

5 ways to get a coach's attention through online scouting

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1. Create a captivating highlight reel. According to Kara Pratt, my Houston Juniors Recruiting Director and the Executive Vice President of the Junior Volleyball Recruiting Association, "Your videos to coaches should be only 2-3 minutes long and organized based on skill. You might only have 30 seconds to pique a coaches' interest, so you need to showcase your best skills and keep it action-packed. If your first 30 seconds are compelling to a coach, they'll likely watch the full highlight." Another tidbit of advice from college coaches is that it's unnecessary to use slow-motion or pointing effects on the video. If you identify what position you play at the beginning of the video, they'll clearly be able to find you.

2. Always include a video with your emails. PSAs should be researching schools that they want to go to and reaching out to coaches via email. Pratt advises that each time you email a coach, the subject line should always include your name, position, your club and your graduating class. Also, always include a video link with your emails so they can see you in action. Take every opportunity to showcase your skills to coaches since they won't get as many chances to watch you play in person this season.

3. Stay in communication with coaches. As of now, for the class of 2023, college coaches cannot respond to your emails until June 15 going into your junior year, so younger players won't receive any responses to the emails they send. This one-way communication is not always rewarding, but it is the best way to convey your interest in specific schools and for them to get to know you on a personal level.

One of the only other means of communication that coaches can send to PSAs are questionnaires. They can be mailed, emailed or texted as a way for colleges to learn about their PSAs during the dead period. Be sure to answer them. This is a great way to let coaches know something interesting about you!

4. Remember that you're always on camera. Even the video you DON'T send to coaches is important. With tournaments streaming every game, you're on video during hitting warm-ups, matches and even when you're on the bench. Scouts take note of players' attitudes and how they interact with coaches and teammates. Also, it's becoming common for clubs to stream their practices for college coaches to watch. Practices are a great way for coaches to see how PSAs train and to observe their work ethic on a daily basis.

5. Use social media to reach a bigger audience. While we mostly tend to post pictures of ourselves on Instagram with our friends and family (and an occasional selfie), we should use social media as a recruiting platform. Posting a volleyball highlight once in a while along with some team photos is a great way to connect with a larger audience. The recruiting rules are very strict, but college coaches are allowed to follow your social media platforms and like your posts. Coaches want to see who you are off the court as well. This helps them determine whether you will fit their program. Remember to post appropriate things online; coaches can tell a lot about players based on their Instagram feed!