



The Specialist Recruiting Grind

Since the 12th Annual STS College Exposure Camp, I have spent countless hours finalizing our 2016 prospect list, gathering, reviewing and posting game film and statistics and communicating with college coaches, prospects and parents. It is a long process that will run through much of February and even into March. But it is what I do every year to open as many doors as possible at the college level for our specialists.

As I remind prospects and their parents every year, patience is essential as well over 90% of specialists recruiting decisions are made in January and February of the senior year. In the hierarchy of college football recruiting, kickers, punters and snappers are usually at the very bottom and the last to be recruited. That being said, I recognize the challenges, frustration and range of emotions that many of you are experiencing during this difficult process.

Please know that the anxiety, uncertainty and questioning you are experiencing is normal. This just means you are officially experiencing what I like to call the specialist recruiting grind. And while nothing ever comes easy for kickers, punters and snappers, please do not get discouraged. If you keep moving forward with the right frame of mind and approach, it will be well worth the work and the wait!

Continue to send out your resume, transcript and film while recognizing that unlike many areas of the country, there are numerous college football opportunities in the northeast. Embrace these opportunities no matter how big or small the school is. Do not get caught up in whether a school is division I, II or III. Do not obsess about how many fans will be watching you on fall Saturdays or if your game winner will appear on Sports Center.

If a college coach invites you to campus, take the visit and keep an open mind. If nothing else, getting on campus will help you realize what you do not want. However, you may be pleasantly surprised that a school you never heard of or even considered is the best option for you.

As the recruiting process unfolds, focus on the best fit in terms of academics, career, location, campus, social life and the like coupled with a chance to compete for a starting position within your first two seasons. Think about what school will set you up for where you want to be in ten years with the assumption that you will never play a down in the NFL. Ask yourself the following question: if your football career ended tomorrow, would you be happy at the University of...?

At the end of the day, if you let this perspective guide your thinking, you will land in a good spot. You will find a college or university where you will not only get to play football for another four years but have the opportunity to further your education and earn a meaningful degree!

Lee McDonald
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