



This article is intended to help alleviate the panic that has begun to set in as a direct result of the recently passed Division I Legislation. Panic is defined as ‘sudden uncontrolled fear or anxiety, often causing wildly unthinking behavior’. Over the past week I have heard multiple first-hand accounts of ‘wildly unthinking behaviors’. For you to better understand the level of panic, I have chosen to share a few incidents that have become common place over the past week – *just to give perspective* and in no way to shame or judge.



Pre-high school athletes asking DI Head Coaches for verbal offers to get on the record prior to May 1st, 2019.

Wildly Unthinking Behavior - *in what universe does a 13 or 14-year-old determine the course of a seasoned Division I Coaches’ recruiting plan?*



PSA is overwhelmed with getting early offers & realizes they will not know after May 1st if their top school wants them...demands to speak with a coach and will call ‘every 5 minutes’ until they answer ...all to seek a confirmation they are ‘liked’ with an expectation they will be offered.

Wildly Unthinking Behavior – *uncontrolled fear and anxiety based upon misinformation*



Recruiting Service Representative reaches out to College Coach and emails a list of athletes they need offers for (8th/9th graders) prior to May 1st, 2019.

Wildly Unthinking Behavior - *sports agent-like activity for 8th/9th grade volleyball players??? Not even sure ‘wildly unthinking behavior’ describes this one!*



PSA receives a verbal offer after legislation is passed (April 19th, deadline for decision is April 30th). PSA is considered a top recruit in class of 2023.

Wildly Unthinking Behavior - *an 8th grader is forced to make a six-figure scholarship decision regarding their future within 11 days, when they can’t even figure out how to make their weekly allowance last 7 days!*

John Wooden once said “do not let what you cannot do, interfere with what you can do”, a priceless nugget of wisdom that is needed by all of us as we muddle through this together.

While PSA's and College coaches have been given 'cannot dos' with the passing of the 2018-93 Recruiting Legislation, we encourage both parties to take a step back from 'panic mode' and begin to dialog and determine together what we *can do* inside of the proposed confines of the legislation.

Education is a powerful weapon to combat panic and our aim to inform is a collaborative effort from both the club and college coaching community. The massive onus of education is on Junior Volleyball Clubs as they begin to understand and inform their prospective student-athletes on the parameters of the 2019 Division I Recruiting Legislation recently passed on April 18, 2019.

Our intent is to clarify the legislation and also to offer suggestions and methods on how to best manage communications and assist your prospective student-athletes targeting Division I programs. In addition, we are also including feedback from Division I College Coaches and Club Recruiting Coordinators that are utilizing forthright methods of communications with both the PSA's and coaches.

For the purpose of keeping it simple, we are breaking this down as follows:

1. Actual Legislation Passed on April 18, 2019
2. Misinformation Regarding Division I Coaches Communications with Club and/or High School Coaches
3. Education & Policy for Club Staff & How to Advise their Athletes and Families

1. **LEGISLATION** that was passed on April 18, 2019 and will be ratified as is or modified on May 1, 2019 by the NCAA Board of Directors.

1. Telephone Calls from a Division I Coaching Staff:

Current: DI Coaching staffs may not initiate phone calls with PSA's and/or their family members before September 1 of her/his junior year.

Passed: DI Coaching Staffs may not initiate phone calls with PSA's and/or their family members before **June 15** at the **conclusion of** his/her **sophomore** year in high school.

Exception: If a PSA is in a non-traditional academic calendar, telephone calls may not be made to the PSA and/or his/her family members prior to the opening day of classes for their junior year.

2. Telephone Calls from a PSA to a Division I Coaching Staff:

Current: PSA's can initiate calls at any age to Division I Coaching Staffs.

Passed: A DI Coaching staff member may not receive telephone calls from a PSA and/or their family members before **June 15 at the conclusion** of his/her **sophomore** year in high school.

3. Recruiting Materials & Electronic Correspondence:

Current: DI Coaching Staffs cannot provide recruiting materials, including general correspondence related to athletics or send electronic correspondence to a *PSA and/or his/her family until September 1 of their junior year.*

Passed: DI Coaching Staffs will be able to send recruiting correspondence **beginning June 15** at the conclusion of their **sophomore** year in high school. If a PSA attends a school with a non-traditional academic calendar, recruiting materials cannot be sent until after the opening day of their Junior Year.

4. First Opportunity to Visit a Division I Volleyball Program:

Current: September 1st of Junior Year (official and unofficial)

Passed: An Unofficial/Official visit with athletics department involvement (e.g. contact with athletic department staff, athletic-specific tour, complimentary admission to a match) shall not occur with a PSA and/or their family before **August 1 at the beginning of his/her junior year in high school.**

5. Offers of Financial Aid: Oral Offer Agreements

Current: DI Athletic Volleyball Programs are allowed to extend Oral offers to Sophomores, Freshman and beyond.

Passed: A DI Volleyball Program Staff member **shall not**, directly or indirectly, provide a PSA an oral offer (or indicate) that an offer will or may be made) of athletically related financial aid, other institutional financial aid, admission to the institution or as a member of an intercollegiate team before **June 15th immediately following the PSA's sophomore year.**

2. MISINFORMATION that is permeating the volleyball community since the legislation has passed; “Coaches cannot discuss or communicate with Club and/or High School coaches regarding pre-correspondence-aged prospects”. **This is false**, there has been no legislation proposed, voted on or pending restricting third party communications.

Laura Kasey, JVRA Division I Advisory Board Chair & Minnesota Associate Head Coach sets the record straight:

“DI College coaches can never (and could never) ask you to pass on information directly to a (pre-correspondence-aged) prospect. However, clubs do have the discretion to share information they have on a program as they choose. **I repeat, the rule is that a college coach cannot ask or imply that messages be passed on to prospects.**”

The rule is **not** that clubs can't share information they have about a program or a program's interest in a prospect, with that prospect at their own discretion, because they are not NCAA members. The burden is on college coaches to comply with NCAA rules on how they converse or correspond with the club and high school coaches.

If a college coach calls / texts / writes a Club or HS Coach:

Permissible example: Hey, I watched Sally at Windy City and she was great. I am impressed with how she has developed her slide attack. Hope her team has a great experience at Nationals! (This can be verbal and/or in written form directly to the club and/or high school coach.) In addition, general information regarding their program can be shared with the club and/or high school coach.

Impermissible example: Hi, I watched Sally at Windy City and she was great. I am impressed with how she has developed her slide attack. Can you tell her we think she's a stud and would be a great fit for our program?

Impermissible example: Hi Sally, you were a stud at Windy City. I am impressed with how you have developed your slide attack. You'd be a great fit for our program!

I recommend clubs have a policy for how they will handle information from college coaches about players ... and educate both the coaches and their players on what that policy is.

3. CLUB EDUCATION & POLICY

- Formulate a policy for sharing DI Coaches communications with pre-correspondence aged prospects
 - o All Communications could be documented via email to PSA as a record of compliance
- Educate athletes and their families on what is permissible correspondence or communication directly from a DI Coach (for pre-correspondence/communication prospects).
 - o Camp information Calls/Invites/Emails
 - o Questionnaires (unlimited)
- KEY is to educate early
 - o Designate Freshman/Sophomore Years as the 'Years of Learning' with focus on;
 - academic excellence
 - improving athletic ability and strength
 - learning the game
 - determining long-term career goals
 - understanding all levels of opportunities DI-DIII, NAIA, NJCAA, etc

Facts, Dispelling Misinformation and promoting **Education** are the keys to the success of this next series of challenges in DI volleyball recruiting. It allows us all to take a step back and relieve the pressure of recruiting and decision making for young athletes and to allow PSA's to focus on the pursuit of excellence in academics, honing their athletic ability and discovering what they want their future to look like.

I would like to share some insight from both club and college personnel...words of wisdom for all!

Kara Pratt, JVRA Vice President & Houston Juniors Recruiting Coordinator:

"I have expressed to college coaches that our 2023 and even our 2022's do not have nor need offers at this time. The purpose of slowing down the process is simply that, not putting 13, 14 and 15-year-old athletes in a position where they have to make life decisions when they simply don't know what academic courses will be taking when they get into high school.

The other struggle I have is when a PSA comes to me and says that College A said that if I attend their camp, that shows them HOW interested I am in their program. The fact of the matter is, the average family doesn't have \$1,000 or more to pay for flights, hotel and camp costs during the summer for multiple schools.

At the end of the day, when talking with our families, I truly feel, at no point in time should a PSA be pressured into making a decision. If they are, then that is not the "right fit".

Kevin Hodge, JVRA Committee Chair & WAVE VBC Recruiting Coordinator:

"We must embrace the new legislation that has been implemented by the NCAA and for our NCAA potentials. The game will eventually get back to what it should be at the junior's level; a game. Junior's volleyball can get back to it's innocence, where it can be enjoyable to just play instead of the focus being about "who is at my court watching". To think that you need to make a quick and uninformed decision about selecting a university because of a deadline isn't the most tactful play. Think big picture! You will be attending school for the school and it's academics. To make that decision early is a bit reckless. Use your time now to research and be thorough with potential schools so that when you make that big decision you truly know it is the correct one."

Mike Schall, DI Advisory Board Member & University of North Carolina Assistant Coach:

“One of my main points in dealing with young people and their families in the process in how to deal with perceived pressure to make a decision on a particular deadline is to ask them how they would feel about playing for someone who pressures them into making a decision before they are ready.”

I know “kids these days” get a lot of flack. I’m not in that camp as I love kids who are willing to work their tails off but won’t tolerate abusive or subpar coaching and teaching. Kids are smarter than they used to be and won’t follow blindly. I don’t feel that they should follow blindly in this situation either. Making a decision before they are ready may actually hurt them from discovering more opportunities that may be available to them in the future.”

Closing thoughts...

I received the following message from a DI Coach this morning in regards to a phone call they had last night with a class of 2021 athlete, *“she isn’t sure if she’ll have offers or places to play in college if she can’t talk to coaches. She is very worried because she doesn’t have a final list of colleges yet.”*

As an individual who counsels athletes and their families daily...I know that uncertainty can cause anxiety, the new legislation will help athletes by allowing more time to research programs. If an athlete wants to play in college, there will absolutely be the right opportunity one or two years down the road. Not having a final list of colleges at ages 13-15 is TOTALLY FINE!!!!!! Frankly, not having a final list beyond that is okay too, especially if you are unsure of what your academic goals are.

My message to all prospective student-athletes, “put effort and time in discovering who you really are...volleyball is what you do and is not who you are” and your journey is unique to you, be patient and please... no more uncontrolled anxiety or wildly unthinking behavior...just common sense.”

Patty Costlow
Executive Director

