



NCAA DI Legislation Fastpitch Softball Early Recruiting

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

In December 2017, the Division I softball coaches met at the NFCA Convention and discussed how to stop early recruiting. Two different approaches were discussed:

- 1) The NCAA Student Athlete Experience Committee proposals
- 2) The “lacrosse legislation” passed in April 2017, establishing September 1 of junior year as the start date for ALL recruiting contact

More information about these and the current NCAA recruiting contact rules can be found on the Early Recruiting Action Center page on www.nfca.org.

Here are some frequently asked questions and answers about stopping early recruiting.

1. How would recruiting contact rules affect camps and clinics?

- Camps and clinics are by definition instructional.
- We support the idea of teaching the sport, including coming onto campus for camp and getting a feel for the coach, the style, and the players. **THE LINE IS RECRUITING CONTACT.**
- We do not need to be getting into offers, scholarships, etc.
- This is the way it was earlier and it worked.
- Once the early recruiting began, it was a landslide.
- **REMEMBER: COACHES WANT THIS RULE.**

2. How do you enforce incoming phone calls?

- We think it will be SIMPLER to have all contact begin on one later date.
- It is our understanding that the compliance association concluded that incoming phone calls are really no different than incoming emails. The point is in *how they are handled* – coaches will have to ask age of PSA at the beginning of a phone call, if too young, coaches will have to politely say “we are not able to talk at this time.”
- When the softball community knows this has passed, it should not be a problem.

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3. How do you enforce recruiting contact rules?

- Recognize that enforcement is important, but that there are a lot of rules that are challenging to enforce. Some might say that most of the NCAA manual raises enforceability issues. Who sits outside a coach's office during a dead period to make sure no one visits?
- The issue of early recruiting needs regulation – which is the sole purpose of the NCAA: to govern college athletics.
- Coaches are asking for this rule (which is rare). All coaches now are required to self-regulate.
- Many contracts state that NCAA rules violations can be cause for termination, which gives a strong incentive to follow the rules.
- Seems like now that compliance is on board and willing to try this approach.
- Social media can also be used as an enforcement radar (see all of the tweets about early commitments or recruiting contact).

4. Why Sept. 1 of junior year?

- This will give coaches and PSAs two full years of high school.
- After height of summer recruiting, this fall date give PSAs a chance to be evaluated before recruiting contact begins.
- Then PSAs can visit campus and get a better feel for the school with students there, classes are in session.
- Junior year also lines up better with the natural time of when students begin looking at college.

5. What about a potential “crush” of recruiting on Sept. 1st?

- Possibly a busy day/week for the top of the recruiting class (5-10%).
- They will be better able to handle this as juniors vs. middle schoolers.
- This would be similar to July 1st a few years ago, but that seemed to work out fine.
- We recognize that no solution is perfect.



6. Is there a concern about compressing the recruiting time between contact and decision?

- The current recruiting time is already incredibly compressed with middle school kids making very quick decisions.
- By pushing back the date for direct contact, we think this will improve the recruiting experience, including the length of time. Certainly, we don't expect that it will make it worse.
- Junior year is a better age and more typical time to be making these decisions too.

7. How will this affect the role of third parties (travel ball/high school coaches)?

- Travel ball and high school coaches will still have their roles of coaching players and bringing teams to competitions for college coaches to watch.
- We believe this legislation will reduce or eliminate the "agency" of these third parties.
- Evaluative contact can go one way: travel ball/hs coaches → college coaches
- College coaches may only indicate interest or no interest.
- PSAs will be able to have an idea of potential recruiting options.
- College coaches will be able to receive important information about PSAs, but not send any messages back other than interest or no interest.
- Third parties cannot now and will not serve as intermediaries of contact.
- We see this as a dramatic improvement over the current recruiting set-up.

8. How would a new rule affect verbal commitments?

- The NCAA does not recognize verbal commitments.
- Legally, a verbal commitment may be enforceable.
- Ethically, a verbal commitment represents a coach's word and commitment to a PSA.
- This legislation would not introduce NCAA consequences for breaking a verbal commitment, but coaches are always advised to consult their administrations regarding making changes to verbal commitments.



9. Could a coach still communicate with a PSA who has verbally committed?

- No.
- No recruiting contact means no recruiting contact.
- This rule is defined by the age and date, not the recruiting status.
- While this may be challenging in some respects for both PSAs and coaches who have verbal commitments and then cannot communicate until Sept. 1 of junior year, it is critically important to have a clear, bright line for permissible recruiting contact.

10. How about waiting to see how lacrosse does?

- Why wait? Feedback has been overwhelming positive. We are confident this is the way to go.
- Waiting = another tidal wave of pressure and early recruiting for another class of young PSAs.
- We are on the right side of this issue. We just need the rule to be put in place. And it exists.

Softball is ready to move forward and address the issue of early recruiting that is hurting our sport.

**Please support our efforts in any way you can.
Sign our petition on www.nfca.org.**

#Sept1Jr

If you have additional questions about early recruiting, please email Joanna Lane, Joanna@nfca.org.

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