In Recruiting, Patience Is a Virtue

Written by Dan Kaplan, CBound
Thursday, 01 May 2008

Junior Lauren Cook recently committed to UCLA, but Class of 2009 members will be making college choices well into next year. Be patient and don't panic if you are among that number.

This is the time of year where there is great relief for some and great stress for others in the 2009 class. It is the latter part of a three-month period when the announcement of commitments has been continuous and strong in number. Beginning in February, and through the last major tournament, many of the junior class make their verbal commitments. While this is an ongoing process, and will continue for some until we are well into the 2009 season, there are enough players committed at this point that it at least feels as though many are done with this process.

While we often hear from club coaches about players being more relaxed and playing better now that they have committed, we also hear about the building stress for many players who have yet to find a place to play. For them, this is a very challenging time. With every teammate that has made a decision, the junior that has yet to find a spot is often feeling more stress.

There is a misconception as to the availability of places to play. While we see several announcements on the Prep Volleyball message board, there are many options still available. Commitments for the 2009 class will continue through February and even some beyond that. Keep in mind that Prep’s Senior Showcase in Las Vegas in February is attended by many college coaches seeking players. Also consider Prep’s College Needs List which for 2008 still has 340 schools listed. So what if you are in the 2009 class and are not committed? How do you minimize the stress?
*You need to have confidence in the scene itself. Understand that there are many opportunities out there even if it appears that ‘everyone is committing.’

*Understand that many of the opportunities that take place from February to May are from the high profile schools (high level Division I) or schools that have received a commitment from one of the top players on their list. Know that coaches start at the top of their list and work down in their effort to get players.

*Keep in mind that players themselves (that means you, too) seek their top choice and work their way down. As most players seek a level that maximizes their current level or potential (think about the question most players ask themselves – ‘can I play at this level?’).

*Given the two points above, and generally speaking, both coaches and players are starting at a level higher than they will end up. To further this point, a Division II coach recently commented how he knows to wait until April or May when players have exhausted the Division I opportunities they have considered and understand that his program would be the right fit. This is true within the Division I schools themselves.

*Many early commitments are by those players that know where they want to go and happen to be in a position to get an offer from those schools. The next set of commitments often include players who receive an offer (usually the more well-known players) and feel that it is an opportunity they do not want to pass up.

*Opportunities present themselves starting each May and thru February, as coaches start a new cycle of recruiting after failing to get players off their short list. Their ‘new’ efforts to recruit positions create many new options.

*Things happen. Off-season injuries, transfers, a change of coaches, and, for some, a change of philosophy after the spring season, could lead college coaches to seek players when they otherwise thought they were done recruiting.

While it is often challenging emotionally, patience is often required during the recruiting process. Certainly an open-mind helps as well, as the more opportunities a player will consider make this process easier. Nevertheless, to the extent that you are not finding what you want, be persistent and patient as time is on your side.

PrepVolleyball.com has partnered with CBound to bring recruiting information and content to the site. CBound is an on-line guide to the recruiting process for parents and athletes. It includes an on-line DVD, sample letters and links to related sites. The CBound site, www.cbound.com, is directed by Dan Kaplan and has been developed with cooperation from several college coaches.

Last Updated ( Thursday, 01 May 2008 )