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Image, court demeanor important to talent evaluators

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It took just one look and I knew. I had found the one I was looking for, that someone special to build a relationship with. Of course as I started to look closer, I began to notice the little things. Those irritating, but important things that bring on the second thoughts and allow doubt to creep into your mind.

Love and relationships? Not really. How about recruiting evaluations and what college coaches might be looking for in the gym this July? Recruiting and dating have a lot in common from "love at first sight" to building a relationship. How you "look" is on top of the list in both love and basketball. Obviously coaches are going to consider first and foremost what you can do on the floor. A player's skill level and productivity will be the thing that catches their eye and makes them continue to watch. They'll be looking elsewhere if you don't have the potential and game to play on their level.

Now, with the obvious being said, let's talk about some other things coaches notice while watching potential recruits. Even in a coach's eyes, beauty is only skin deep!

Be coachable. How you interact with your coach and whether you're making an effort to execute the things they ask of you are important to every recruiter. Eye contact and body language are big indicators for us. We watch timeouts and we notice who's not paying attention or not participating in the team huddle.

Along the same line, make every effort to fit in with your teammates and contribute to the atmosphere around the team. Lots of eyes are on you during warm-ups and on the bench. We notice how you respond when being taken out of the game and if you're supportive of the rest of the team.

Handle the tough days. We know everyone is going to have a bad game, but continue to play hard and find other ways to make an impact. If your shot isn't falling, the answer isn't to put it up even more. The solution is to get it in the hands of someone who is hot. Don't allow your struggles to impact your chemistry with your teammates. It's obvious to recruiters and it hurts your team. We even take a look at how you respond to officiating. It tells us something about your ability to focus on the next play as well as your temperament on the floor.

Something that is easy for any recruiter to pick out is the player who's out to "get theirs." Believe me, it's very obvious when someone is putting up shot after shot that they aren't putting the team first. If your coach is telling you to shoot, by all means, fire away! But if your nickname is the "black hole," it might be time to think about shot selection. College coaches aren't too impressed with a player without a conscious.

One thing that might surprise you is that we notice who is getting and, even worse, who is paying attention to coaching from the bleachers. Your coach is on the bench and that's where the instruction should be coming from. All players get input from family and friends whether they want it or not. It just shouldn't be happening at game time and, more so, nobody wants to see a potential recruit who listens.

We also have been known to watch players away from the court. When we see how you carry yourself,

we try to picture you in our sweats representing our university. Dragging your bag across the gym floor on the way to the van isn't quite the image we like for our programs. Away from the floor, we also notice how you interact with your teammates and family. The players who live on the phone or are texting constantly seem detached from their teams and raise a few eyebrows among coaches, too. Every college program works hard to build team chemistry and we're always looking for clues as to how a recruit might impact ours.

In the end you have to be able to play and to tell the truth, the better the player, the less we might be concerned with any of these issues. The reality is that recruiters look at a lot of players for every slot that they have to fill. These just might be the kinds of things that separate you from the others. If you and another player are very similar in their eyes, these could be deciding factors between getting recruited by a university and being crossed off its list.

What may seem like a little thing to you might be a red flag for a program you're hoping to hear from. So, if you're looking for a second date and the chance to build a relationship, pay attention to the little things. If they're not issues for you, who knows, it could lead to the "c" word... commitment!

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