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Things for recruits to keep in mind

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If you take a close look at the NCAA recruiting calendar you'll see that the month of August is designated as a quiet period. Over the past several years the reality is that it's become anything but. Lately August seems to



An important rule for recruits: Don't rush into anything.

bring an irrational rush to commitment that often leads to some bad decisions for recruited athletes.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you unpack your bag from your July travels and the phone begins to ring.

First off, always keep in mind that this is *your* process, not that of the schools. Don't allow them to dictate your time frame. There are no lines, approaches or angles that should make you feel obligated to rush your decision or fail to completely explore all of your options. If you still want to talk with some other schools or take some visits, but feel pressure to commit immediately, be wary of the source of that pressure. If they say they want you but someone else is ready to commit, don't overreact. Schools that are truly interested in you and your future will wait. If they're willing to move on quickly, maybe you weren't quite as special to them as they might have indicated. If you were close to making a decision anyway, then you'll have to weigh the extra time against how strongly you felt about that particular option.

If you were hoping to generate some additional interest this summer or were planning on narrowing your list following the evaluation period, wait a week or 10 days. See who else might call or show some interest in your future. Be sure not to get caught up in the "they didn't call in the first couple of days" illusion. So what? In the long run what matters is whether they're interested and if they happen to be offering. One thing that occurs this time of year is that a lot of schools hear the word "no" from one recruit and move on to other players further down their list.

This is the time to bite the bullet and to put your ego aside. Look closely at all of your options. If someone is willing to offer you in excess of \$200,000 in educational and athletic opportunities, being their first or second choice is irrelevant. When you sign your national letter of intent, and ultimately when you arrive on campus, you're no less important to them than the rest of their signees or even that first choice that passed on them. More so, come game time no coach has ever said I can't play her because she was my second choice.

Additionally, be sure keep an open mind to any of those schools that you might be hearing from for the first time. The last school to call just may be the perfect fit that you've been looking for. How long somebody may have recruited you or how many games of yours they were sitting at halfcourt during July does nothing to make any school a better fit. Once again, setting aside your ego may allow you to find the best setting for your basketball future. Even if you've previously narrowed your list of schools, should someone call or express some interest that intrigues you, check them out. Narrowing the list was your choice, and now it's your prerogative to look beyond those schools if other possibilities present themselves.

Situations like this also reveal something about the coaches you're considering. If they are uncomfortable or give you a difficult time for extending or expanding your search, they're revealing to you where their priorities truly lie. It's true that they've got a job to do and that there is a business aspect to recruiting, but that's on their end, not yours. The professional, confident and caring recruiter wants you to be sure and has no problem with you doing what you have to do. This is your education, basketball career and college experience. You get one shot at it; they recruit another class every year.

Lastly, if you're not a senior (class of 2012) don't get caught up in the moment because you see others pulling the trigger. The rash of early commitments and pressured decisions the past several years has created a transfer environment that has grown completely out of control. You can't let the fear of an opportunity not being there in future dictate the choices you make about your future. Take your time and get it right initially. The fact that someone has offered creates no obligation on your part to make a choice before you're ready to.

In the end never lose sight of the fact that **nothing** is more important than finding the right fit for you academically, athletically and personally. Don't allow the process to get in the way of a well researched and comfortable decision for your future. It's way too important to be made because another athlete made a choice or a recruiter is playing hardball because they want you to make up your mind on their timeline.

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