

What Gets You in the College Game?

Tips for the High School Pitcher.

Brandon Harmon
Associate Head Baseball Coach
Gonzaga University

NCAA Division 1 Recruiting Calendar

- Quiet Period- Oct. 9- Feb. 29, 2024
 - A quiet period is that period of time when it is permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts only on the member institution's campus. No In-person, off-campus recruiting contacts or evaluations may be made during the quiet period.
- Dead Period- Nov. 6-9 (NLI signing period), Jan. 4-7 (ABCA convention), May 27-June 3 (Regionals), June 15-17 (Fathers Day), July 3-5 (4th of July)
 - A dead period is that period of time when it is not permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts or evaluations on or off the member institutions campus or to permit official or unofficial visits by prospective student-athletes to the institution's campus.
- Recruiting Shutdown- Nov. 21-26 (Thanksgiving), Dec. 22-27 (Christmas)
 - A recruiting shutdown is a period of time when no form of recruiting (contacts, evaluations, visits, correspondence, phone calls) is permissible.
- Evaluation/Contact Period- March 1- July 31
 - A contact period is that period of time when it is permissible for authorized athletics department staff members to make in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts and evaluations.

Dates and Timeline

- August 1st going into your junior year. 2-way recruiting can begin. (2026)
- Zero communication with a student athlete can happen before that, unless it involves attending a camp.
- Majority of recruiting happens in June/July/August, and parts of Sept.
- Camps during the quiet period. What's your objective?
 - Experience vs. Instruction vs. Exposure

10 Things HS pitchers can expect in College

Player View

- 1) Body Preparation
- 2) Pitchability has to match stuff.
- 3) Failure
- 4) College Baseball is Full time.
- 5) Perspective/Confidence/Expectations

Coaches View

- 1) "The most important pitches of your career."
- 2) Volume of Throwing.
- 3) Fastballs are cool, but OS pitches win!
- 4) Weight Room
- 5) Not everyone can be a starting pitcher.

“The most important pitches of your career”

- 1) Pitching in the stretch with runners on base!
- 2) Managing extra variables, and still executing a pitch.
- 3) Holding runners, picks, break times, looks, etc.
- 4) Maintaining your “stuff”. 92 in the WU and 87 in the stretch, doesn't work.



Body Preparation

- 1) "Prehab"
- 2) PT to prevent injury.
- 3) Routine!
- 4) Weight Room
- 5) Mobility/Stretching
- 6) Injury Prevention

- As Coaches what are we doing to promote these activities?
- Are we providing meaningful time to support them?



Volume of Throwing

- 1) Throwing vs. Pitching
- 2) Moving the ball 6x a week.
- 3) Long Toss/High intent
- 4) Need to be a great thrower to be a great pitcher long term.
- 5) Mound Work
- 6) Grip Work

- This game is about reps. We have to be able to throw to get better!



Pitchability has to match stuff.

- 1) College/HS- We are trying to win.
- 2) Showcases- You are trying to get noticed.
- 3) What gets you noticed, is different then what gets you recruited, and is different then what gets you into college games.
- 4) Both areas need the same amount of focus. Neither work on their own.
- 5) Have never met a coach who doesn't like strikes.

If you have:

- Bad stuff, good command
- Good stuff, bad command

You pitch at the exact same level of pro ball: Not the big leagues.

I'll grant one is more tolerable to watch, but coaching isn't about your comfort. It's about developing big leaguers. And

Fastballs are cool, but off-speed pitches win.

- Offensive minded coach- His view!
- Hitters at the college level can hit velocity!!
- Can you spin something for a strike, can you expand that pitch for a swing.
- Developing that 3rd pitch, CH is a separator for guys early in their career.



Failure

- 1) It's going to happen.
- 2) How can you respond to it.
- 3) College- Every outing your result is posted, you don't get the benefit of only posting the good ones.
- 4) "Never blow the opportunity to use a failure"
- 5) As coaches we need to encourage growth from failure and be honest with our athletes.



Weight Room Habits

- 1) Lifting is year-round, not when its convenient.
- 2) Have to be consistent, so you can lift even on days you might pitch.
- 3) Diet
- 4) The difference between most freshmen and upperclassmen
- 5) Encourage HS athletes to go watch a college game. Physicality stands out!



College Baseball is Full Time

- How do you balance the 3 main areas
 - Athletic
 - Academic
 - Social Life
 - Time Management
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Yearly

Only 3 pitchers can start on the weekend!

- 1) The transition from being the GUY to one of the GUYS is tough.
- 2) Our job to show how much we value relievers.
- 3) Being a starter and closer is glamorous, being the 25-appearance middle guy is what gets teams to the tournament.
- 4) 67% of college appearances come out of the bullpen.
- 5) Coaches want to know what they will get.



Perspective/Confidence/Expectations

- Freshmen vs. Upperclassmen
- You are supposed to be behind them, that's normal!
- Surrounding our athletes with people who will help them set realistic and attainable goals.
- We have to provide our experience and wisdom as coaches, players only know what they have experienced.