

# ISC Recruiting Times

## What Are College Coaches Looking For?

When college coaches watch you play, whether live or on video, what catches their attention?

Like many of life's great questions, the simplest answer to the above questions is "It depends." For example, all NCAA Division I schools operate under the same rules, so what makes one program different from another. The differences are guided by a several key factors; the coach and his/her coaching philosophy, the school's ability to attract a particular type of student, and in part, the financial commitment the athletic department makes to its soccer program. It is the coach's job to create a personality for his/her program by taking into account all those variables.

This leads us back to recruiting, which every college soccer coach will tell you is the lifeblood for any program. Neglecting recruiting is the same as neglecting your program. This is why it is important for you, the recruit, to understand what college coaches are looking for and what they are paying attention to when watching you and your team play. If for example, College Coach A has implemented an attacking style of play focused on having possession of the ball on the ground; when she or her staff goes to identify midfield players at an event, they are more than likely looking for players with an excellent first touch, the ability to play with her head up under pressure, and who can play a variety of passes with accuracy. This is a generalization of course, but you get the idea that what a coach looks for is tied to how the coach envisions her team playing and most importantly, the positional roles of the players within that structure.

You should also be aware that it is the college coach's job is to identify players' strengths and weaknesses and project how those attributes might positively

1

**KNOW & PLAY TO  
YOUR STRENGTHS**

2

**SYSTEMATICALLY  
DEVELOP YOUR  
WEAKNESSES**

3

**NOT EVERY PLAYER  
IS A FIT FOR EVERY  
PROGRAM**

### BREAKING NEWS!

The Division I Council Coordination Committee has just extended the recruiting dead period for all Division I sports through July 31, 2020. This means no face-to-face contact with college coaches on or off their campus.

As of June 1, Division II enters a quiet period which means face-to-face contact may *only* occur on the college's campus with no face-to-face contact occurring off-campus.

Division III rules leave all visits and observation decisions to be made by each college and university.

impact their team sometimes three to five years down the road. Yes, it is as much art as it is a science! The graphic below is meant to provide you a snapshot of the types of traits and abilities college coaches are evaluating when watching you play. It is by no means a completely comprehensive list, but it does provide you some insight into what a college coach might be keeping notes on when recruiting from the sideline. It is possible, even probable, that you aren't going to be the best player at everything. Rather, stay focused on highlighting your strengths while working to develop your weaknesses. The continuum at the bottom of the chart is meant to spotlight that instead evaluating yourself as being good or bad at a give skill or ability, all your traits fall on a continuum and are able to be developed. Some players are more developed at certain things and less developed at other things at any given point in time, but all traits can be improved.

