



## Bartram Trail XC and TF

### Frequently asked questions about competing in college as a track & field and cross country athlete.

- **How does a college XC/T&F program recruit?**
  - **Social Media Paints a Poor Picture!**
    - Unlike other collegiate sports, a XC/T&F staff usually does not have a singular person dedicated to recruiting (sometimes called a recruiting coordinator). Instead, the head or event coaches must be the main recruiting agent for the program. Considering the extensive time and resources it takes to coach their current athletes, it's common for collegiate coaches to squeeze recruiting into an already busy daily routine.
  - **Coaches are Watching!**
    - Collegiate coaches often rely on the internet to review a Prospective Student Athlete's (PSA) performance marks before making any inquiries. However, just because they haven't contacted you does not mean they are not interested in you.
  
- **How should I market myself?**
  - **Start the Conversation Yourself!**
    - Create an email that can be tailored to each unique coach and school. Include:
      - a link to your TFRRS bio
      - a copy of your transcripts
      - a copy of your ACT/SAT scores
      - a short paragraph as to what you'd like to accomplish as a collegiate athlete.
      - Fill out and return any PSA Recruiting Questionnaires.
    - Coaches want to recruit athletes that already want to come to their schools. Initiating the first contact is an excellent way to demonstrate your desire to compete for them and your independence as an individual. *Do not use your parents to communicate for you. You must do it yourself.*

*"I like the idea of initial email with links. FL TFRRS is the best database out there. Emails to college coaches must be brief and to the point. Follow up and update emails should be 2-3 sentences at most. Timing the email to arrive in a coaches inbox about 8:45am on Monday is a good strategy." – Neal West, veteran collegiate coach*

  - **You Do Not Need to Hire a Service!**
    - In our sport, be suspect of anyone that tries to sell you on a recruiting service. Track & field athletes are much easier to assess and information on your performances ends up being very easy to find. You can market yourself very well with a little bit of effort.
  
- **What should I expect?**
  - **Know Your Ability!**
    - Be careful not to use evidence that your performance marks are better than a few of a college team's current athletes. College coaches want to improve their teams

and bring in better athletes. Instead, look up the school's conference results and compare yourself there. If you can score in their conference meet immediately, they will likely be interested in you. However, coaches know athletes want to improve so if you're close to scoring they may still be interested in you. But be honest with yourself and avoid the trap of thinking you are better than your performances show.

- **Don't get stuck on DI!**
  - College coaches that seem too busy or do not return your communication are probably not interested in you. Don't get too upset, there is a collegiate program for you. The NCAA has three divisions and there is a fourth association called the NAIA. While Division 1 (D1) in the NCAA is often the most competitive, there are excellent coaches, teams, and opportunities at all levels.
- **Better Grades and Test Scores Matter!**
  - Counter to popular belief, most schools require PSAs to meet their traditional entrance requirements. Admission offices may offer athletes an exception or two, but college coaches must be careful to spread their entrance exceptions over their entire recruiting class. While some schools will grant entire exemptions to their entrance standards, this is rare. Either way, the [NCAA has their minimum eligibility standards](#) and these are non-negotiable.
- **What is great recruiting etiquette?**
  - **Play it Cool!**
    - Give coaches their space and do not inundate them with communication. Expect them to follow the same etiquette. A text or call once a week is great, but don't feel offended if several weeks go by without any communication. When you do update them on your progress, make sure to include a bit about your team. All coaches want great teammates.
  - **Don't Lead the Coach On!**
    - If you are being contacted by a coach that you are not interested in competing for, let them know as early in the process as possible. Tell them that you are flattered in their interest, but you just don't feel their university is a good fit for you. End with a thank you.
  - **Making a Choice!**
    - Once you select your school, contact each coach that was actively recruiting you and let them know where you have decided to pursue your collegiate athletic experience. Again, let them know you are flattered and thank them for their interest. Don't burn any bridges. You may want to transfer one day, and your future self will want a positive relationship with each coach you've met.
  - **Don't Bring Up Scholarship Money!**
    - Money is always a hard thing to talk about. Don't get excited when a school you're only partially interested in offers you a sizable amount. This may distract you from making a good decision. And don't get offended when the school you are most excited about offers you very little or even just a walk-on spot. The size of most XC/T&F scholarships are often so marginal that it becomes only a small variable in where you end up. At the end of your decision, choose a coach and program that you love.
- **Does BTTF/XC do a signing day?**
  - Not really. Often, seniors sign track & field scholarships so late in the school year it's hard to fit them on the calendar. However, we can help facilitate one if your parents would like to organize it on campus.