

Questions to ask a coach during the recruiting process

by [Ray Lauenstein](#)

Seek and you shall find. Ask and you will know. If you are a first time parent in the college search process, or even if you are a seasoned vet, you have to ask questions to gain the knowledge and information necessary to make the proper decisions for and with your child. Remember that you are scouting a coach and a program as much as he is scouting you. Critical inquiry is important and a coach's hesitation at answering something should signal a red flag.

Questions to ask. The list of questions below serves as a starting point for you and a primer for your own specific questions.

Questions:

- What is the in-season time commitment?
- How much time in the off-season for conditioning and practice?
- Can I play another sport?
- Is there academic support and tutoring available in and out of season?
- What is the school's policy on missed classes because of sport participation?
- What percentage of players stay in the program all four years?
- What percentage of players graduated in four or five years?
- How many roster spots are available next year?
- How many freshman recruits are you trying to bring in?
- What positions are you looking to fill?
- What position are you recruiting me for?
- How many others are you recruiting at that position?
- Where do (I) stand on your recruiting depth chart? (You want to know if they really want you or just hope to get you for depth purposes.)
- Is there a JV program and what is the schedule?
- What are the minimum academic eligibility requirements (they may differ from NCAA min standards)?
- What types of travel accommodations are provided, i.e. food, transportation, and lodging?
- Does the school underwrite all expenses or do athletes have to raise funds or spend out of pocket? (Pertains mainly to spring trips.)
- Are there plans for facility expansion and construction in the next few years?
- Are employment or work study opportunities available in the athletic department?
- Are athletes permitted to live and work at school in the summer? (Some schools do not offer summer classes.)
- Do the dining facilities accommodate athletes who play or practice late?
- Can athletes get first choice of class sections that meet at non-practice times, helping to avoid conflicts? (This is very important).
- What type of summer time playing opportunities will be available? Does the coach have contacts that can get you into a good league such as [Cape Cod League](#), [Northeastern Collegiate Baseball League](#) or Alaska Baseball League for example?

Questions and the reasons behind them.

Q: What positions will I play on your team?

- It's not always obvious.
- Most coaches want to be flexible so that you are not disappointed.

Q: Describe the other players competing at the same position.

- If there is a former high-school all-American at that position, you may want to take that into consideration.
- This will give you clues as to what year you might be a starter.

Q: Can I "red-shirt" my first year?

- Find out how common it is to red-shirt and how that will affect graduation.
- Does the school red-shirt you if you are injured?

Q: What are the physical/strength and conditioning requirements each year?

- Philosophies of strength and conditioning vary by institution.
- You may be required to maintain a certain weight, depending on the sport.

Q: How would you best describe your coaching style?

- Every coach has a particular style that involves different motivational techniques and discipline.
- You need to know if a coach's teaching style does not match your learning style.

Q: When does the head coach's contract end?

- Don't make any assumptions about how long a coach will be at a school.
- If the coach is losing and the contract ends in two years, you may have a new coach.

Q: Describe the preferred, invited and uninvited walk-on situation. How many make it, compete and earn a scholarship?

- Different teams treat walk-ons differently.
- You might pick a school for academics and attempt to make the team as a walk-on.

Academics

Q: How good is the department in my major?

- Many colleges can have very highly rated specific departments or schools within the college.
- A team's reputation is only one variable to consider.

Q: What percentage of players on scholarship graduate in four years?

- This will tell you about the quality of their commitment to academics.
- The team's grade-point average also is a good indicator of the coach's commitment to academics.

College Life

Q: Describe the typical class size.

- At larger schools, classes are likely to be larger and taught by teaching assistants.
- Average class size is important to the amount of attention you receive.

Q: Describe in detail your academic support program. For example:

Study-hall requirements, tutor availability, staff, class load, faculty cooperation.

- This is imperative for marginal students.
- Find a college that will take the 3.0 students and help them get a 3.500 GPA.

Q: Describe the typical day for a student-athlete.

- This will give you a good indication of how much time is spent in class, practice, studying and traveling.
- It also will give you a good indication of what coaches expect.

Q: What are the residence halls like?

- Make sure you would feel comfortable in study areas, community bathrooms and laundry facilities.
- Number of students in a room and coed dorms are other variables to consider.

Q: Will I be required to live on campus throughout my athletics participation?

- Apartment living may be better than dorm living.

Financial Aid

Q: How much financial aid is available for summer school?

- There is no guarantee. Get a firm commitment.
- You may need to lighten your normal load and go to summer school in order to graduate in four years. You can take graduate courses and maintain your eligibility.

Q: What are the details of financial aid at your institution?

- What does my scholarship cover?
- What can I receive in addition to the scholarship and how do I get more aid?

Q: How long does my scholarship last?

- Most people think a "full ride" is good for four years. It is a year to year agreement that is renewed.
- Financial aid is available on a one-year renewable basis.

Q: If I'm injured, what happens to my financial aid?

- A grant-in-aid is not guaranteed past a one-year period even for injuries.
- It is important to know if a school has a commitment to assist student-athletes for more than a year after they have been injured.

Q: What are my opportunities for employment while I'm a student?

- Find out if you can be employed in-season, out-of-season or during vacation periods.
- NCAA rules prohibit you from earning more than the cost of attendance during the academic year