participation, athletics grant-in-aid status, and race/ethnicity was not performed due to inadequate participant distribution. Those indicating participation in both high school and privatized sport prior to enrollment in college (n=173) greatly outnumbered those listing high school participation only (n=15). In addition, student-athletes on athletics

scholarship (n=175) far outweighed those receiving no athletically-related aid (n=36). Race and ethnicity distributions were heavily concentrated in two groups – Caucasian (n=135) and African-American (n=65). African-Americans represented 61.9% of the basketball participants so sport comparisons are likely to reflect the primary race/ethnicity differences.

Research Questions 1a, 2a, 3a, 3b, 4a

The goal of Part A of the survey was to answer Research Questions 1a, 2a, 3a, 3b, and 4a and describe the advisory role high school coaches serve during the recruiting process for their prospective intercollegiate student-athletes. Study participants were asked to rate the level of reliance on their high school coach for advice in four primary areas – issues related to athletics participation, academics, NCAA rules and procedure, and other college enrollment matters. Group mean scores and standard deviations for each focus area can be found in Table 2. Reliability as established through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient calculation was over .900 in each advisory area as shown on Table 2.

Table 2. Reliance on the High School Coach during the Recruiting Process.

Area	Mean	Std. Deviations	Alpha
Issues related to Athletics	2.52	1.26	.935
Issues related to Academics	2.34	1.29	.955
Issues related to NCAA rules	2.40	1.30	.952
Other college enrollment issues	2.03	1.08	.919

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Overall, all group means were below the mid-point of 3.0. Responses indicated the advice of high school coaches was most beneficial on issues related to athletics (mean=2.52, SD=1.26). High school coaches were relied on least by their respective students for advice on college enrollment issues such as the general financial aid and admissions process (mean=2.03, SD=1.08). Within-subjects MANOVA comparing reliance on the high school coach across the four primary advisement areas showed significant differences in the results, Wilks' Lambda = .741, $F(3,186) = 21.66$, $p < .05$.

To answer Research Question 1a, study participants were asked to rate the level of reliance placed on their high school coach on four specific issues concerning intercollegiate athletics participation – various levels of competition, opportunities for playing time, the reputation and tradition of specific college and university athletic programs, and college head coaches and coaching staffs. Mean scores and standard deviations for each item can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliance on the High School Coach on Athletics Issues.

Advice	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Competition	2.61	1.32
Playing Time	2.52	1.38
Program Reputation	2.43	1.35
Knowledge of College Coach	2.52	1.44

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely

Participants responded that high school coaches were most helpful advising prospective student-athletes about various levels of competition in intercollegiate sport

(mean=2.61, SD=1.32). High school coaches were deemed least helpful when advising students about the reputation of different college sport programs (mean=2.43, SD=1.35). MANOVA results indicated significant, although weak, effect among items, Wilks' Lambda = .951, $F(3,186) = 3.18$, $p < .05$, with all scores similar.

Research Question 2a addressed the recruiting advisory role high school coaches serve on issues related to academics. Participants were asked to rate the level of reliance placed on their high school coach for advice on four issues concerning academics – college entrance requirements, academic degree programs, the academic reputation of specific colleges and universities, and overall academic success in college, such as proper study habits and time management. Mean scores and standard deviations for each item can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Reliance on the High School Coach on Academic Issues.

Entrance Requirements	2.41	1.39
Degree Options	2.28	1.35
Academic Reputation	2.29	1.30
Academic Success	2.39	1.45

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely

Results revealed that the high school coach is most helpful for students when advising about college entrance requirements (mean=2.41, SD=1.39). Advisory discussions with the coach on issues concerning degree options (mean=2.28, SD=1.35) and the academic reputations of various colleges and universities (mean=2.29, SD=1.30) were seen as least important. MANOVA results indicated a significant difference among

items in the area of academics, Wilks' Lambda = .952, $F(3,186) = 3.11$, $p < .05$.

However, the differences were not strong.

Research Question 3a and 3b addressed the advisory role of high school coach pertaining to issues of NCAA rules and procedures. Students were asked to rate the level of reliance placed on their high school coach for advice in two general NCAA issue areas – advice related to NCAA rules about specific components of the recruiting process, such as contacts from and evaluations by college coaches, advice related to official and unofficial recruiting visits, and advice related to the NCAA recruiting calendar, and advice about the procedures to gain NCAA-approved freshman eligibility, including registration with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse (now referred to as the NCAA Eligibility Center), NCAA freshman academic eligibility standards such as required grade-point averages and test score requirements, and high school course selection as related to NCAA core course requirements. Mean scores and standard deviations for each item can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliance on the High School Coach on NCAA Issues.

Advice	Mean	Std. Deviation
Contacts /Evaluations	2.36	1.35
Official/ Unofficial Visits	2.40	1.43
Recruiting Calendar	2.32	1.45
IEC Registration	2.59	1.54
Freshman Eligibility	2.39	1.49
Core Course Requirements	2.31	1.43

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Results showed that high school coaches were most helpful assisting their students with the NCAA Eligibility Center registration process (mean=2.59, SD=1.54). Students relied least on their high school coaches when seeking advice concerning core course requirements for freshman eligibility (mean=2.31, SD=1.43) and advice related to the NCAA recruiting calendar (mean=2.32, SD=1.45). Again, multivariate testing showed significant difference across items, Wilks' Lambda = .870, $F(3,186) = 5.49$, $p < .05$.

The purpose of Research Question 4a was to describe the advisory role of the high school coach on other issues related to general college enrollment. Students were asked to rate their level of reliance on advice from the high school coach in five areas – issues related to the non-athletics financial aid process, issues related to the overall admissions and enrollment process, issues related to college location, culture, and climate, issues related to social development opportunities in college, and issues related to future career goals. Mean scores and standard deviations for each item can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Reliance on the High School Coach on General Enrollment Issues.

Advice	Mean	Std. deviation
Financial Aid Process	2.15	1.32
Admissions /Enrollment	1.67	1.08
College Locale /Culture	2.16	1.26
Social Development	1.81	1.14
Career Goals	2.34	1.39

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Reliance on the high school coach for recruiting advice in this category was rated lowest of the four reported areas. Individual item mean scores ranged from a high of 2.34 to well below 2.0. The highest level of reliance was on advice related to future career goals (mean=2.34, SD=1.39) while advice related to the general admissions and enrollment process (mean=1.67, SD=1.08) was rated the lowest of any individual item in Part A of the survey. MANOVA showed a significant effect of the high school coach in each of the general college enrollment items, Wilks' Lambda = .919, $F(3,186) = 27.29$, $p < .05$.

Research Questions 1c, 2c, 3d, 4c

Part B of the survey was devised to answer Research Questions 1c, 2c, 3d and 4c and evaluate the role of seven potential sources of guidance or information during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process – the high school coach, parents or guardians, high school teachers and guidance counselors, privatized sports coaches, college admissions staff, college coaches, and the internet. The ratings were analyzed in an

advisor (n=7) by area (n=4) within-subjects MANOVA. Total and area by advisory mean scores can be found in Table 7.

Table 7. Reliance on Various Advisors during the Recruiting Process.

Advisor	Athletics	Academics	NCAA	Other	Total
High School Coach	2.63 (1.37)	2.12 (1.21)	2.34 (1.39)	2.19 (1.29)	2.32 (1.33)
Parents /Guardians	4.16 (0.92)	4.24 (0.96)	3.10 (1.37)	4.09 (1.02)	3.90 (1.24)
HS Teachers /Guidance Counselors	2.25 (1.15)	3.31 (1.32)	2.23 (1.36)	2.92 (1.32)	2.68 (1.37)
Privatized Sport Coach	3.35 (1.33)	2.09 (1.23)	2.70 (1.42)	2.20 (1.30)	2.59 (1.41)
Admissions Staff	2.48 (1.23)	2.99 (1.24)	2.75 (1.39)	3.33 (1.32)	2.89 (1.33)
College Coaches	3.70 (1.07)	3.01 (1.24)	3.96 (1.14)	3.47 (1.29)	3.54 (1.25)
Internet	2.70 (1.11)	2.87 (1.21)	2.79 (1.29)	2.85 (1.19)	2.80 (1.22)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Overall mean score results for each advisor across different advisory areas were telling. Parents and/or guardians (mean=3.90, SD=1.24) and college coaches (mean=3.54, SD=1.25) were clearly seen as the most important advisors during the recruiting process while the two coaches most likely involved in the student's athletic growth and development during the pre-college years – the high school coach (mean=2.32, SD=1.33) and the privatized sport coach (mean=2.59, SD=1.41) – were rated least important. Previously reported within-subjects MANOVA indicated a difference between the four areas. MANOVA also reveals a main effect for advisors, Wilks' Lambda = .234, $F(6,183) = 99.765$, $p < .05$. Area by advisor interaction is also significant by effect suggesting that differences among advisors vary across area.

To answer Research Question 1c students were asked to consider their intercollegiate athletics recruiting experience as it pertained to the four athletics issues addressed in Part A of the survey, then rate their level of reliance on each of the seven advisory sources. Differences in the students' advisory reliance were clear. Parents / guardians (mean=4.16, SD=0.92) ranked as the most important advisors on athletically-related issues while college coaches (mean=3.70, SD=1.07) and the privatized sport coach (mean=3.35, SD=1.33) were also rated favorably in this area. High school coaches received their highest advisory rating in the area of athletics (mean=2.63, SD=1.37), but surpassed only high school teachers and guidance counselors (mean=2.25, SD=1.15) and college admissions staff (mean=2.48, SD=1.12) among the group.

To address Research Question 2c participants were asked to rate their level of reliance on each of the seven potential advisory sources on items related to academics. High school coaches (mean=2.12, SD=1.21) were not viewed as critical advisors on academic issues, ranking sixth among the seven advisory groups and surpassing only privatized sport coaches (mean=2.09, SD=1.23). Parents and/or guardians (mean=4.24, SD=0.96) again ranked as the most important advisors with high school teachers and guidance counselors rated much higher than their advisory rating on athletic issues (mean=3.31, SD=1.32).

Research Question 3d addressed the participants' reliance on advice concerning NCAA rules and procedures. Mean scores appeared consistent with academic advisory role results and indicated high school coaches were not viewed as critical advisors for the study group in this area. High school coaches (mean=2.34, SD=1.39) again ranked sixth

among the seven advisory groups rated by the participants, surpassing only high school teachers and guidance counselors (mean=2.22, SD=1.36) as recruiting advisors on NCAA issues. One change from previous results was the ranking of parents and/or guardians and college coaches. College coaches (mean=3.96, SD=1.14) were clearly rated as the primary recruiting advisors concerning issues of NCAA rules and procedures. Parents and/or guardians (mean=3.10, SD=.1.37) ranked as the second most important advisors in this area.

Research Question 4c addressed advice the participants received concerning general college enrollment issues. Mean scores were similar to results testing advisory roles in the other three recruiting issues categories and indicated high school coaches were not seen as critical advisors on issues related to general college enrollment. High school coaches (mean=2.19, SD=1.29) ranked last among the seven advisory groups rated by the study participants, just below privatized sport coaches (mean=2.20, SD=1.30). Parents and/or guardians (mean=4.10, SD=1.02) and college coaches (mean=3.47, SD=1.29) were rated as the primary recruiting advisors on college enrollment issues with the college admissions staff (mean=3.33, SD=1.32) receiving its highest individual area response score of all the four recruiting issue categories.

Reliance on the High School Coach by Sport

Survey responses were examined to determine reliance on the high school coach using the variable of sport participation. Group mean scores by sport for each general advisory area can be found in Table 8.

Table 8. Reliance by Sport on the High School Coach

Advisory Issues	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
Athletics	2.09 (1.19)	2.06 (1.16)	2.91 (1.00)	2.90 (1.39)	2.52 (1.26)
Academics	2.00 (1.14)	1.95 (1.22)	2.77 (1.28)	2.56 (1.33)	2.34 (1.29)
NCAA Rules	1.86 (0.96)	1.73 (1.05)	3.00 (1.13)	2.84 (1.45)	2.39 (1.30)
Other Enrollment	1.80 (0.88)	1.60 (1.01)	2.40 (1.00)	2.25 (1.19)	2.03 (1.08)
Sport Total	1.94 (1.16)	1.84 (1.22)	2.77 (1.37)	2.64 (1.47)	2.31 (1.38)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Overall, men's basketball players (mean=2.77, SD=1.37) reported the greatest reliance on their high school coaches for recruiting advice when compared with participants in other sports. Women's soccer participants (mean=1.84, SD=1.22) report the lowest reliance scores. Men's basketball participants reported the highest scores on advice concerning NCAA rules and procedures (mean=3.00, SD=1.13) while the lowest overall issue area scores were posted by women's soccer for general college enrollment advice (mean=1.60, SD=1.01) and NCAA rules and procedures (mean=1.73, SD=1.05). Within-subjects MANOVA showed a significant area by sport effect, Wilks' Lambda = .899, $F(9,555) = 2.22$, $p < .05$, although the effect was not strong. Further between-subjects MANOVA testing confirmed that, overall, the four sports differed in their responses, $F(3,185) = 10.043$, $p < .05$. Tukey's HSD and Scheffe were both used to determine where sport differences occurred. Analysis showed no differences between men's and women's soccer or men's and women's basketball players. However, soccer participants and basketball participants did differ significantly.

Reporting by sport shows consistent differences across individual issue items.

Mean scores and standard deviations for the advisory items in each of the four reliance areas are reported in Table 9.

Table 9. Survey Item Reliance by Sport placed on the High School Coach.

Advice	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
Level of Competition	2.11 (1.18)	2.09 (1.23)	3.10 (1.09)	3.00 (1.41)	2.61 (1.32)
Playing Time	1.94 (1.14)	2.21 (1.41)	2.84 (1.13)	2.92 (1.53)	2.52 (1.38)
Program Reputation	2.16 (1.32)	1.96 (1.24)	2.76 (1.18)	2.76 (1.47)	2.43 (1.35)
Knowledge of College Coach	2.13 (1.43)	1.98 (1.30)	2.94 (1.28)	2.90 (1.48)	2.52 (1.44)
Entrance Requirements	2.02 (1.15)	1.99 (1.28)	2.94 (1.49)	2.57 (1.37)	2.41 (1.39)
Degree Options	1.91 (1.15)	1.89 (1.23)	2.74 (1.44)	2.46 (1.36)	2.28 (1.35)
Academic Reputation	1.94 (1.16)	1.93 (1.24)	2.66 (1.28)	2.53 (1.33)	2.29 (1.30)
Academic Success	2.11 (1.38)	1.98 (1.42)	2.72 (1.41)	2.65 (1.46)	2.39 (1.45)
Contacts /Evaluations	1.88 (1.06)	1.88 (1.25)	2.80 (1.27)	2.73 (1.45)	2.36 (1.35)
Official/ Unofficial Visits	2.02 (1.20)	1.80 (1.18)	2.82 (1.39)	2.82 (1.56)	2.40 (1.43)
Recruiting Calendar	1.80 (1.11)	1.66 (1.16)	2.84 (1.43)	2.82 (1.55)	2.32 (1.45)
IEC Registration	1.86 (1.15)	1.76 (1.10)	3.50 (1.35)	3.03 (1.67)	2.59 (1.54)
Freshman Eligibility	1.83 (1.10)	1.62 (1.09)	3.12 (1.46)	2.80 (1.59)	2.38 (1.49)
Core Course Requirements	1.72 (1.00)	1.62 (1.07)	2.94 (1.31)	2.78 (1.63)	2.31 (1.43)
Financial Aid Process	1.80 (1.09)	1.62 (1.11)	2.74 (1.35)	2.34 (1.38)	2.15 (1.32)
Admissions	1.41	1.33	1.98	1.88	1.67

/Enrollment	(.80)	(.97)	(1.11)	(1.19)	(1.08)
College Locale /Culture	1.97 (1.15)	1.80 (1.20)	2.44 (1.21)	2.38 (1.34)	2.16 (1.26)
Social Development	1.52 (.81)	1.56 (1.11)	2.00 (1.12)	2.07 (1.28)	1.81 (1.14)
Career Goals	2.27 (1.32)	1.68 (1.22)	2.82 (1.30)	2.57 (1.43)	2.34 (1.39)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

The individual item mean scores by sport corroborate the results shown by between-subjects MANOVA testing. On each of the 19 questions from Part A of the survey, men's and women's basketball participants rated reliance placed on the high school coach for recruiting advice higher than students participating in soccer. All five of the responses recorded at the 3.0 mid-point or higher were reported by basketball participants. Conversely, 29 of the 31 group means falling below 2.0 were reported by soccer players. Men's basketball participants rated reliance on the high school coach highest in advice pertaining to NCAA Eligibility Center registration (mean=3.50, SD=1.35), freshman eligibility test score standards (mean=3.12, SD=1.46), and various levels of competition (mean=3.1, SD=1.09). Women's basketball players also valued the high school coach's advice on NCAA Eligibility Center registration (mean=3.03, SD=1.67) and levels of competition (mean=3.00, SD=1.41). Both men's and women's basketball participants rated the high school coach's advice on the college admissions and enrollment process as least important (MBB mean=1.98, SD=1.11; WBB mean=1.88, SD=1.19).

Soccer participants rated advice from the high school coach as much less important. Only nine of the 39 total mean responses from men's and women's soccer

players fell at 2.0 or above. Men's soccer participants rated advice pertaining to future career goals highest (mean=2.27, SD=1.32) while women's soccer players placed the most value on advice related to playing time (mean=2.21, SD=1.41).

Reliance on Recruiting Advisors by Sport

The sport participation variable was also tested to determine the importance of various advisors and information sources used during the recruiting process. Group mean scores by sport for each advisor can be found in Table 10. Tables 11 through 14 report mean scores and standard deviations showing each advisory group's influence in the four recruiting issue areas – those related to athletics, academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and other general college enrollment matters.

Table 10. Reliance by Sport on Various Advisors.

Advisor	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
High School Coach	1.89 (1.09)	1.80 (1.12)	2.77 (1.27)	2.69 (1.45)	2.32 (1.33)
Parent/Guardian	3.42 (1.35)	3.88 (1.22)	3.90 (1.19)	4.07 (1.02)	3.90 (1.24)
HS Teacher / Guidance Counselor	2.08 (1.22)	2.47 (1.41)	2.81 (1.39)	2.87 (1.33)	2.68 (1.37)
Privatized Sport Coach	2.48 (1.43)	2.75 (1.44)	2.26 (1.31)	2.57 (1.44)	2.59 (1.41)
College Admissions Staff	2.70 (1.35)	2.95 (1.32)	2.81 (1.32)	3.02 (1.32)	2.89 (1.33)
College Coach	3.47 (1.36)	3.47 (1.20)	3.57 (1.23)	3.69 (1.18)	3.54 (1.25)
Internet	3.02 (1.17)	3.09 (1.20)	2.62 (1.24)	2.68 (1.20)	2.80 (1.22)
Total	2.78 (0.70)	2.91 (0.76)	2.99 (0.64)	3.08 (0.64)	2.94 (0.69)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Ratings for the various recruiting advisors showed a greater reliance on the high school coach from men's and women's basketball players compared to that expressed by men's and women's soccer players. Overall, however, the high school coach was not deemed one of the more important sources of recruiting advice. Parents and/or guardians were rated the most important advisors by women's basketball (mean=4.07, SD=1.02), men's basketball (mean=3.90, SD=1.19), and women's soccer (mean=3.88, SD=1.22) participants, followed by college coaches. Men's soccer players rated college coaches the most important overall advisors (mean=3.47, SD=1.36) with parents / guardians rated second (mean=3.42, SD=1.35). Men's basketball players (mean=2.77, SD=1.27) and women's basketball players (mean=2.69, SD=1.45) each rated high school coaches fifth in importance among the advisor choices. Men's soccer (mean=1.89, SD=1.09) and women's soccer (mean=1.80, SD=1.12) rated their reliance on advice from the high school coach least important compared to the other advisor options.

Within-subjects MANOVA indicated a significant effect by sport among the advisor groups, Wilks' Lambda = .745, $F(18,536) = 3.11$, $p < .05$. There was also a significant, although weaker, effect across area, advisor, and sport, Wilks' Lambda = .627, $F(54,500) = 1.58$, $p < .05$. Between-subjects MANOVA did not show significant differences between sports.

Mean scores and standard deviations reporting the importance of specific recruiting advisors on issues related to athletics can be found in Table 11.

Table 11: Recruiting Advisors by Sport on Athletics Issues.

Advisor	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
High School Coach	2.25 (1.25)	2.03 (1.16)	3.10 (1.19)	3.01 (1.52)	2.63 (1.37)
Parent/Guardian	3.69 (1.20)	4.12 (.95)	4.22 (.91)	4.40 (.72)	4.16 (0.92)
HS Teacher / Guidance Counselor	1.83 (.93)	2.07 (1.11)	2.35 (1.16)	2.50 (1.22)	2.25 (1.15)
Privatized Sport Coach	3.16 (1.47)	3.79 (1.12)	2.92 (1.31)	3.17 (1.42)	3.35 (1.33)
College Admissions Staff	2.33 (1.14)	2.62 (1.18)	2.20 (1.09)	2.69 (1.18)	2.48 (1.23)
College Coach	3.64 (1.14)	3.94 (.85)	3.56 (1.16)	3.73 (1.12)	3.70 (1.07)
Internet	2.86 (1.14)	2.98 (1.05)	2.47 (1.13)	2.73 (1.13)	2.70 (1.11)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Although men's and women's basketball players placed some value on them as recruiting advisors, high school coaches were not ranked among the most important overall advisors for the study group on issues related to intercollegiate athletics participation. Each of the four sports - men's soccer (mean=3.69, SD=1.20), women's soccer (mean=4.12, SD=.95), men's basketball (4.22, .91), and women's basketball (mean=4.40, .72) - rated parents and/or guardians highest among all advisors for advice pertaining to athletics issues. College coaches were also consistently rated highly for their advice in the athletics area. Women's soccer players ranked college coaches the highest (mean=3.94, SD=.85) followed by women's basketball participants (mean=3.73, SD=1.12).

Ratings for high school coaches as advisors on issues related to athletics are similar to those reported from the athletics issues' results in Part A of the survey. Men's

and women's basketball (mean=3.10, SD=1.19; mean=3.01, SD=1.52) relied much more heavily on their high school coaches for advice on athletics issues than their counterparts in soccer. The advisory rating given high school coaches by men's soccer players (mean=2.25, SD=1.25) ranked only above high school teachers and guidance counselors (mean=1.83, SD=.93) when considering advice on athletics issues. Women's soccer players rated reliance on high school coaches for athletics advice lowest (mean=2.03, SD=1.16) among all advisors they considered.

Reliance on various recruiting advisors pertaining to academic issues can be found in Table 12.

Table 12. Recruiting Advisors by Sport on Academic Issues.

Advisor	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
High School Coach	1.75 (.93)	1.68 (1.08)	2.50 (1.14)	2.42 (1.36)	2.12 (1.21)
Parent/Guardian	3.79 (1.27)	4.14 (1.01)	4.26 (.92)	4.48 (.87)	4.24 (0.96)
HS Teacher / Guidance Counselor	2.50 (1.14)	2.98 (1.47)	3.43 (1.26)	3.65 (1.11)	3.31 (1.32)
Privatized Sport Coach	2.09 (1.27)	2.16 (1.28)	1.84 (1.11)	2.13 (1.23)	2.09 (1.23)
College Admissions Staff	2.67 (1.26)	3.03 (1.25)	2.92 (1.22)	3.11 (1.27)	2.99 (1.24)
College Coach	2.77 (1.35)	2.85 (1.17)	3.11 (1.20)	3.32 (1.21)	3.01 (1.24)
Internet	3.01 (1.18)	3.14 (1.21)	2.73 (1.33)	2.75 (1.20)	2.87 (1.21)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Mean score results indicate that high school coaches were not viewed as critical advisors on issues related to academics, particularly for participants in men's and women's soccer. Basketball participants rated high school coaches sixth among the

seven advisory groups on academic issues, surpassing only privatized sport coaches.

Men's and women's soccer participants both ranked high school coaches last concerning advice on academic matters. Parents and/or guardians were rated the most important advisors to participants in each of the four sports - men's soccer (mean=3.79, SD=1.27), women's soccer (mean=4.14, SD=1.01), men's basketball (mean=4.26, SD=.92), and women's basketball (mean=4.48, SD=.87). Basketball participants rated high school teachers and guidance counselors above the 3.0 mid-point while women's (mean=3.14, SD=1.21) and men's soccer players (mean=3.01, SD=1.18) each rated the importance of the internet to receive academic recruiting advice second only to parent and/or guardian ratings.

Mean scores and standard deviations describing the reliance on specific advisors in matters of NCAA rules and procedures are reported in Table 13.

Table 13. Recruiting Advisors by Sport on NCAA Issues.

Advisor	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
High School Coach	1.69 (.95)	1.84 (1.17)	2.84 (1.44)	2.78 (1.47)	2.34 (1.39)
Parent/Guardian	2.52 (1.29)	3.07 (1.47)	3.11 (1.36)	3.28 (1.34)	3.10 (1.37)
HS Teacher / Guidance Counselor	1.64 (.92)	2.07 (1.43)	2.43 (1.42)	2.34 (1.34)	2.23 (1.36)
Privatized Sport Coach	2.56 (1.44)	2.83 (1.43)	2.32 (1.36)	2.69 (1.50)	2.70 (1.42)
College Admissions Staff	2.37 (1.37)	2.62 (1.36)	2.92 (1.42)	2.92 (1.46)	2.75 (1.39)
College Coach	3.86 (1.34)	3.87 (1.13)	4.01 (1.08)	4.01 (1.17)	3.96 (1.14)
Internet	3.18 (1.28)	3.01 (1.28)	2.58 (1.29)	2.67 (1.29)	2.79 (1.29)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Again, high school coaches were not seen as primary advisors on matters pertaining to NCAA rules and procedures. High school coaches were ranked fourth among the seven advisory groups by both men's (mean=2.84, SD=1.44) and women's (mean=2.78, SD=1.39) basketball players. Men's soccer participants rated high school coaches (mean=1.69, SD=.95) sixth among the seven advisor choices, ahead of only high school teachers and guidance counselors (mean=1.64, SD=.92). High school coaches were rated last (mean=1.84, SD=1.17) by women's soccer players in the NCAA issues area. Each of the four sports rated college coaches as the primary advisors related to NCAA issues with parents / guardians reported as the second most important advisors by men's basketball (mean=3.11, SD=1.36), women's basketball (mean=3.28, SD=1.34), and women's soccer (mean=3.07, SD=1.47). Men's soccer players (mean=3.18, SD=1.28) rated the importance of the internet to receive academic recruiting advice on NCAA issues second only to college coaches.

Mean scores and standard deviations reporting levels of reliance on various recruiting advisors on issues of general college enrollment are found in Table 14.

Table 14. Recruiting Advisors by Sport on General Enrollment Issues.

Advisor	MSOC	WSOC	MBB	WBB	TOTAL
High School Coach	1.86 (1.15)	1.62 (1.05)	2.62 (1.22)	2.53 (1.39)	2.19 (1.29)
Parent/Guardian	3.64 (1.24)	4.14 (1.01)	4.00 (1.14)	4.09 (1.03)	4.09 (1.02)
HS Teacher / Guidance Counselor	2.32 (1.29)	2.75 (1.38)	3.01 (1.43)	2.98 (1.21)	2.92 (1.32)
Privatized Sport Coach	2.09 (1.25)	2.22 (1.31)	1.96 (1.17)	2.28 (1.39)	2.20 (1.30)
College Admissions Staff	3.40 (1.37)	3.50 (1.31)	3.16 (1.34)	3.36 (1.28)	3.33 (1.32)
College Coach	3.58 (1.36)	3.22 (1.23)	3.58 (1.32)	3.69 (1.14)	3.47 (1.29)
Internet	3.01 (1.08)	3.22 (1.23)	2.67 (1.20)	2.55 (1.19)	2.85 (1.19)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Overall, mean scores were similar to results testing advisory roles in the other issue categories and indicated high school coaches did not serve a critical role as recruiting advisors on issues related to general college enrollment. Men's (mean=2.62, SD=1.22) and women's (mean=2.53, SD=1.39) basketball participants ranked high school coaches sixth among the seven advisory groups in this area with only privatized sport coaches rated lower. Parents and/or guardians were rated as the primary recruiting advisors by each of the four sports on college enrollment issues. The importance of high school coaches as advisors on issues related to general college enrollment mirrored previous mean score results in that men's basketball and women's basketball participants relied significantly more on their high school coaches for advice on college enrollment issues than did soccer participants. The advisory ratings given high school coaches by

men's soccer players (mean=1.86, SD=1.15) and women's soccer players (mean=1.62, SD=1.05) were the two lowest single mean scores in this recruiting advisory category.

Race / Ethnicity Differences

Participant distribution was heavily weighted in two race / ethnicity groups, Caucasian and African-American, which comprised slightly over 94% of the sample. Ethnicity by sport data are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Ethnicity by Sport Distribution.

Sport	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	African-American	Asian-American	Other / Mixed	Total
MSOC	44	1	1	5	1	2	54
WSOC	45	1	0	6	1	1	54
MBB	14	0	0	37	0	2	53
WBB	32	0	2	17	0	1	52
Total	135 (63.4%)	2 (0.9%)	3 (1.4%)	65 (30.5%)	2 (0.9%)	6 (2.8%)	213*

Note: One participant did not designate a race/ethnicity classification.

The African-American population made up almost 60 percent of the basketball participants. Overall, participant distribution was not adequate to yield meaningful results. However, mean scores comparing the Caucasian and African-American groups in the four advisory areas are presented in Table 16. Comparisons across the various recruiting advisors are presented Table 17. Within-subjects MANOVA revealed a significant but weak effect when comparing advisor reliance across race / ethnicity groups, Wilks' Lambda = .767, $F(30,710) = 1.62$, $p < .05$. Similar testing showed no effect of the issue areas across race / ethnicity.

Table 16: Reliance by Race / Ethnicity on the High School Coach.

Advisory Area	Caucasian	African-American	Total
Athletics	2.33 (1.30)	2.92 (1.13)	2.52 (1.26)
Academics	2.00 (1.17)	2.95 (1.32)	2.33 (1.28)
NCAA Rules	2.09 (1.18)	3.00 (1.30)	2.38 (1.29)
Other Enrollment	1.77 (0.96)	2.49 (1.15)	2.01 (1.06)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Table 17: Reliance by Race / Ethnicity on Various Advisors.

Advisor	Caucasian	African-American	Total
ATH/High School Coach	2.41 (1.33)	3.02 (1.37)	2.62 (1.37)
ATH/Parents/ Guardians	4.17 (0.90)	4.17 (0.89)	4.16 (0.92)
ATH/HS Teachers/ Guidance Counselors	2.09 (1.06)	2.51 (1.22)	2.26 (1.15)
ATH/Privatized Sport Coach	3.41 (1.28)	3.17 (1.42)	3.35 (1.33)
ATH/Admissions Staff	2.46 (1.10)	2.37 (1.13)	2.48 (1.13)
ATH/College Coaches	3.80 (1.09)	3.54 (1.07)	3.70 (1.07)
ATH/Internet	2.78 (1.01)	2.59 (1.23)	2.70 (1.11)
ACA/High School Coach	1.88 (1.11)	2.53 (1.29)	2.10 (1.20)
ACA/Parents/ Guardians	4.24 (0.93)	4.25 (0.99)	4.24 (0.96)
ACA/HS Teachers/ Guidance Counselors	3.18 (1.33)	3.56 (1.19)	3.32 (1.31)
ACA/Privatized Sport Coach	2.02 (1.14)	2.15 (1.35)	2.10 (1.23)
ACA/Admissions	2.92	2.97	2.99

Staff	(1.22)	(1.26)	(1.25)
ACA/College Coaches	2.90 (1.25)	3.20 (1.19)	3.02 (1.24)
ACA/Internet	2.97 (1.09)	3.20 (1.19)	3.02 (1.24)
NCAA/High School Coach	2.10 (1.26)	2.80 (1.52)	2.32 (1.38)
NCAA/Parents/Guardians	3.10 (1.34)	3.02 (1.44)	3.09 (1.37)
NCAA/HS Teachers/Guidance Counselors	2.05 (1.32)	2.52 (1.42)	2.23 (1.36)
NCAA/Privatized Sport Coach	2.64 (1.32)	2.66 (1.540)	2.70 (1.42)
NCAA/Admissions Staff	2.62 (1.32)	2.95 (1.47)	2.76 (1.39)
NCAA/College Coaches	3.96 (1.10)	3.88 (1.29)	3.96 (1.14)
NCAA/Internet	2.92 (1.27)	2.47 (1.33)	2.79 (1.29)
OTH/High School Coach	1.93 (1.16)	2.63 (1.39)	2.17 (1.27)
OTH/Parents/Guardians	4.20 (0.97)	3.93 (1.06)	4.09 (1.02)
OTH/HS Teachers/Guidance Counselors	2.86 (1.27)	3.03 (1.40)	2.93 (1.31)
OTH/Privatized Sport Coach	2.18 (1.31)	2.22 (1.31)	2.21 (1.30)
OTH/Admissions Staff	3.32 (1.33)	3.25 (1.36)	3.32 (1.32)
OTH/College Coaches	3.41 (1.31)	3.58 (1.33)	3.46 (1.29)
OTH/Internet	2.98 (1.10)	2.63 (1.33)	2.86 (1.19)

Note: Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all and 5 = completely.

Mean score results by both issue area and advisor show clear differences in the reliance Caucasian and African-American participants placed on their high school

coaches for advice during the recruiting process. In each of the four issue areas African-American participants rated advice from their high school coaches higher than the group mean. Caucasian participants ranked high school coaches lower in each area. These differences were mirrored when comparing advisor by issue mean scores. African-Americans consistently rated the high school coach above the overall mean with Caucasian participants scoring the high school coach lower.

Research Questions 1b, 2b, 3c, and 4b

A component of each general research question focused on whether or not discussions about the recruiting process occurred between high school coaches and their prospective intercollegiate student-athletes and, if discussions did occur, which party initiated these interactions. Additionally, the survey contained two open-ended questions dealing specifically with advice from the high school coach deemed helpful by students and advice students could have used but did not receive from their coaches.

The Participant Information portion of the survey contained questions (7a. and 7b.) asking students to first indicate whether or not discussions with their high school coach concerning the recruiting process took place and then identifying who initiated those discussions. The results found that 123 (57.4%) of the participants (n=214) had discussed the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process with their high school coach. Eighty-one participants (37.8%) responded that no such conversations took place and 10 participants (4.6%) did not respond to the question. Men's basketball players (n=42, 34.1%) reported the most discussion with their high school coach followed by women's basketball players (n=37, 30.1%). The fewest number of positive responses came from

men's soccer participants (n=18, 14.6%). Twenty-six women's soccer players responded that recruiting discussions had occurred between themselves and their high school coaches (21.1%). Of those sport participants reporting that recruiting discussions with the high school coach did not take place, only nine (11.1%) were men's basketball players while 29 (35.8%) participated in men's soccer. These results appear to coincide with the mean score results from Part A and Part B of the survey. Consistently throughout both sections of the data collection tool, basketball players – specifically men's basketball players – rated assistance from their high school coaches on issues pertaining to the recruiting process much higher than soccer participants.

Responses to question 7b of the survey indicated that recruiting conversations between prospective intercollegiate student-athletes and their high school coaches tended to be initiated by the coach. Of the 123 participants reporting recruiting discussions with their high school coach occurred, 78 (63.4%) stated those interactions were initiated by the coach. Again, an overwhelming number of these coach-initiated discussions took place with men's and women's basketball players (n=56, 71.8%). In all sports except women's soccer, a majority of respondents said recruiting discussions were initiated by the high school coach, not the player. In women's soccer, 14 of the 26 participants (53.8%) reported that they approached the high school coach first about recruiting issues. Women's basketball players reported the highest rate of coach-initiated recruiting discussions (n=28, 75.7%) while two-thirds of the men's basketball players stated their coaches approached them first concerning recruiting. Two participants, one each from women's soccer and women's basketball, responded that they initiated recruiting

discussions with their high school coach after leaving the previous question (“Did you ever discuss the recruiting process with your high school coach?”) blank. The students’ responses for item 7b were thus eliminated from frequency calculations.

To better understand what kind of recruiting information high school coaches shared with their students, participants were asked to report what advice from the coach was most helpful during the recruiting process. Responses were categorized consistent with the Issue sections of the survey – helpful advice pertaining to athletics, academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and general college enrollment. In addition, some responses were categorized as ‘General’. These were primarily objective, emotional or personal phrases such as “Go where you will be happy” or “Go where you feel comfortable.”

Over half of the participants (n=114, 53.3%) responded positively to the question. A positive response was one in which the student clearly listed an area or areas in which the high school coach provided important advice to them during the recruiting process. Positive participant responses by sport are found in Table 18.

Table 18: Open-End Responses / Positive Advice from High School Coach.

SPORT	POSITIVE RESPONSES	% OF SPORT RESPONDING
WSOC	23	41.8
MSOC	19	35.2
WBB	32	61.5
MBB	40	75.5
TOTAL	114	53.3

A total of 140 statements reflected helpful recruiting advice from the high school coach. Categorization of the responses revealed 54 (38.6%) pertaining to issues related

to athletics participation. Twenty-nine responses (20.7%) dealt with general college enrollment issues while only 14 (10.0%) related to academic advice. Only three comments (2.1%) mentioned helpful advice pertaining to NCAA rules and procedures. Forty responses (28.6%) were categorized as 'General'.

The majority of responses related to athletics coincided with the Likert-scale questions in Part A of the survey. Of the 54 athletically-related responses, 18 (33.3%) came from women's basketball participants and, surprisingly, 14 (25.9%) were reported by men's soccer players. Responses directly related to levels of competition (n=9), playing time (n=9), the reputation and tradition of college athletic programs (n=5), and college coaches and/or coaching staffs (n=12) comprised 35 of the 54 comments (64.8%). Additional responses dealt generally with the students' participation options (n=6), such as "keep your options open", "don't eliminate any options", or "pursue all your options". Students also responded that general athletic-related advice, such as "play hard", "work hard", "train hard", and "stay focused on (sport)" was also common.

Men's basketball players provided over half of the responses (n=8, 57.1%) related to academic advice while no men's soccer participants reported any helpful advice in that area. Almost half of all comments (n=6, 42.9%) dealt either specifically or generally with the academic reputation of colleges or universities. Advice such as "go where you can get a good education" or he/she "told me (school) was a good school academically" seemed in line with academic reputation. General academic success statements, such as "stay focused on school" or "your goal is to graduate" also appeared. Only one statement

was directly related to the student's choice of degree programs and there was no mention of any advice related to college entrance requirements.

Virtually no advice from high school coaches concerning NCAA regulations or procedures was mentioned. Only three comments (2.1%), one each from women's basketball, men's basketball, and women's soccer, were made about this advisory category. Two general statements related to the NCAA Eligibility Center, formerly the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse, were made: "Clearinghouse information" and "Clearinghouse". The women's basketball participant commented on advice concerning the amount of time spent in discussions with college coaches. This issue is directly related to NCAA rules concerning contacts and evaluations of prospective student-athletes by college coaches and coincides with one of the questions from Part A of the survey (advice related to NCAA rules regarding contacts and evaluations from college coaches).

Although the lowest group mean score for any issues category in Part A of the survey came from the section "Other issues related to college enrollment" (mean=2.02, SD=1.26), over 20 percent (n=29) of the open-ended responses concerning helpful advice received by the high school coach related to this area. Men's basketball players provided the most comments on this issue (n=12, 41.3%) with men's soccer players reporting just four items (13.8%). The majority of these responses (n=15) were general statements related to overall campus culture, social issues, and extracurricular activities. A number of students received advice such as "pick a school, not just a (sport) program", "go for the school, not just the sport", or "go somewhere you'd want to be even if you weren't

playing (sport)". Students were encouraged to visit a variety of schools, make sure they experienced college life, not just life in the sport, and were given advice on college life. One student specifically mentioned advice received related to the proximity of the campus ("stay close to home"). Four students mentioned advice related to financial aid, but none were clear whether the advice dealt with athletically-related or general scholarship assistance.

A number of comments (n=40) were viewed as general, encouraging statements made by high school coaches to their students. A large percentage of these generally supportive comments were reported by men's and women's basketball players (n=17, 42.5%; n=16, 40.0%). These responses tended to be positive bits of advice ranging from telling the student to look for the best fit or best situation (n=12), going where the student feels comfortable (n=8), and going where the student will be happy or have fun (n=8). Students were also advised to go where they felt wanted (n=4), where it felt like home (n=2), or where it was "best for you" (n=2).

Just under half of all students participating in the survey (n=100, 46.7%) either responded negatively to the question (ex.: "my high school coach was no help") or did not provide a response. Negative participant responses by sport are found in Table 19.

Table 19: Open-End Responses / Negative Advice from High School Coach.

SPORT	NEGATIVE RESPONSES	% OF SPORT RESPONDING
WSOC	32	58.2
MSOC	35	64.8
WBB	20	38.5
MBB	13	24.5
TOTAL	100	46.7

Negative responses included 23 questions (23%) left blank. Nine of the blank responses were from foreign student-athletes. In all, 21 foreign student-athletes either left the question blank or provided a response such as ‘N/A’.

In addition to reporting the most helpful recruiting advice received from their high school coach, students were also asked in a separate question to report what advice they would liked to have received during the recruiting process. Consistent with the cataloging of responses providing examples of helpful advice, responses from this question were categorized consistent with the Issue sections of the survey.

Since the focus of the question tended toward the negative by asking students what advice they would liked to have received from their high school coach, it is not surprising that the response rate from soccer participants (n=61, 48.8%) was higher than in the previous question. One-hundred twenty-five (58.4%) student-athletes positively responded to the question. A positive response was one in which the student clearly listed a specific area or areas in which they wanted, but did not receive, advice from their high school coach during the recruiting process. Of those responding, the highest number were women’s soccer participants (n=35, 63.6%). Thirty-two participants each (25.6%) from men’s and women’s basketball responded while men’s soccer had the lowest

number of respondents (n=26, 20.8%). Eighty-nine students (n=214, 41.6%) either responded negatively (ex.: “my high school coach was no help”) or did not provide a response. Negative respondents by sport included 28 from men’s soccer (51.9% of all men’s soccer participants), 21 from men’s basketball (39.6%), 20 from women’s basketball (38.4%), and 20 from women’s soccer (36.4%). Of the negative responses, 30 questions (33.7%) were left blank. Nine of the blank responses were from foreign student-athletes. In all, 16 foreign student-athletes either left the question blank or provided a response such as “N/A”.

Of the 161 total statements made by the participants, 54 dealt with issues related to athletics participation. Women’s basketball and women’s soccer participants accounted for 33 (61.1%) of these comments. Twenty-two of the 54 responses (40.7%) dealt primarily with the areas addressed in Part A of the survey. Students’ called for more advice concerning levels of competition (n=8), knowledge about college coaches or coaching staffs (n=6), the reputation or tradition of college athletics programs – referred to by students as “good programs” (n=5), and playing time (n=3). Many of the responses dealt with options the students had and the timing of their decisions (n=20). These students wanted more information about their playing options and advice on timing their commitments to specific schools. Other general athletics advice sought by the students included information dealing with club sports or camps (n=3), training and preparation for college participation, especially preseason practice (n=3), and a better understanding of how “hard” college sports would be.

A total of 19 comments were made related to desired advice on academic issues. Men's basketball and men's soccer players provided 14 of the 19 responses (73.7%). The largest single number of responses indicated students wanted more help or advice simply with "academics" (n=9). Responses coinciding with the Likert-scale statements in Part A of the survey included requests for advice dealing with college entrance requirements (n=3), academic success (n=3), degree program options (n=2), and academic reputation (n=1). One student called for more advice on how to "keep up with academics".

While only three comments related to helpful advice received by the high school coach concerning NCAA rules and procedures were made in response to the previous question, advice sought, but not received, in this issue category was clearly what students desired most. Forty-one comments were made by participants concerning the lack of advice on NCAA issues. Women's basketball and women's soccer players provided 27 (65.9%) of these responses. Comments coinciding with statements from Part A of the survey included a desire for more advice concerning contacts and evaluations (n=12) and rules on official and unofficial visits (n=3). General responses included a desire for more information about the NCAA and NCAA Eligibility Center, formerly the NCAA Clearinghouse (n=10), and a desire for more help "getting recruited". Since recruitment is heavily regulated by the NCAA, this response was categorized with NCAA issues. Students also requested more information and advice on signing with a school or the timing surrounding official commitments (n=5). These responses are related to issues concerning the NCAA recruiting calendar.

Sixteen comments dealt with other issues of college enrollment. Six responses each (37.5%) came from women's basketball and women's soccer participants. No men's basketball players commented positively to this question. Responses coinciding with the issues from Part A of the survey included a need for more advice concerning campus culture and location (n=3), the admissions and enrollment process (n=2), and financial aid (n=1). Other general statements concerning college enrollment included a request for advice on "what to avoid", how the coach chose his or her school, "what to expect", and general school choice.

While general responses concerning helpful advice received from the high school coach tended to be very open and objective, such as "go where you will be happy" or "go where you feel comfortable", general responses commenting on advice sought during the recruiting process were more direct and specific. Of the total responses provided (n=31), 13 came from women's soccer participants (41.9%). The overwhelming number of responses in this category expressed the feeling that any help at all from the high school coach during the recruiting process would have been appreciated (n=15, 48.4%) or that the high school coach should have more knowledge of the overall process in order to help (n=6). Two other remarks were made pertaining to general advice a high school coach could give – encouraging the student to make his or her own decision (n=4) and encouraging the student to stay positive (n=1).

Other Important Recruiting Advisors

Survey Question 48 asked students to list other advisors who may have helped them during the recruiting process. Students were asked not to provide names of the

advisors, only a position or title held by that person. Examples of additional advisors provided in the question were a minister, family friend, relative, and former teammate. A total of 114 students (53.3% of total study participants) provided 160 responses listing additional advisors in their recruiting process. Nine categories of additional advisors were identified. Responses can be found in Table 20.

TABLE 20: Additional Recruiting Advisors by Sport.

RESPONSES	WSOC	MSOC	WBB	MBB	TOTAL
Friends/Teammates	21	17	16	23	77
Other Family	8	3	11	9	31
Other Coaches	4	4	8	3	19
Recruiting Agency	2	8	0	0	10
Other College Athletes	3	2	3	2	10
Pastor	0	0	4	4	8
Trainer/Personal Trainer	0	1	2	0	3
Doctor	0	0	1	0	1
College Advisor	0	0	1	0	1

Responses listing friends, teammates, or former teammates were the most prominent (n=77, 48.1%) and listed most frequently by participants from each sport. Two other categories of additional advisors each comprised over 10 percent of all responses – other family members (n=31, 19.4%) and other coaches (n=19, 11.9%). Other family members were either listed as such or were listed more specifically, such as “brother”, “sister”, or “uncle”. Other coaches included former coaches and coaches from different sports. Other additional advisor responses included other athletes or college athletes (n=10, 6.3%), recruiting agencies (n=10, 6.3%), pastor or minister (n=8, 5.0%),

trainer or personal trainer (n=3, 1.9%), doctor (n=1, 0.6%), and college advisor (n=1, 0.6%). Upon review of those surveys listing a recruiting agency or service as an additional advisor, it was discovered that eight of the 10 responses came from men's soccer participants who were not United States citizens.

Summary

The study data clearly outlined two themes in the results. First, high school coaches are not seen as particularly important advisors during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Although their highest issue area scores did occur in the athletics category, all group mean results from the four issue categories rating reliance on the high school coach's advice fell well below the 3.0 mid-point. In addition, when compared with other traditional recruiting advisors and sources of information, high school coaches were not looked upon as primary outlets for assistance for students during the recruiting process.

Second, a clear difference was shown in the reliance basketball participants placed on their high school coaches versus that sought by soccer participants. Consistently across issues and advisors, basketball players ranked their experiences with and advice from the high school coach much higher than ratings reported by soccer participants.

In addition, responses to open ended questions revealed that, while students appreciated the help they received from their high school coach during the recruiting process, there was a desire for much more. One of the greatest areas of discrepancy was with assistance on matters of NCAA rules and procedures. Only three students

commented positively about their high school coaches help in this area while 41 expressed a need for more NCAA policy advice. These results supported concerns shared by the high school coaches participating in the information gathering done to assist in the study's survey development. High school coaches saw themselves as important potential advisors to their students on matters on NCAA rules and procedures but were frustrated at the difficulties they faced trying to gain current NCAA recruiting materials.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The intercollegiate athletics recruiting process involves a variety of different stakeholders. At the center is the prospective student-athlete. These young men and women are faced with college attendance and athletic participation decisions that largely determine their futures and careers. Surrounding these young student-athletes are various advisors and sources for information, all with an interest in guiding the students to make good decisions about college attendance. One of these potential advisors is the high school coach. In their position, high school coaches have the opportunity to assist prospective student-athletes on recruiting decisions related to athletics participation, academic issues, and general college enrollment and serve as mentors during an important stage of their students' lives. Literature (Hill, 1993; Hoch, 1999; James, 2003) and research conducted for survey development suggest that high school coaches understand the importance of their participation in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process and their roles as advisors to their students at a very important stage of life. However, literature also reflects that much of the information and advice available to high school coaches about their role in the recruiting process is generated by other coaches and administrators. Little research generated from student experiences and reflection exists to help high school coaches understand the value and effectiveness of their recruiting advice. The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process from the

perspective of those most invested in the final decisions – the student-athletes themselves. In addition, students also reported their level of reliance on a variety of different advisors, including the high school coach, during their recruiting process.

The high school coach's role in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process is described using data obtained from a survey administered to 214 NCAA Division II men's and women's basketball and soccer participants. Following a brief overview of the sample as it relates to the research goals, discussion will focus on the four research questions. The questions are based on the high school coach's advisory role during the recruiting process in four specific areas – athletic participation issues, academic issues, NCAA rules and procedures, and other issues of college admissions and enrollment. In addition, the relative advising roles of the coach and other advisors, such as parents and college coaches, will be discussed for each research question. Strengths and limitations of the research are also discussed as well as opportunities for future study in the area of intercollegiate athletics recruiting.

Participant Overview

The survey was completed by 214 NCAA Division II student-athletes representing four sports – men's basketball, women's basketball, men's soccer, and women's soccer. Only two student-athletes had not been officially recruited based on the NCAA definition of a recruited prospective student-athlete. Thus, the study sample is fully experienced in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process and was in a position to receive guidance from others, including high school coaches, about the issues addressed in the research questions. A large majority ($n = 175$, 81.8%) reported

receiving athletic scholarship assistance at their current institution suggesting that the study population had a broad recruiting experience. Only 189 participants completed Part A of the survey, the section specifically targeting the role of the high school coach in the recruiting process, because 25 students did not attend high school in the United States including 24 who were not residents of this country. Interaction between the prospective student-athlete and the high school coach was important and over 65% (n=123) of those completing Part A of the survey reported discussions specifically about the recruiting process with their high school coach.

Research Question 1: Advice on Athletics

The first research question focused on the advisory role of the high school coach during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process on issues related to athletics participation. Specific items asked about the high school coach's advice on the appropriate level of competition, opportunities for playing time in college, the reputation and tradition of specific college and university athletic programs, and knowledge about college coaches and coaching staffs. Students also rated the assistance provided by potential advisors concerning issues of athletic participation.

Overall, responses to all four questions in the athletics area were similar and slightly below the mid-range on the 5-point scale. While some participants placed relatively strong reliance on the high school coach for advice in this area, in general the coach's assistance was not viewed as critical. Men's and women's basketball players consistently indicated a higher level of reliance on their high school coaches than did men's and women's soccer players. Participants from both basketball teams valued

advice concerning various levels of competition the most while also giving higher marks to the coach's advice about college coaches and coaching staffs. These results supported current literature in which Slabik (2002) encourages high school coaches to be able to effectively advise student on appropriate levels of play. In addition, literature also emphasized the importance of regular contact between high school and college coaches to help the high school coach provide better guidance to their athletes (Hurley & Hollibaugh, 1999; Klungseth, 2004; O'Donnell, 1997). The soccer participants, on the other hand, seemed to rely very little on their high school coaches for assistance in any of the athletics issue areas presented.

Athletics was the focus of the first research question because the study revolved around the transition students made in their athletic careers from high school to college and advice they receive in that area is important. As an integral part of the student's high school athletic experience, the high school coach is in a position to be a primary advisor on athletic-related issues as Hill (1993) pointed out in his study of minor league baseball players. Also, in the earlier coaches' survey, high school coaches themselves described the important role they can play in helping students make the transition from high school to college sports. While the coach appears to be in a key position to provide recruiting assistance and those in the profession acknowledge the importance of that role, student-athletes in this study did not see the coach as a key advisor. Lackluster results in an area expected to show the importance of the high school coach in the recruiting process warn of weaker results in subsequent study questions.

A less than expected endorsement of the high school coaches' recruiting advice in the area of athletics participation was mirrored in the overall rating of the coaches' athletics advisory role when compared to other potential sources of guidance in the recruiting process. Parents were clearly rated as most influential advisors, followed by college and privatized coaches. Again, the discrepancy between basketball participants and soccer players was noticeable. Men's basketball players rated their reliance on advice from their high school coach behind only parents and/or guardians and college coaches. Women's basketball players also placed some value on their high school coaches' advice, but did deem the privatized sport coach, traditionally an AAU coach in basketball, as a more important advisor on athletic-related matters. Soccer participants saw little need for assistance from the high school coach when it came to advice on athletics issues. In fact, both men's and women's soccer players rated assistance from the college admissions staff and the internet on areas related to athletics as more important than advice from their high school coaches. The notion that a high school student-athlete would place more emphasis on internet assistance than his or her own high school coach in matters pertaining to athletics is alarming. Conversely, men's and women's soccer participants relied heavily on privatized sport coaches, primarily referred to as club coaches in soccer. Similar to the high school coach's role for men's and women's basketball players, soccer participants ranked the privatized sport coach behind only parents and/or guardians and college coaches in advisory importance on athletic issues.

Overall, the level of reliance placed on the high school coach for recruiting advice related to athletics issues was much less than one might expect, considering the coach's

dual role as an educator and athletics instructor and the coaches own belief in their ability, as presented in literature review, to critique the overall student. Of the seven advisory groups and information sources student-athletes were asked to rate in this area, high school coaches fell above only high school teachers and guidance counselors. When one considers that some high school student-athletes, in this case those participating in soccer, would rely more on the internet or college admissions personnel for advice pertaining to appropriate levels of competition related to their own athletic ability, it speaks to the differences in high school coaching structure among various sports. One difference centers on the role the privatized, or club, coach plays for the soccer participant. Basketball has a much longer competitive history as part of secondary school education than soccer. Because of this, basketball programs are more likely to be established in the high schools and employ more experienced coaches. The rise of the club soccer program as a competitive option for young athletes, in many areas, has overshadowed the growth of high school soccer programs. In high schools, where the traditional sports of football, basketball, and baseball tend to be more prominent, youth and high school-aged students may view club programs as a more focused opportunity to learn the sport and grow competitively. In concert with this possibility, skilled soccer coaches may be drawn more toward the private coaching sector than the public schools, where they are faced with battles for money, facilities, and attention against other, more established sports. For the high school basketball player, the historical strength of the sport at the secondary level and the likelihood of more experienced coaches with stronger

ties to college programs provide an opportunity for better guidance through the recruiting process.

Research Question 2: Advice on Academics

Research Question 2 dealt with the recruiting advisory role high school coaches play for their student-athletes on issues related to academics. Specifically, student-athletes were asked to rate their reliance on the high school coach for advice on issues such as college entrance requirements, various degree options available to the student, the academic reputation of specific colleges and universities, and methods for academic success, such as study habits and time management. Many times, the athletics responsibilities of the high school coach are secondary to their role as a teacher in their respective schools. One of the consistent points made in the literature about the role of high school coaches is the unique position they hold as potential advisors in both athletic and academic related issues. In the earlier coaches' survey, current high school coaches spoke specifically of this responsibility and claimed their insight into what one coach referred to as "the total package" of the high school athlete could serve as an important asset for both student and college coach during the recruiting process. Although this assertion has merit, one could make a case that the primary relationship between high school coaches and their prospective student-athletes centers on athletics first. Because of their traditional role as educator, though, the decision was made to assess the coach's role in academic advisement.

Survey results confirmed suspicions that the role a high school coach plays in areas of academic advisement is not as strong as their guidance on athletic issues. Also,

the results continue the trend shown in results on athletics. Clearly, participants from men's and women's basketball felt much more positive about the level of academic advice they received from their high school coaches than those participating in soccer. Closer review also reveals that men's basketball players had an even stronger feeling about the academic assistance provided by their high school coach than did women's players. However, overall survey results showed little strength in the coach's academic advising role. This can be explained, in part, by the low scores issued coaches by the men's and women's soccer participants. In most of the advice categories students were asked to respond to, soccer players barely rated their level of reliance on high school coaches above the first Likert-scale option, identified as "Not at All". On the other hand, men's basketball participants, while not rating the coach's advice as important as on athletic issues, did rate the academic advice above the scale midpoint. Highest reliance on the high school coach was in the area of advice pertaining to college entrance requirements while the lowest marks tended to relate to advice concerning the academic reputation of specific colleges and universities. It expected that the high school coach's role in academic advisement would be less than the level of assistance provided concerning athletic issues. Results of the study confirmed this assumption.

The relatively low academic advisor ratings received by high school coaches were clear when study participants were asked to rate the list of potential advisors and information sources. Parents and guardians, high school teachers and guidance counselors, and college coaches were shown to be the most important advisors on academic issues during the recruiting process. High school teachers and guidance

counselors were ranked highly as academic advisors during the recruiting process while high school coaches fell toward the bottom in the list of importance, landing only slightly above the privatized sport coach in the rankings. This result give credence to the charge Miller (1993) forwarded encouraging strong and ongoing relationships between guidance counselors and high school coaches to help strengthen a positive mentoring environment for the student-athlete. In this study, though, results showed little reliance on the high school coach for advice concerning academic issues during the recruiting process.

One interesting result in this area was the ranking of the internet's role in providing academic assistance during the recruiting process. Consistent with results gauging advice pertaining to athletics, men's and women's basketball players relied more heavily on their high school coach in matters of academic advisement than the internet. However, soccer participants relied the least on high school coaches and the internet was ranked just below parents and/or guardians as a source for their academic information. These results parallel the athletic advisor results.

Research Question 3: Advice on NCAA Rules and Procedures

Research Question 3 sought to determine the role high school coaches play advising their student-athletes on NCAA rules and procedures, particularly as they pertain to the recruiting process and freshman academic eligibility. Specific items asked about advice on issues such as contacts and evaluations by college coaches, official and unofficial visits to college campuses, the NCAA recruiting calendar, registration for the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse, now referred to as the NCAA Eligibility Center,

NCAA freshman academic eligibility requirements, and high school course selection related to NCAA core course requirements.

Much of the recruiting process is regulated by the NCAA. In addition, rules governing the academic eligibility of entering freshman student-athletes constantly change and differ between the various NCAA competitive divisions. Thus, accurate advice concerning this array of rules and regulations is critical if prospective student-athletes are to transition from high school to college sport participation smoothly. High school coaches are in a position to be key contacts for college coaches trying to gain information about the prospective student-athlete and, as Hoch (1999) points out, should thus be familiar with NCAA recruiting rules. In addition, the high school coach can serve as a go-between and, potentially, an important advisor to the student-athletes themselves. However, in the coaches' survey, high school coaches expressed concern that the NCAA did not directly provide recruiting information to them to assist in advising their student and rated their familiarity with NCAA rules and procedures low. Traditionally, NCAA mailings with information about recruiting and academic eligibility rules go to high school guidance offices. From there, coaches reported, access to that information varied.

Overall, reliance on the high school coach for assistance on NCAA matters appeared only slightly above their role in academic advisement and slightly below athletic advisement. In line with the continuing trend of differences between basketball and soccer participants, differences from this category were the largest in the study. Particularly in areas related to freshman academic eligibility and the NCAA Eligibility

Center, formerly the Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse, high school coaches were given among their strongest advisory ratings of the study from men's and women's basketball players. Additionally, the level of assistance sought by basketball participants in the other NCAA recruiting focus areas was also well above the scale midpoint. On the other side of the spectrum, though, men's and women's soccer students rated their reliance on high school coaches for assistance in this area lower than both advice pertaining to athletics and that related to academics. To illustrate this difference, men's basketball players gave their highest ratings ($M = 3.50$) in Part A of the survey to the assistance received by their high school coach on the NCAA Eligibility Center registration process. Soccer players, however, consistently rated this advice on the low-end of the scale ($M = 1.86$). The overall mean score for the NCAA issues category shows a somewhat weak position for the advising importance of the high school coach. It is clear, though, that coaches had a much more positive impact advising participants in basketball over those in soccer, particularly in areas related to freshman eligibility.

Differences between soccer and basketball participants also appeared in ratings of specific advisors. Again, the gap between basketball student-athletes and soccer participants was the largest in the study. Men's and women's basketball players did rate advice from other groups, including parents and/or guardians, college coaches, and college admissions staff, ahead of that received from high school coaches. Still, reliance ratings for the coaches were above average. Soccer participants continued to show virtually no reliance on their high school coaches for recruiting advice. One startling result was that the privatized sport coaches were more valued advisors on NCAA rules

and regulations than either the high school coaches or high school teachers and guidance counselors. As club coaches, these individuals are not designated to directly receive any information from the NCAA concerning recruiting rules or freshman academic eligibility. As reported earlier, official NCAA correspondence on this issues normally goes to high school guidance offices. The fact that soccer participants rated both high school advisors (coaches and teachers / guidance counselors) as the two least important sources for NCAA information is alarming. It is unlikely that club soccer coaches have direct access to high school student academic records, thus would not be in a position to accurately report a prospective student-athlete's academic standing or capability to a college coach. An additional danger is that college coaches could take advantage of the student-athlete's reliance on the club soccer coach for information, knowing their ability to gain knowledge in this area would come strictly from secondary sources. In the end, though, it does not seem to benefit the college coach or the prospective student-athlete, to rely on a source that may not have as much interest in or knowledge about NCAA policy.

Research Question 4: Advice on Other College Enrollment Issues

Research Question 4 focused on the recruiting advisory role of high school coaches on issues related to general college enrollment and attendance. Specifically, student-athletes were asked about advice pertaining to the non-athletics financial aid process, issues related to the admissions and enrollment process, the location and culture of specific colleges and universities, social development opportunities available in college, and future career goals.

Clearly, the least important role of the high school coach during the recruiting process as reported by the study participants was in the general college enrollment area with mean item ratings around 2.0. Again, men's basketball players provided much higher ratings for the high school coach than participants in other sports, but overall reliance was less than in any of the other recruiting issues categories. High school coaches provided the least assistance in the college admissions and enrollment process and also did little to enlighten their student-athletes on various social development opportunities in college. On the positive side, there was some indication that high school coaches did provide guidance for students concerning future career goals. These results were muted somewhat, as the difference between the opinions of basketball participants, particularly male players, and soccer participants varied greatly. Overall, the importance of assistance from the high school coach in these areas compared to the other recruiting issues faced by the student-athletes is not seen as valuable.

One may suspect that students looking for assistance gaining college admission, applying for financial aid, and learning about campus culture would count heavily on college personnel for guidance. The study population supported this notion as college coaches and admissions staff, along with parents and/or guardians, played the most important roles in advising the student-athletes on issues pertaining to general college enrollment. It is also not difficult to imagine that the transition from high school to college sport participation may lessen the importance of earlier athletic advisors in dealing with non-athletic, college-related issues. This, too, seemed to be supported by survey results. Participants in each of the four sports rated reliance on their high school

and privatized sport coaches as least important with making decisions concerning general college enrollment.

High School Coach and Prospective Student-Athlete Communication

These questions focused on levels of communication between high school coaches and their prospective student-athletes. Students were asked whether or not they ever discussed the recruiting process with their high school coach and who initiated discussions. Well over half of the students reported having discussions with their high school coach specifically about the recruiting process. Of these discussions, over 60 percent were initiated by the high school coach. However, when considering the overall results, the initiative of high school coaches to approach their student-athletes about the recruiting process appears less than stellar. With the 25 participants reporting high school attendance outside the United States eliminated from the responses, only 78 of 189 study participants, slightly over 40%, reported a coach-initiated discussion concerning the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. Clearly, basketball coaches showed more initiative than those in soccer. Of the coach-initiated discussions, 56 (71.8%) originated from men's and women's basketball coaches. Of the 52 women's soccer players reporting attendance at high schools in the United States, only 12 (23.1%) said their high school coach initiated discussion. After excluding those not attending high school in the United States, only 27% of men's soccer participants reported having a high school coach-initiated discussion about recruiting. In contrast, over half of the men's and women's basketball players held discussions about the recruiting process at the request of their high school coach.

When study participants discussed helpful advice they received from their high school coaches during the recruiting process, responses overwhelmingly fell in the area of athletics. While a number of responses related more general, positive advice, such as “go where you’ll be happy”, over half of the comments shared by the students dealt directly with positive, helpful advice about issues of athletics participation.

The distribution of student comments, for the most part, mirrored how students had rated the role of the high school coach during their recruiting process. Much like mean score results from Part A of the survey, students reported much more specific, helpful advice related to athletics than any other area. Students shared that high school coaches helped them specifically on issues related to levels of competition, opportunities for playing time, information about college coaches and coaching staffs, and the reputation and tradition of specific college athletic programs. Also reflective of Likert-scale survey results, very few students reported specific items of helpful advice from the high school coach on issues related to NCAA rules and procedures. A low number of advisory comments related to academics were also shared. One difference from the ratings was evident: far more helpful advice examples concerning general college enrollment were reported. Clearly, general issues were the least important area of advisement in Part A of the survey, but students provide 29 comments related to general college enrollment, most reminding students to choose a school for more than just athletics participation.

Students were also asked to reflect on what advice may have been useful to them during the recruiting process, but was not offered by the high school coach. As expected

when considering results from both the Likert-scale portion of the survey and the lack of helpful comments reported by student through the open-end option, the greatest disparity came in the area of NCAA rules and procedures. While only three comments pertaining to helpful advice were shared by students, 41 statements were made lamenting the lack of general or specific information concerning NCAA regulations. Generally, students felt more help simply “getting recruited” was needed. More specifically, students lamented the lack of assistance understanding issues about contacts and evaluations from college coaches and NCAA freshman eligibility procedures, including dealings with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Although a lot of helpful advice was shared with the students concerning athletic participation, there was an equal amount of concern that more information would be important in the future. Students seemed particularly disappointed in the lack of information shared about the various playing options offered them and the appropriate timing of their college choice. One of the most telling, recurring comments made by the study participants was general in nature and simply shared that any assistance from the high school coach at all would have been appreciated. Along these same lines, students reported a wish that their coaches just knew more than they did about the overall recruiting process.

Additional Recruiting Advisors

Part B of the survey provided students an opportunity to rate their level of reliance on a list of potential recruiting advisors and information sources. These options were chosen primarily because of their close relationship to the prospective student-athlete,

such as parents and/or guardians, their link to the student through secondary school sport or education, such as high school coaches and teachers, or as college representatives during the recruiting process, such as college coaches and admissions staff. Because of the prominent use of the internet as a contemporary information source, it was also listed as a specific source. However, it was expected that others who were not listed might be involved in recruiting advisement. Thus, students were asked to list other influential people in their recruiting process. Peers were the most common response by the study participants, who tended to simply list “friends” or “teammates”. Family members other than parents were also frequently mentioned, sometimes only as “other family”, others more specifically such as “an uncle”. Other coaches were also mentioned, whether a former coach or a coach from a different sport. Pastors and other college athletes were named as well.

One interesting item that emerged from this question was the mention of recruiting agencies as important advisors in the process. Further review revealed that eight of the 10 students listing these entities were international men’s soccer participants. Two women’s soccer players, both United States residents who attended high school here, also listed recruiting agencies as important advisors. Recruiting agencies were not mentioned by basketball players.

The core advisory groups specified in Part B of the survey could certainly be defended as those in a position to serve as primary recruiting advisors to the prospective student-athlete. Results from the open-ended item on additional advisors showed,

however, that the resource base for this important process is not limited to only a few segments of the population.

The Question of Race and Ethnicity

Clear statistical differences were shown in responses between sports, but an underlying issue in these results is that of race. Almost 70% of men's basketball players (n=37) and 33% of women's participants (n=17) were African-American. Only 11 African-Americans were either men's or women's soccer participants. Basketball in the United States has become a sport with high African-American participation. For example, Coakley (2007) points out that well over 70% of NBA participants are currently African-American. He explains this as a social and cultural phenomenon present in our society where, because of historical discrimination and the broadly publicized success of African-American athletes in certain sports, youth are drawn to basketball as an avenue to develop skills they see as biologically innate and achieve a certain cultural destiny.

Another explanation for the racial imbalance between soccer and basketball is access. With the perceived weakness of high school soccer, as supported by the survey results, the best avenues for skill development and advancement may probably occur at the club level, a privatized and more expensive option. High school basketball still serves as a consistent outlet for youth to improve in the sport and showcase their skills and, since its support comes from the public education system, is a much cheaper option. These differences could mirror class issues faced in our society, where whites tend to be viewed as more privileged and minorities, such as African-Americans, tend to be faced with more severe socioeconomic challenges.

Summary

Four important discoveries were made in the study. First, when assessing the overall role of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process, it was apparent through descriptive statistical results that this advisory group was not viewed by the study group as critical to their successful transition from high school to intercollegiate student-athlete. When given the opportunity to rate their level of reliance on the advice of high school coaches in areas of athletic participation, academics, NCAA rules and procedures, and other college enrollment issues, comprehensive results reflect that the high school coach's advice was not highly valued. These results support concerns raised by NCAA Division I basketball coaches that the high school coach is seen as less and less influential in the recruiting process (Berry, 2002). When asked to rate the importance of different potential recruiting advisors and sources of information, high school coaches were not the primary advisors prospective student-athletes turned to during the recruiting process.

Although the overall survey results were consistent, there was a clear discrepancy in the reliance on the high school coach reported by basketball and soccer participants. Those participating in basketball, particularly men's players, consistently rated the importance of the high school coach as a recruiting advisor much higher than did soccer players. These results compare favorably to James' 2003 study which showed that Canadian basketball players felt their high school coaches played a significant role helping them gain exposure with college coaches in the United States. Even in areas where the high school coach's advice was deemed least important, such as issues of

general college enrollment, basketball participants, specifically men, were more reliant on their high school coaches. In contrast, soccer participants were consistent in their low ratings provided high school coaches and even viewed the internet as a more important source of recruiting information.

The third important result of the study was the revelation that high school coaches were clearly deficient in the advice they provided concerning NCAA rules and procedures. This deficiency is not necessarily an indictment of the coach's interest in helping their student-athletes. In preparation for the study, discussions with high school coaches revealed their frustrations over not having adequate access to sources of information that could help them advise students on NCAA recruiting rules and freshman eligibility standards. The coaches' frustrations were reflected in the survey results, particularly when students were given the opportunity to voice what advice they would have liked to have received from their coach during the recruiting process. Three comments pertaining to helpful NCAA advice had been shared in a previous question. Students provided 41 comments directly related to NCAA-related advice they wished they had gotten.

The fourth discovery was that, while students may not have relied as heavily on their high school coaches as one may have expected, there was a clear level of disappointment that the coaches were either not involved at all or were not very knowledgeable about the overall recruiting process. This indicates that high school coaches could, with proper resources and better initiative, improve their role as advisors in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of the study included the size and distribution of the sample population, the focus on NCAA Division II, the source of data, and the clear, consistent results. Similarly, the sample and focus on Division II are also limitations in some ways.

The sample population (n=214) was large enough to produce significant results and comparisons by gender and sport also provided strength to the study. The fact the study sample was comprised of NCAA Division II student-athletes added a unique characteristic to the study. Research on intercollegiate athletic student-athlete populations is weighed heavily toward Division I and Division III participants. As traditionally smaller schools providing athletic scholarship assistance, Division II institutions comprise a unique segment of the competitive college sport structure. It is only fitting that research be conducted in this setting.

While the size of the sample population provided strength to the study, the decision to survey participants in only four sports could be seen as a limitation. The decision to research sports in which both high school and privatized sport competition was prominent led to the sport choices. However, the sports of baseball, volleyball, and softball have similar competitive offerings and could provide a better cross section of student-athletes.

The strength of using NCAA Division II participants is offset by the fact that members of Divisions I and III are not represented. Division II is the smallest of the three competitive arms of the NCAA structure and while gaining information from this

particular group of students was important, a broader look at students from all divisions would provide a better picture of student-athlete recruiting experiences.

The choice of institutions to provide the study sample is also a limitation. Each school participates fully for championship play in NCAA Division II athletics. However, the size of the institutions, the fact they are each religiously-affiliated, and their location in the same region of the country may not provide the strongest representative population.

One of the most important strengths of the study is that data were generated from direct student response about their recruiting experiences. Much of the research in this area reports the opinion coaches have about the recruiting process or shares information from students about why they chose specific schools. Little research has been done in which students offer information about the quality of advice they receive and from whom that information comes.

The final strength of the study was shown in the clear and consistent results across items and areas. First, the generally low ratings for the high school coaches advice was clear. Coaches received low reliance ratings on all four advising areas. Even in athletics, other potential advisors were rated higher. The difference between basketball players and soccer players was also clear and consistent. This finding is one of the key elements that could anchor future research.

Future Research Opportunities

The study suggests opportunities for future research. One direction could be to explore the differences between basketball and soccer participants reflected in the current study's results. Questions concerning the strength of the basketball players' reliance and

the weakness of the soccer players' reliance could provide important answers about the culture of those sports and the quality and focus of the high school coaching for each. Along these same lines, differences between racial and ethnic groups in these sports could also be the focus of future research. As proposed by Coakley (2007), African-American youth, particular boys, gravitate toward certain sports because of their belief in possible success. Race differences in participation between the two sports was apparent and further research relating these differences with the role of the high school coach could be important.

In addition, addressing any of the current study's limitations would also be grounds for future research. Different segments of the student-athlete population, such as participants in different sports or from different levels of competition, could be used to test results from this study. For example, Babe Ruth and American Legion sponsored summer baseball programs have a long history in the United States. Privatized off-season options for softball participants, usually referred to as travel teams or all-star squads, are growing. Since these programs are the equivalent of the privatized club and AAU options which exist for soccer and basketball players, research on the role of high school coaches in softball and baseball could add to the depth of knowledge uncovered by this study.

Given the overall low ratings of the high school coaches' advice despite their potential advising influence, it seems that coaches need training and resources to assist athletes in the recruiting process. Results from the study can be used to educate high school coaches about areas where their prospective student-athletes need sound guidance

during the recruiting process. In particular, student responses to open-end questions concerning helpful and needed advice provide a ground work for strategies coaches can employ to assist their students. Coaches provided their greatest assistance in areas of athletics participation. These strengths can be enhanced through improved communication with college coaches and a better understanding of NCAA rules and procedures. Along those lines, school districts should provide seminars for coaches to better educate them on the NCAA recruiting process and help them understand specific recruiting issues in which they can provide the most useful advice for their students.

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Appendix A

High School Coaches' Role in Recruiting Survey

Participant Information

Sport Affiliation: _____ Baseball
_____ Basketball
_____ Soccer
_____ Softball
_____ Volleyball

Gender: Male ____ Female ____

Total years as a High School Head Coach: _____ Year in current position: ____
Additional years of High School coaching experience: _____

What other primary duties / responsibilities do you have in the school system? _____

Do you have any College coaching experience? Yes No

If so, how many years? _____

What capacity? _____ Head Coach Asst. Coach Both

Is so, were you involved directly in the recruiting process?

Off campus prospect evaluation Yes No

Off campus contacts, such as in-home visits? Yes No

Offering of financial aid awards Yes No

Do you currently or have you in the past coached in the privatized sport structure?
(such as AAU, club, travel or showcase teams) Yes No

If so, how many years have you been involved? _____

What was your undergraduate degree major? _____

Do you hold a masters or other advanced degree? Yes No

If so, in what field? _____

Have you completed any other training, such as continual
learning or workshops, related to coaching or athletics? Yes No

If so, have any of these covered material
related to intercollegiate athletics recruiting? Yes No

Role in Recruiting

The following questions pertain to the role you play as a high school coach during the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process.

Please use the following response scale for the next question:

- 1 = Never involved
- 2 = Rarely involved
- 3 = Usually involved
- 4 = Always involved – a primary role

Rate your degree of involvement in the following areas when advising your student-athletes about the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process:

1) Critique of physical ability / level of play capability	1	2	3	4
2) Academic ability and standing	1	2	3	4
3) Socio-Economic issues, such as financial aid and location of colleges & universities	1	2	3	4
4) Other issues, such as knowledge about college coaching staffs, opportunity for playing time	1	2	3	4
5) Serving as a liaison between the college coach and your student-athlete	1	2	3	4
6) Arranging contacts with college coaches, such as through visits to your campus or to the college campus	1	2	3	4
7) Accompanying your students during meetings held with college coaches on your campus	1	2	3	4
8) Providing information requested by college coaches through questionnaires or other written correspondence	1	2	3	4
9) Assisting student in understanding NCAA recruiting rules	1	2	3	4
10) Assisting student in understanding the NCAA Initial- Eligibility Clearinghouse procedures	1	2	3	4
11) Assisting the student in understanding NCAA freshman academic eligibility rules	1	2	3	4

12) On average, how often during the school year do college coaches contact you requesting an assessment of athletic ability for one or more of your student-athletes?

Never Rarely (1-2) Regularly (3-5) Often (6+)

13) When contacted by a college coach, are you regularly asked to assess the academic ability of your student-athletes? Yes No

13) When contacted by a college coach, are you regularly asked about the character and 'coachability' of your student-athletes? Yes No

14) At what point during the student's career do you normally begin advising them concerning the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process?

Fr. or Soph. Year Early Jr. Yr. Late Jr. Yr. Early Sr. Yr. Late Sr. Yr.

- 15) Do you conduct regular information sessions with your team concerning the recruiting process? Yes No

NCAA Recruiting & Initial-Eligibility Rules & Procedure

The following questions pertain to your familiarity with NCAA rules and procedures related to intercollegiate athletics recruiting and the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Please use the following response scale for the next question:

- 1 = Not very familiar at all
2 = Somewhat familiar
3 = Relatively familiar
4 = Very familiar

In general, how familiar are you with the recruiting rules for the following NCAA Divisions:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|---|---|---|
| a) | <u>Division I</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b) | <u>Division II</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c) | <u>Division III</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Specifically, how familiar are you with the following rules and procedures:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1) NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse registration procedure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2) SAT / ACT test score requirements for Divisions I & II | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3) Minimum grade-point average requirements for Divisions I & II | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4) The Initial-Eligibility sliding scale for Division I | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5) Core courses offered at your high school and accepted by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6) NCAA rules pertaining to recruiting evaluations and in-person contacts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7) NCAA rules pertaining to recruiting communication via telephone, email, or other written correspondence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8) NCAA rules pertaining to official and unofficial visits | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9) NCAA rules pertaining to the recruiting calendar, such as Dead periods and Contact periods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10) Procedures and rules pertaining to the National Letter of Intent program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- Do you ever receive NCAA literature concerning recruiting rules & regulations? Yes No
If so, how often do you receive this material? _____
If so, from what source(s)? _____

NCAA mailing Guidance Office Coaching Clinics Other (please specify)

- How do you learn about changes in NCAA recruiting rules?

NCAA mailing Guidance Office Coaching Clinics Other (please specify)

- How often do you work with your school's guidance office in relationship to the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process

Often

Fairly regularly

Not very often

Hardly ever/Never

Additional Thoughts / Comments

These may be changes in the recruiting process you have seen over time, problems you currently face, or changes you would like to see made.

Appendix B

High School Coaches' Survey Results

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations

Questionnaire Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Level of Play Capability	3.167	1.169
Academic Ability	3.833	.408
Socio-Economic Issues	3.500	.837
Other Athletic-related Issues	3.167	.753
Liaison with College Coaches	3.167	.753
Arrange College Coach Contacts	3.333	.817
Accompany in Meetings w/ College Coaches	3.000	.894
Provide Requested Information to Coaches	3.500	.837
Assist w/ NCAA Recruiting Rules	3.500	.837
Assist w/ NCAA Initial-Eligibility Procedures	3.333	.817
Assist w/ NCAA Academic Eligibility	3.500	.837
Assess Athletic Ability	2.667	.817
NCAA Clearinghouse Registration	3.333	.817
NCAA Rules /Test Score	3.167	.753
NCAA Rules /GPA	2.833	.753
NCAA Rules /Sliding Scale	2.333	.516
NCAA Rules /Core Course	3.500	.548
NCAA Rules /Contacts	3.000	1.095
NCAA Rules /Communication	2.833	.983
NCAA Rules /Visits	3.333	.817
NCAA Rules /Recruiting Calendar	3.167	.753
NLI Procedure	2.833	.983

Appendix C

Student-Athlete Recruiting Experiences Survey

Participant Information

Sport Affiliation: _____ Soccer, Men _____ Soccer, Women
 _____ Basketball, Men _____ Basketball, Women

Current Season of Competition Status: _____ 1st / Freshman or Red-Shirt Freshman
 _____ 2nd / Sophomore
 _____ 3rd / Junior
 _____ 4th / Senior

Gender: _____ Male _____ Female Age: _____

Race / Ethnicity: _____ Caucasian/European-American _____ African/African-American
 _____ Hispanic/Latino _____ Asian/Asian-American
 _____ Native American _____ Other(please specify) _____

1. Are you a U. S. citizen / permanent resident? Yes No
 If No, list country of origin _____

2. Did you attend high school in the United States? Yes No
 If No, in what country? _____

3. Which of the following best describes the transition to your current institution:
 Enrolled directly from high school after graduation: _____
 Transferred from a two-year or four-year college: _____
 Enrolled as an international student / did not
 attend a high school in the United States _____

4. During the years you attended high school, did your sport participation include the following?
 High School sport: _____
 Privatized sport (club, AAU, etc): _____

5. Did you experience any of the following during your college athletic recruiting process?
 (check all that apply):
 A college visit in which any portion of your expenses
 were covered by the athletics department _____
 Received more than one telephone call from a college
 coach or athletics department staff member _____
 An arranged, off-campus meeting with a college
 coach or athletics department staff member _____
 Received an athletic scholarship offer from a college _____

6. Do you currently receive any athletically-related financial aid? Yes _____
 No _____

7a. Did you ever discuss the recruiting process with your high school coach?
 Yes _____
 No _____
 Not Applicable _____

 b. If Yes, who first initiated these discussions? You _____
 Your high school coach _____

Please note: If you did not attend a high school in the United States or did not participate in your current sport in high school, please skip to Part B of the survey beginning on page 3.

PART A: The Role of the High School Coach in Your Recruiting Experience

The following questions ask about your experiences and interactions with your high school coach and others during the collegiate athletics recruiting process. Please answer all questions as completely and accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers! You may ask questions at any time or write in information to explain your responses.

During your college athletics recruiting experience, **how much did you rely on your high school coach** to advise you concerning the following issues?

<u>Issues related to Athletic participation</u>	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
1) Advice related to levels of competition (Division I, II, III, NAIA, JUCO)	1	2	3	4	5
2) Advice related to the opportunity for playing time	1	2	3	4	5
3) Advice related to the reputation and tradition of specific college athletic programs	1	2	3	4	5
4) Advice related to college head coaches and/or coaching staffs	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues related to Academics</u>	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
5) Advice related to college entrance requirements	1	2	3	4	5
6) Advice related to academic degree programs	1	2	3	4	5
7) Advice related to the academic reputation of specific colleges and universities	1	2	3	4	5
8) Advice related to academic success in college (e.g. study habits, time management)	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues related to NCAA rules and procedures</u>	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
9) Advice related to NCAA rules regarding contacts and evaluations from college coaches	1	2	3	4	5
10) Advice related to official and unofficial visits to select colleges	1	2	3	4	5
11) Advice related to the NCAA recruiting calendar such as contact periods and dead periods	1	2	3	4	5
12) Advice related to the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse registration process	1	2	3	4	5
13) Advice related to NCAA freshman academic eligibility standards, such as grade-point average and test score requirements	1	2	3	4	5
14) Advice related to high school course selection and NCAA Clearinghouse core course requirements	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Other issues related to college enrollment</u>	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
15) Advice concerning the non-athletics related financial aid process, such as submitting the FAFSA and applying for institutional aid	1	2	3	4	5
16) Advice related to the admissions and enrollment process, such as room deposits, medical or housing forms and information, or class registration	1	2	3	4	5
17) Advice related to specific colleges, such as location, culture, or climate	1	2	3	4	5
18) Advice related to social development opportunities in college, such as campus organizations and extracurricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
19) Advice related to future career goals	1	2	3	4	5

PART B: Advisors in Your Recruiting Experience

During your college athletics recruiting experience, **how much did you rely on each of the following people** to advise you on **issues related to athletics**, such as possible levels of competition opportunities for playing time, or the reputation and tradition of specific college athletics programs?

	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
20) High School Coach	1	2	3	4	5
21) Parent(s) / Guardian(s)	1	2	3	4	5
22) High School Teachers/Counselor other than your coach	1	2	3	4	5
23) Privatized Sport Coach (club, AAU)	1	2	3	4	5
24) College Admissions Staff	1	2	3	4	5
25) College Coach(es)	1	2	3	4	5
26) Information from the Internet	1	2	3	4	5

During your college athletics recruiting experience, **how much did you rely on each of the following people** to advise you on **issues related to academics**, such as academic degree programs, reputation, or strategies for academic success?

	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Completely</u>
27) High School Coach	1	2	3	4	5
28) Parent(s) / Guardian(s)	1	2	3	4	5
29) High School Teachers/Counselor other than your coach	1	2	3	4	5
30) Privatized Sport Coach (club, AAU)	1	2	3	4	5

31) College Admissions Staff	1	2	3	4	5
32) College Coach(es)	1	2	3	4	5
33) Information from the Internet	1	2	3	4	5

During your college athletics recruiting experience, **how much did you rely on each of the following people** to advise you on **issues related to NCAA rules and procedures**, such as freshman academic eligibility or Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse policies?

	Not at all		Some		Completely
34) High School Coach	1	2	3	4	5
35) Parent(s) / Guardian(s)	1	2	3	4	5
36) High School teachers/Counselor other than your coach	1	2	3	4	5
37) Privatized Sport Coach (club, AAU)	1	2	3	4	5
38) College Admissions Staff	1	2	3	4	5
39) College Coach(es)	1	2	3	4	5
40) Information from the Internet	1	2	3	4	5

During your college athletics recruiting experience, **how much did you rely on each of the following people** to advise you on **other issues related to college admissions and enrollment**, such as the financial aid process, school location, or future career goals?

	Not at all		Some		Completely
41) High School Coach	1	2	3	4	5
42) Parent(s) / Guardian(s)	1	2	3	4	5
43) High School Teachers/Counselor other than your coach	1	2	3	4	5
44) Privatized Sport Coach (club, AAU)	1	2	3	4	5
45) College Admissions Staff	1	2	3	4	5
46) College Coach(es)	1	2	3	4	5
47) Information from the Internet	1	2	3	4	5

48) List any other advisors who played an important role in during your college athletics recruiting process.
Please list persons by position/title, not name (e.g. minister, family friend, relative, former teammate):

49) During your college athletics recruiting process, what advice received from your high school coach was most helpful?

50) Thinking back to your college athletics recruiting experience, what advice would you have liked to receive from your high school coach?

Appendix D

Human Participant Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: The Role of High School Coaches in the Intercollegiate Athletics Recruiting Process

Project Director: Joseph L. Smith, Doctoral Graduate Student, Department of Exercise & Sport Science

Participant's Name: _____

DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES:

The purpose of this study is to examine and describe the roles of the high school coach in the intercollegiate athletics recruiting process. You will be asked to complete a survey with questions about your experience and interactions with your high school coach and others during the college recruiting process. Participants in the study are student-athletes in NCAA Division II institutions in the South Atlantic region of the United States. Estimated time for completing the survey is 15 to 20 minutes.

Prior to the administration of the survey, an explanation of the study will be given. Participants will then be provided a consent form further explaining the specifics of the study, participation procedures, and possible risks and benefits. Participants will be given an opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the study. A copy of the consent form will be available to all those choosing to participate in the study. Once consent is obtained, the survey will be distributed and collected by the study administrator. Consent forms and surveys will be coded to insure that consent has been granted for each survey response. No other identification will be made. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants may decline or end participation at any time without penalty.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

There are no physical or psychological risks involved with study participation. The psychological risks and discomforts are not viewed as serious. Remember that participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may choose to participate or end your participation at any time without penalty or other consequences.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

Although this study will not directly benefit those participating, by gathering information from student-athletes who have experience the college recruiting process, it is hoped the results of this project can be used to assist high school coaches in providing better guidance to their prospective student-athletes and, in turn, improve the quality of the recruiting experience for the student.

CONSENT:

By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. Written data collected from this study will be protected by the study administrator for a period of two years, at which time all surveys and other collected materials will be shredded and disposed.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by the study administrator, Joe Smith, by calling (828) 328-7131 or emailing at smithj@lrc.edu. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation.

By signing this form, you are confirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project as described to you by Joe Smith.

Participant's Signature

Date