

The first thing you should know as a sophomore in high school is the new NCAA recruiting rule regarding communication between athletes and coaches. Before June 15 of your sophomore year, there can't be ANY back-and-forth communication between the athlete or parent/guardian and a college coach.

That doesn't mean you can't email coaches to tell them about yourself. It just means they can't email you back, nor can they text you or talk on the phone.

There are many things you can do at this stage of your high school career to increase your chances of getting a scholarship, including researching which schools will need your position in your grad year and which volleyball summer camps you'll want to attend.

Be proactive. It may not seem like the finish line of your high school career is near, but it will be here sooner than you think.

SOPHOMORE YEAR CHECKLIST

- Follow the Freshman Year Checklist (www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/freshman-checklist). Be sure you have completed those items if you're starting the recruiting process as a sophomore.
- Revise the target list you have made of schools that interest you. Now that you've played another year and gotten older, you may have a better idea of the major/area of study you're interested in, so you can check the schools' websites to confirm they have what you're looking for. Also, reassess the area of the country and the conferences in each NCAA division to determine if you should look at other divisions for the level of play, size of school and academic reputation you want.
- Keep working through your target list to determine if schools need your position in your graduation year. This may take some time, and it will require patience. It can be a guessing game, but with some detective work, you'll learn this information over time.
- Continue to email coaches on your target list. It's a good idea to check in every couple of weeks or so and let coaches know how you are doing on your volleyball team, in school, and with extracurriculars. Also, this makes it clear that you are still interested in their school and program. It will feel like you're talking to a rock because coaches can't respond during your sophomore year (even through your club coach) until June 15. But understand this: Most likely, they are reading your emails and watching you play.
- Work hard to continue improving your volleyball skills. Ask your club and/or high school coach for suggestions on how you can get better and work on your weaknesses. Continue private lessons, when you can, to fine tune your game.
- Become a great teammate by being positive and exuding energy. Don't be an "eye-roller" or have bad body language when your teammates make a mistake. Be supportive. And be the type of player who bounces right back after a mistake. Coaches watch you in warm-ups and on the bench. They value a good attitude and good body language as much as good skills.

- Plan to go to more volleyball camps. As a sophomore, camps and clinics are crucial. You should still target clinics and summer camps at schools where you want to play. Email the coaches in advance to let them know that you will be there. This is a great way to show them that you're serious about their program and to get a better feel for what their program is like. If budget is an issue, you don't necessarily have to go to the entire camp. If it's a 3- or 4-day camp, consider going for 2 days, especially if you have other camps to attend. The coaches can usually prorate the fee, and they understand that players often go to multiple camps.
- The floodgates open June 15! Communication between players and coaches is open and can go back and forth (emailing, texting, phone calls) as of midnight on June 15. This became the magical day in the recruiting process after the rule change in May of 2019. Communicate with coaches on June 15 or as soon as you can after June 15. You may hear right away from some coaches you've been contacting. Prepare before June 15 by knowing which coaches you'd like to call on your target list and having questions ready to ask. Also, be prepared to answer questions from them – if you get them on the phone or if they contact you.

QUICK TIP

Don't get discouraged if your dream school isn't showing interest. First and foremost, you're playing volleyball to have fun. If you love the game and keep working hard, you'll give yourself a chance to play at the next level.

Remember, when a school says no, it's not just about you and it certainly doesn't mean you're not a good volleyball player. Maybe the school is already well stocked at your position. Or maybe they need someone who jumps a little higher. Whatever the reason, just keep playing and working hard and having fun. Chances are, you'll arrive at a destination that's right for you.

CHECK OUT THE OTHER COLLEGE CHECKLISTS

[Freshman Year Checklist](http://www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/freshman-checklist) - www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/freshman-checklist

[Junior Year Checklist](http://www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/junior-checklist) - www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/junior-checklist

[Senior Year Checklist](http://www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/senior-checklist) - www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/senior-checklist