

'Tis the Recruiting Season

By Amanda Freed

With the summer recruiting season quickly approaching it's important to remember a few key things that will put you a step ahead and more at ease with the pressure.

If you are an uncommitted high school junior or senior, start by doing your research. Identify the schools that you are interested in, or are interested in you, and see what would be a good fit. By good fit I mean, does it have the field of study you are pursuing? Are you okay with the distance from home? After looking at the current roster, are you comfortable with the role you might be playing your first year or two?

The most difficult part about the recruiting process is getting seen. There are so many girls that play softball and only so many tournaments and so many chances to get looked at. So how are you going to get the coaches attention? Letters and videos are a good way to get your name out there, but coaches want to see you in a game situation.

Let's face it, "showcase" tournaments are overwhelming, not only for the athletes but for the coaches as well. So, how can we make it easy on the coaches? When you contact or respond to colleges regarding an upcoming tournament, send them an updated schedule, highlight your team name as well as the times and fields you will be playing at. With hundreds of girls playing, coaches do not have time to wander around looking for you. If you are a pitcher, ask your coach if he or she might have an idea of when you'll be pitching. Ask if it would be possible to assign you a game ahead of time so you can notify college coaches before the tournament starts and allow them to plan accordingly. You want to make it as easy as possible.

Next, don't obsess about playing "for the college coaches" during your game. They'll be wearing their school attire to be noticed but it is important to play the same game you've been playing all year long. Believe it or not, a coach can see talent in one swing or one throw so focus on doing little things to the best of your ability. Do not play scared or with the fear of failing. Do not think, "This is my ONE opportunity to show them." If this is your thought process, you will tighten up and look frightened. Play the game to compete and to win.

Finally, act like a professional. This means acting professional in all areas of your life. College coaches want to see how you will fit in with their program. Will you make a smooth transition or will you require extra attention that should be spent on your team? When you're on the field, hustle, communicate, and carry yourself with confidence. When you walk off the field, use proper language and treat your parents, coaches, and peers in a manner that positively reflects you.

Remember, you are being recruited to jump on a train moving full speed down the track. For this reason, recruiting is a "process." College coaches are looking for the right fit for their program but never forget that this is four years of your life so take your time and choose wisely. At the end of the day, the decision is yours.