



What Does the Signing Period Mean for Underclassmen?

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Over the last few weeks we have covered critical information about the National Letter of Intent. While this information is vital for every student-athlete who has serious intentions of playing collegiately, it signals something different for every recruit depending on their age. Its obvious what signing day means for a senior, but what does it mean for Juniors, Sophomores, and Freshmen?

Over the next few months, college coaches will be putting the finishing touches on their 2009 recruiting class. For Seniors, this means their recruiting process has been completed. While Juniors, Sophomores, and Freshmen are not signing a NLI, they should view signing day as a warning that college coaches will now turn their attention to underclassmen.

What does signing day mean for a Junior in the class of 2010?

In many ways, Junior year is the most important for recruiting. During Junior year, relationships are being developed between coaches and athletes through campus visits, phone calls, and letters. While these forms of communication have been going on for months for many Junior athletes, the passing of the signing period allows college coaches to focus entirely on the Junior class.

Essentially the Junior class becomes the Senior recruiting class once signing day has passed. In some sports the signing period for the 2010 class is less than a year from now which means Juniors should be heavily involved with college coaches at this point. Most Juniors have been receiving official recruiting letters since September 1st.

Depending on the sport, the official phone contact period is rapidly approaching or has already started and all the work that is done leading up until that day will dictate how many college coaches call. If a prospect is receiving numerous phone calls from Division 1 college coaches when that is allowed, they should take that as an excellent sign. On the flip side, if college coaches are not calling, either the student-athlete is not on the coaches' radar or they simply are not that caliber of athlete.

Summer is just around the corner which can be a productive time of year for recruiting purposes. Camps, combines, tournaments, and showcases all take place in the summer months for many sports. These are great experiences and if approached properly can be valuable tools for improving a prospect's recruiting process. Many student-athletes will be taking visits to campus which is a big step in finding the right fit. Simply put, signing day is a symbolic transfer of attention from class of 2009 to the class of 2010. There should be no hesitation with the recruiting process and student-athletes should analyze how far along in the process they are and where they would like to be a year from now when their signing day comes.



What does signing day mean for a Sophomore in the class of 2011?

Much like the Junior class, the signing period is significant for the Sophomore class because college coaches will begin to put together their recruiting boards for the class of 2011 once they have finalized the class of 2009. For most student-athletes in this class, the first time they can receive an official recruiting letter is September 1st. This means a student-athlete in this class has a little more than half a year to get on as many recruiting lists as possible to ensure the mailbox is full on that first day. All the work that is done in the recruiting process between now and September 1st will have a strong impact on how many college coaches write a student-athlete. Much like receiving phone calls for the class of 2010, whether or not a student-athlete is receiving bundles of letters come September 1st should be a good measuring stick for how many college coaches are aware of the student-athlete.

For those Sophomores in the class of 2011 who are lucky enough to have varsity experience already, they should be distributing their highlight and skills tape and getting their information out to the coaching community. For other Sophomores, Junior year will be their first at the varsity level which means properly filming the games is something that needs to be done.

Student-athletes usually fall into one of two categories at this age. One group is anxious to get ahead of their recruiting competition knowing that the process starts extremely early. This group of athletes takes advantage of their ability to write, call, and visit college coaches as often as they want to start developing relationships. The other group tends to lack the necessary recruiting urgency and is comfortable sitting back and waiting for coaches to come to them. Take a guess at which group usually finds more recruiting success...

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