

CollegelInfo

Videotapes for College Coaches

"One picture is worth a thousand words!" So, how much more is a video worth? It's worth quite a bit to some college coaches. Sooner or later, players investigating college soccer programs will probably be asked by a coach to send a video. It takes time and thought to put together a quality video. It can also be needlessly expensive. Cost can be kept to a reasonable level if parents on club teams work together to collect video footage. Ideally, teams should be encouraged to begin collecting video footage when players are in their sophomore year of high school. A special effort should be made to tape games against strong opponents. It is a waste of time and money to tape games with mismatched opponents. Players should also have themselves videotaped while participating in other soccer activities like Olympic Development, high school games, international travel tournaments, three-on-three- tournaments, specialized clinic sessions, etc. Be sure to have a tape of a training session available because it is not unusual for coaches to ask for one. By the beginning of their senior year, players should have access to various kinds of footage that shows their soccer skill level and playing ability. The footage can then be adapted and personalized to meet the requirements of individual college coaches.

Never send an unrequested video to a coach. Not all coaches accept videos. Coaches of some of the more prominent college soccer programs discard hundreds of unsolicited soccer videos each year. Don't waste time and money preparing a video that won't be seen. The lower a school's recruiting budget, the more likely the coach will request a video. A low recruiting budget is not necessarily a sign of a second-rate soccer program. Often, schools with lower recruiting budgets are using their money to develop their academic programs. Investigate all the colleges that interest you. When you have identified the schools that you like the most, contact each coach by letter or phone and ask if he would like to receive a video. Find out exactly what type of action he prefers to see. Ask how long the tape should be. Some coaches have very definite ideas about how much time they are willing to invest in video watching. If a coach wants a game, send a video of a game. If a coach wants skill practices, send footage of skill practices. If he wants highlights, give him highlights.

If a player has collected various kinds of video footage between his sophomore and senior years, it is relatively easy and inexpensive to edit the material into two or three different video segments. Most coaches request one or more segments of three basic types - an unedited game, action highlights or a combination of action highlights and training sessions. Coaches do not expect polished, professionally edited film. It is important that the individuals who video have above-average ability to capture player movement. If the footage is of low quality, don't include it no matter how wonderfully you played. Coaches get frustrated watching poor quality tapes. Some players can put together suitable videos in their own homes using their personal video and/or computer equipment. Players who don't have the equipment or aren't comfortable editing their own videos can look in the yellow pages under video production services and find a competent editing service. Individual freelance photographers, the type that cover weddings and special events, are often much cheaper than corporate-oriented video services and can do a very satisfactory job. Before hiring a professional, be sure to ask about his experience filming athletic events. Ask to see some tapes that he has done. Remember that colleges often tape many of their athletic events. Check with local college athletic departments to see if they may have staff willing to hire out to do athletic filming. On very important events, like regional cup competitions, do not rely solely on a professional video service. Encourage parents to also shoot their own footage. The more angles and the more film shot, the more options players will have when they begin to edit film.

[over]