



FREE RECRUITING GUIDE

THE 15-SECOND RULE

How college coaches evaluate recruiting emails in the first 15 seconds — and exactly what to put in yours to survive that window and get a real response.

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THE REALITY OF A COACH'S INBOX

CHAPTER 01

Hundreds of families waste junior year emailing the wrong schools, sending the wrong information, and wondering why no one writes back. The problem is not talent. The problem is the email.

A Division I head coach receives between 50 and 200 recruiting emails every single day. On a busy week — after a showcase or during peak recruiting season — that number doubles. They are not sitting at a desk carefully reading each one. They are checking email between practice, on the bus, at 11 PM after a game. They scroll fast. **Most emails get deleted in under five seconds.**

The ones that survive those five seconds get 15 more. That is the window you are writing for.

What a Coach Decides in 15 Seconds

When a coach opens a recruiting email, five questions run through their mind almost simultaneously:

1. Is this kid actually a fit for our program — or is he emailing 300 schools and hoping?
2. Do the numbers mean anything at our level — or is this a D3 arm emailing D1 programs?
3. Did he research us — or is this a copy-paste with my name dropped in?
4. Is there a film link I can click right now — or do I have to go searching?
5. Does this look like a serious prospect — or a parent who wrote this for their kid?

WHAT A COACH TOLD US

"If an email doesn't tell me who you are, what position you play, what your numbers are, and give me a link to your film — it's gone. I don't have time to go searching. You have to make it easy for me." — College Baseball Head Coach, NCAA Division I

The solution is not to write a longer email. It is to write a better-structured one. Every component earns its place. Every sentence either survives the 15-second scan or it doesn't.

Why the 15-Second Problem Exists

The volume of recruiting emails coaches receive has exploded over the past decade. Families have gotten better at knowing they should email coaches. They have not gotten better at knowing how. The result is an inbox full of emails that all look the same — generic subject lines, copy-paste templates, and missing film links.

Your email has to be immediately different from the 199 emails that arrived that day. The good news: most of your competition is not doing the basics correctly. A well-structured email from a player whose numbers fit the program stands out sharply.

KNOW YOUR REAL NUMBERS FIRST

CHAPTER 02

Before you write a single email, answer one question honestly: **Do your numbers actually fit the programs you are targeting?**

An 80 MPH pitcher emailing 30 D1 programs is wasting everyone's time — including his own. That same pitcher at a strong D3 or NAIA program is in range and has a real shot if his email is right and his film is current. The families who get results build a target list of **fit** schools — programs where the player's numbers are competitive, not where the player dreams of playing.

Position Benchmarks by Division

POSITION	D1 RANGE	D2 RANGE	D3 / NAIA
Pitcher (velocity)	84–95+ MPH	80–87 MPH	74–83 MPH
Catcher (pop time)	Under 2.00s	2.00–2.10s	2.10–2.20s
INF / OF (60-yard)	6.5–6.9s	6.8–7.1s	7.0–7.4s
Exit velocity	95–110+ MPH	88–95 MPH	82–90 MPH
GPA (minimum)	2.3 core (3.0+ realistic)	2.0 (2.5+ realistic)	2.0 (varies)

These are ranges, not hard cutoffs. A D1 program rebuilding its staff might look at a high-character 82 MPH pitcher who touches 85. A D2 program with a full pitching staff might need 86+ to have interest. The benchmarks tell you where to start your targeting — not where to stop it.

THE TARGET SCHOOL LIST RULE

Target 30–50 schools where your numbers are competitive. Include a mix of D1, D2, D3, and NAIA. The right fit at the right level beats a bench role at a higher program every time. A player who starts 4 years at a strong D3 school develops more, earns more playing time, and often has a better college baseball experience than a player who walks on at a D1 program and never cracks the roster.

Track Your Numbers — Don't Guess Them

If you are using PitchForge, HitForge, or CatchForge, your measurables are already tracked. Export your velocity trend, your peak sessions with dates, and your session count. A coach who sees "94 tracked pitching sessions over 6 months, velocity from 79 to 84 MPH" is seeing work ethic, progression, and verified data — not just a claim. That kind of documented progression separates your email from the ones that say "I'm an 84 MPH pitcher" with no context.

THE 5 INSTANT KILLERS

CHAPTER 03

Five mistakes end your email before the coach finishes the first line. Every single one is preventable. Every single one still shows up in coach inboxes hundreds of times a week.

Killer 1 — A Subject Line That Says Nothing

Subject: Hi Coach Subject: Interested in Your Program Subject: My Son Wants to Play For You

These tell a coach nothing. They look like spam. They get deleted before the email is opened.

What works: Jake Baird | 2027 RHP | 84 MPH | 3.8 GPA | Film Inside

The subject line is the only thing a coach sees before deciding to open or delete. Fifty to seventy-five characters. Name, grad year, position, one key metric, film flag.

Killer 2 — Opening With "I Hope This Email Finds You Well"

Coaches see this opener hundreds of times a week. It signals you copied a template and didn't spend 5 minutes researching their program. The coach's brain immediately categorizes the email as generic before finishing the first sentence.

What works: Open with your name, position, and a specific connection to their program. "Coach — I watched your staff's command development approach in last fall's video series. That approach is exactly what I'm building toward."

Killer 3 — No Film Link, or a Broken One

The email is not the tryout. The film is. No link means deleted. A broken link is worse than no link — it signals disorganization.

A coach will not request access to your Google Drive. They will not search for you on YouTube. Use YouTube (unlisted) or Hudl. **Test the link on two different devices before you send the email.**

Killer 4 — Copy-Paste to 200 Schools

Coaches can tell. If nothing in the email references their specific program — their conference, their coaching staff's approach, their recent season — it reads as a mass blast and gets treated like one.

One personalized line changes everything. Five minutes of research per school. Mention their win-loss record. A pitcher they developed. The conference they play in. Anything that proves you looked them up.

Killer 5 — Bragging Without Evidence

"I am the best pitcher in my area." "I am a D1 prospect." "I can help your program win immediately."

Coaches hear this from hundreds of players per year. Empty claims without numbers, film, and context are worse than saying nothing — they signal a lack of self-awareness.

Let the numbers speak. **84 MPH. 1.72 ERA. 7.4 K/9. 3.8 GPA.** That says everything. "I'm really good" says nothing.

FIVE THINGS THAT GET YOUR EMAIL DELETED IN UNDER 3 SECONDS

- Generic subject line with no metrics
 - "I hope this email finds you well" opener
 - No film link or broken link
 - Zero program-specific references
 - Claims without data
-

ANATOMY OF A 15-SECOND EMAIL

CHAPTER 04

A recruiting email that works has five parts. Each one does a specific job. Miss one and the coach stops reading. Hit all five and you survive the 15-second window.

Part 1 — The Subject Line

50–75 characters. Name, grad year, position, one key metric, film flag.

SUBJECT LINE TEMPLATE

[Name] | [Grad Year] [Position] | [Key Metric] | [GPA] GPA | Film Inside

Example: Jake Baird | 2027 RHP | 84 MPH | 3.8 GPA | Film Inside

Part 2 — The Opening Line

Who you are and ONE real connection to their program. Not flattery. Research.

Coach Williams — I'm Jake Baird, a 2027 RHP at Blackman HS in Murfreesboro, TN. Your pitching staff's improvement in command rate last season is exactly what I'm working toward.

Part 3 — Your Numbers

Position-specific metrics. Four to six numbers. No stories. No adjectives. Just data.

84 MPH fastball (84–86 range) · 68 MPH curveball · ERA 1.72 · 7.4 K/9 · 1.8 BB/9 · 3.8 GPA · Class of 2027

Part 4 — Your Film Link

Clickable. Tested. In the body of the email, not buried at the bottom. Labeled clearly.

Highlight Film (2024–25 Season): [YouTube link] Full game footage available on request.

Part 5 – The Close

Confirm eligibility. One clear ask. Professional sign-off with phone and email.

I am registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and send my full stat sheet and schedule. Thank you, Coach. Jake Baird | 903-000-0000 | jake@email.com

The Done-For-You Template

Copy this. Personalize every bracket. Do not send it without changing the bracketed sections for each specific school. Every coach should feel like they are the only one receiving this email.

SECTION	CONTENT
Subject	[Name] \ [Year] [Position] \ [Metric] \ [GPA] GPA \ Film Inside
Opening	Coach [Last Name], [one specific thing about their program]. That's why I'm reaching out to [School].
Who you are	My name is [Full Name]. I'm a [Grade] at [High School] in [City, State], graduating [Year]. I play [Position].
Numbers	[Velocity/Exit Velo/Pop Time] · [ERA/OBP/Slugging] · GPA: [X.X] · [Travel team name]
Film	Highlight Film ([Season]): [YouTube/Hudl link]. Full game footage available on request.
Close	I am registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you. Thank you, Coach. [Name] [Phone] [Email]

WHEN TO SEND — BY GRADE

CHAPTER 05

The NCAA controls when coaches can respond. It does not control when you can reach out. Players who start early get on boards early. Players who wait until junior year are fighting for whatever is left.

GRADE	NCAA RULES	WHAT TO DO
9th (Freshman)	D1 coaches cannot respond. D3/NAIA: no restrictions.	Build your profile. Target list of 30–50 schools. Send introductory emails to D3/NAIA now. Start tracking measurables.
10th (Sophomore)	After Aug 1: D1 coaches CAN email back. D2 (June 15): coaches can call.	Send personalized emails to 30–40 schools. Update film every 2–3 months. Take unofficial visits. Attend 2–3 targeted showcases.
11th (Junior)	Sept 1: D1 coaches can contact off-campus, extend offers, schedule official visits.	Your most important year. Monthly email updates to every target. Showcases where D1 coaches are present. Take official visits. Be responsive.
12th (Senior)	Early Signing: November. Regular Signing: Feb–April. Rosters fill from the top down.	Commit or pivot fast. Expand to D2, D3, NAIA, JUCO. Update film from senior season. Never stop following up.

50–200
RECRUITING
EMAILS A D1
COACH RECEIVES
DAILY

15
SECONDS TO
SURVIVE THE
COACH'S SCAN

30–50
TARGET SCHOOLS
ON YOUR LIST

5
PARTS OF A
RECRUITING
EMAIL THAT
WORKS

KEY RULE ON NCAA CONTACT WINDOWS

You can email coaches at any age and any grade. NCAA rules restrict when coaches can respond — not when you can send. Early outreach puts you on their radar before the roster fills. A coach who sees your name in 9th grade and tracks your development for two years is far more likely to make an offer than a coach who sees you for the first time in 11th grade.

THE FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

CHAPTER 06

Most coaches will not respond to your first email. That is not rejection — that is 200 emails in the inbox and not enough hours in the day. The players who get recruited are the ones who follow up with new information, not the same email reworded.

Follow-Up by Timing

TIMING	WHAT TO SEND
2 weeks after first email	Brief follow-up. Note it's your second attempt. Add ONE new piece: updated velocity, a strong game stat, upcoming tournament.
After a showcase / tournament	"Coach — I was at [event] this weekend. I went [X mph / posted X stat]. Updated film is here: [link]."
Monthly updates (junior year)	3–4 sentences max. New stat. New film clip. Upcoming event. Ask whether you're on their board.
After any campus visit	Thank-you email within 24 hours. Be specific about what impressed you. Restate your interest level.

Never do this: Email the same coach more than once per week. Send a generic follow-up with no new information. Apologize for following up.

DRILL**Build Your Target School Spreadsheet**

Setup: Open a spreadsheet (Google Sheets or Excel). Create 7 columns: School, Division, Coach Name, Date Emailed, Date Followed Up, Response (yes / no / no reply), Next Action.

Execution: Add every target school before you send your first email. Log each email the day you send it. Set a reminder for a 2-week follow-up. Update the Response column the moment a coach replies. Review and update the spreadsheet weekly.

Reps: 30–50 schools minimum. Work the spreadsheet every Monday. Players who treat this like a job are the ones with options on signing day.

WHEN A COACH RESPONDS

CHAPTER 07

You sent the email. It worked. A coach wrote back — maybe asking for your schedule, your academic info, your updated film, or to set up a call. This is where most families make their worst mistake.

They either panic-reply in 30 seconds with a sloppy answer, or they wait three days because they don't know what to say. Both responses move you down the board.

The 5-Step Response Rule

DRILL

The 5-Minute Response Drill

Setup: Coach's reply is open. Do not type anything yet. Set a 5-minute timer.

Execution: Minute 1 — read the full message twice. Minute 2 — write a bullet list of every action item and question in the email. Minutes 3–4 — complete any external tasks they asked for (fill out a questionnaire, pull your stat sheet). Minute 5 — draft your reply, one sentence per bullet point. Review for grammar and completeness before sending.

Reps: Every single time a coach responds. The 5-minute discipline separates sloppy quick-replies from professional responses that advance your candidacy.

The five steps in order: read fully, list every action item, complete tasks before replying, respond concisely (one sentence per point), reread before you send. Follow that sequence every time, without exception.

RESPONSE MISTAKES THAT COST OFFERS

- Responding with a question instead of delivering what they asked for
 - Long, rambling emails that lack a clear answer to their specific request
 - Waiting more than 48 hours to respond — coaches move quickly and so do their rosters
 - Sloppy grammar or informal tone — you are being evaluated from the first reply forward
-

WHAT TO DO NEXT — THE FULL RECRUITING BLUEPRINT

CHAPTER 08

Getting the email right is step one. But the families who end up at signing day with real options didn't just write a good email. They ran a system. Grade by grade. Showcase by showcase. Follow-up by follow-up.

That system is what separates the players who get recruited from the players who got ghosted after one reply.

What the Full Baseball Recruiting Blueprint Covers

The complete **Baseball Recruiting Blueprint** at fleetforgegroup.com gives you the full grade-by-grade recruiting system from freshman year to signing day:

- Grade-by-grade action plans with exact steps and dates — not vague advice
- Position-by-position benchmarks for D1, D2, D3, NAIA, and JUCO
- The full response system — what to say when a coach replies, calls, or texts
- Done-for-you templates: first contact, follow-up, visit thank-you, and commitment email
- Showcases — which events put you in front of real coaches and which waste your money
- Film breakdown — what coaches watch, what they skip, and how to build a reel under 4 minutes
- How professional scouts evaluate the same players — the 20-80 scale and crossover events
- How to use PitchForge, HitForge, and CatchForge data in your recruiting profile
- Red flags that get prospects quietly removed from boards
- Academic eligibility — the grades and test scores that end careers before they start

GET THE FULL BASEBALL RECRUITING BLUEPRINT

Visit **fleetforgegroup.com** for the complete Recruiting Blueprint — the full grade-by-grade system for high school baseball players and their families.

Every template. Every timeline. Every benchmark. Built by FleetForge Sports & Development — Murfreesboro, TN.

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This guide is free. Share it with every junior-year player you know who hasn't started their recruiting outreach yet.

— Theresa Allison / FleetForge Sports & Development

GET SEEN.

A Division I coach receives 50–200 recruiting emails every single day. Most are deleted in under five seconds. The ones that survive get 15 more. This free guide breaks down exactly what coaches look for in that window — and how to write an email that makes the cut. Free from the Baseball Recruiting Blueprint system at FleetForge Sports & Development.



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