

**HOW TO PREPARE & OBTAIN
THE SOFTBALL SCHOLARSHIP
OF YOUR DREAMS**

Your Recruiting **Handbook**



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Your Recruiting Handbook

by Francais Olexa & Samantha Olexa

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CONGRATULATIONS!



You're about to take control of your future. While that might seem a bit scary we are so excited to be on this journey with you.


We created this book because we realized we had SO many questions about recruiting. Everything seemed so hush-hush about it too. It was like we were trying to find this mythical unicorn that we'd only ever heard about and never seen. It can feel confusing when you haven't been able to see something but are asked to do it. We are here to simplify it all for you so that you can focus on getting the scholarship of your dreams.

When people would say 'just send out an email' it felt daunting trying to figure out where to start. What does the email look like? What's important to include? We want you to be able to fully understand the process of recruiting. By the end of this book, you are going to feel confident. We want you to be able to have a template that you can use to send off to schools and know EXACTLY what they want to see. But for us true confidence is going to come from inside of you. For you to be in tune with who you are and where you want to be. Scholarships are a dime a dozen. Our main goal is that with this knowledge you're about to gain that you'll find schools that fit who you are as a person and where you want to go in life.



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A photograph of a baseball player in a white and red uniform swinging a bat on a field. The player is wearing a dark helmet and is captured in the middle of a swing. In the background, there is a chain-link fence and spectators. A yellow softball is visible in the air near the bat. The text 'ABOUT COACH SAM' is overlaid on the image in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

ABOUT COACH SAM

Samantha grew up in Penticton, British Columbia, Canada. Being completely unathletic, Samantha loved softball but wasn't very good at it. She tried out for the BC Summer Games team at the age of 10. She only made the team because of her infectious positive attitude but wanted to prove to the coaches and herself that she was capable of playing at a more elite level.

Samantha worked hard over that winter to develop her skills. It wasn't just her devoting her time to it though. Her parents drove 8 hours every weekend for her to train at a softball academy.

By the time Samantha returned to the BC Summer Games team that spring she was a completely different player and that opened

doors for her. She realized that she could do anything as long as she put in the effort.

Samantha spent the next 10 years as a student of softball. Her family moved where there was competitive softball so she could pursue her dream of obtaining a softball scholarship.

Samantha became a distinguished softball player for her age group. She won 2 Top Fielder awards at Canadian Softball Nationals. One of her proudest moments was batting .545 all while being a Junior in high school competing against others returning from their first year of university. She was also named as one of the top 26 softball players in Canada for the Junior National Team in 2010.

Samantha went to Simon Fraser University — the only Division 2 school outside of the United States. As a sophomore, Samantha had a batting average of .398 and hit three walk-off home runs that season.

While her softball career ended as a sophomore after pursuing a career in policing, Samantha has always been looking for a way to give back to the game. She recognized the difficulties others aspiring to find scholarships faced. There was a time when she was a small-town girl with big dreams. Now her goal is to inspire young athletes so they can achieve their dreams too. Samantha lives in Northern Canada with her husband, two sons, and dog.





ABOUT COACH O

Photo by Lily Beattie

Francais grew up watching Samantha play softball. Always being at the diamond gave Francais a drive to one day compete with her sister. With opportunities on the horizon, and a little nervous about leaving home, Francais was encouraged by her family to take an opportunity to play at Lynn University. Although the program was rebuilding, she viewed this as a chance to leave it better than she found it.

During her four years, she broke countless records for pitching and hitting. In her Junior year she moved into the top-10 program record book for career strikeouts, innings pitched, ERA, victories, and complete games. In her Senior year she was named All-Sunshine State Conference First

Team, SSC Commissioner Honor Roll, NFCA All-America Scholar-Athlete with a .343 batting average and .505 on-base percentage for her final season. She also led the team with 13 multi-hit games and a 19 consecutive game streak reaching base. In 2018 alone, she had 140 innings pitched and threw 13 complete games with 80 K's. She was also named SSC Pitcher of the Week.

Offensively she is ranked top-10 in program history for: walks, hit by pitch, on-base percentage, runs scored, doubles, games played & started, and hits. Defensively she is ranked top-10 in program history for: innings per game, saves, appearances, starts, innings pitched & ERA, wins, and ERA and complete games. It's safe to say

Francais left the program better than she found it, changing the face of it forever.

After university, she played semi-professionally in Germany for the Neunkirchen Nightmares. Then she went on to coach at Saint Leo University while earning her MBA in Social Media Marketing. Having spent time recruiting for Saint Leo, Francais realized so many athletes struggle to find schools. She has been able to combine her experience to educate young women on their recruiting journey.

Francais lives in Florida with her husband and continues to coach hitting and pitching.



ABOUT US

JB Photography |
@jbphotography.ymm

We thought back to our journey trying to find softball scholarships. People would talk about sending out emails and going to camps but honestly, everything seemed intimidating, overwhelming, and confusing about what to exactly do. Everyone would have different ideas. Outside of paying for a recruiting service and spending thousands of dollars doing that, there didn't seem to be any clear-cut answers.

Fast forward to Francais coaching at Saint Leo University. She would get hundreds of emails from young aspiring athletes wanting to play there. Time and time again many of them seemed to struggle with emails and weren't sure what to put.

We knew we needed to change that. After Francais completed 4 years of coaching at Saint Leo, we decided to put together a program that would take away the overwhelming feelings. We want athletes to feel confident sending out emails. Confident in themselves and confident that they understand the process enough to know how to go about finding what they want. We want you to know how this all works so you know what coaches are looking for and where to begin.

We have created acronyms throughout the process so that it's easy to remember. There is a clear path to take and we lay out the steps for you. We give you templates and examples so it's not just us saying what needs to be done... you can see it! Most of all,

we've been in your shoes. We understand all of the emotions that go along with it. There is also experience from the coaches' side so we can speak to that as well. We are here to change your experience to be confident, clear, and empowered. Our dream is that you feel excited about finding a scholarship and that your parents understand what goes along with it too. We are going to remove the mythical unicorn of a scholarship from the shadows so you can see it and catch it. Let's get started!

xo Coach D & Coach S



CHAPTER

1

STANDOUT
QUALITIES

STANDOUT QUALITIES

If you want to stand out you have to work on Presence, Effort, & Routine (PER). This combination is what sets everyone apart, and quite frankly, why as a coach we'd rather have these over talent.

Presence: It doesn't matter what side of the field you're on, when you face a kid who has *presence* it takes the game to a new level. They are confident in their skills, practice, and preparation. They step onto the field with an aura around them that exudes confidence. How do you manage to maintain this when you're struggling or nervous? You have to go back to basics and remind yourself that you've put the time in. You have to believe what you want to happen has happened. Something our dad used to say to us (more often than we'd like to admit) was "Respect everyone; fear no one" - John Wooden. Respect the talent other players have worked for. Respect their grind to get

them to where they are, but know that their talent doesn't give them an upper hand over you. You have strengths that are their weaknesses.

A key to understanding that you can perform under pressure and keep your presence strong is knowing (again another quote from our dad) is "Pressure is all in your mind." Your mind is what is controlling that nervousness. When you're more scared about the failure from trying rather than failing from staying in the same place, you're not working towards growth. Growth is the name of the game and ultimately what needs to be what you strive towards in life. Presence is confidence and the ability to think about the next play. If you're always prepared for the next thing (ex. recovering from an error to get an out on defence, or noticing the pattern of the pitcher to know that she's going to throw a changeup next), then the speed of the game will always flow in your rhythm. You can't

STANDOUT QUALITIES

rush the game, but your mind can make it feel like it is. Maintain your pace. Maintain your presence in your mind and it will flow on the field. Presence off the field is huge too. When you don't think scouts are watching, trust me they are. Whether they're present physically or hearing of things through the grapevines they know more than they lead on. A coach once told us there is one thing that will turn them away in a heartbeat. It has nothing to do with your performance on the field but is an off the field component. It's how you speak to your parents. More than likely, your parents do a LOT for you. While we realize there are exceptions for good parents and others that are lacking, we are assuming that you have at least one parent that does everything you need. Makes your meals, gets you to school, works extra hours for that new glove you want, etc. How you speak to them is a reflection of you as a person. If you can't speak to

that one person, or two people, who do everything you need because of how deeply they love you, then how will you speak to a coach? Let that sink in for a minute. One of the fastest ways to turn a coach away has nothing to do with your softball abilities, but rather about how kind you are to others. Your presence off the diamond is just as important and it centers around kindness.

Effort: A quality that is noticed and is as impactful as talent is *effort*. You don't have to be the most talented or skilled, but effort will make you stand out. As a coach, we would rather have a kid lacking in skill but has effort because it is a guarantee with a good attitude and effort, you'll surpass talent. "Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard." Laying out for a ball or swinging with purpose are obvious examples. Meaning behind movements rather than going

STANDOUT QUALITIES

through the motions is huge. Effort obviously applies to the effort you show on the field but let's expand on that. When we think of effort we think of how hard someone tries, usually this is something we can see. But how hard do you try when people aren't watching? Are you trying to become 1% better every day? You don't have to try to make major changes overnight. At it's core, it comes down to how much purpose you put into yourself when no one else can see. If you want to improve yourself but you don't know where to start... guess what?! You're already doing it! Keep showing up. Keep reading. Keep implementing what you're learning. At the end of the day, showing up for yourself is the effort that we're talking about.

Do you have to have effort off the field too? We get that you're here to find a softball scholarship. We are confident if you follow our outline that you will find the one you've been dreaming about. It's

important to note though that softball scholarships aren't just about softball skills. It has a lot to do with who you are as a person. We want you to be the kindest person, not just towards others but to yourself. You deserve that. You deserve someone that shows up every day wanting to become the best version of themselves. One that has compassion & determination. So while effort on the ball diamond is a must, the true standout quality is effort into yourself off the field. A simple way to put in more effort and make yourself stand out is to give a helping hand to a coach, it'll go a long way. When a station is done at camp, be the kid that hustles to grab the bucket to be refilled. Be the kid that grabs the ball by the fence that everyone else ignored. Simply asking, "Hey Coach, do you need a hand with anything?" is an easy way to stand out with minimal effort.

STANDOUT QUALITIES

Routine: There is a difference between a routine versus a superstition and as we will talk about in mindset, what you believe to be true is either already true or it will become true. Superstition is the belief that if you don't do X, then you won't be successful. There is a negative connotation around superstitions because of this. Your mind holds so tightly to that one string that if you pull too hard (failing to follow your superstition), it all starts to unravel. The perfect example of routine is Michael Phelps. On race days he woke up at the same time, ate the same thing, did the same warmup and listened to the same songs. This routine is important to highlight because it wasn't a belief that something would go wrong if he failed to follow it, but rather he knew how this allowed his body to perform optimally and he had a sense of control. He was able to minimize distraction because he knew exactly what he needed to do. Pre-pitch routine is important

for whatever position you play and whatever side of the field you're on.

Defence: do you know the signals, are you in position for the location of the called pitch, are you prepared for the tendencies if your pitcher throws a changeup, are you communicating with the players around you, where are you throwing the ball if it comes to you, do you know where the runners are and what speed they have, do you know how many outs there are?

Offense: what's the count, what patterns has the pitcher been throwing, is she hitting her spots, do you have runners in scoring position, if you bunt what side are you aiming for, has the defence shifted each pitch (are they giving away pitch location), are you reading the defence to see if there's a hole? While this list may seem exhaustive, and still incomplete for all the options available, it's important to do a quick run-through. This will help the speed of the game

STANDOUT QUALITIES

seem more manageable the more that you practice this because it becomes second nature. Additionally, your pre-pitch routine should include a breathing routine and a positive mantra to tell yourself. The breathing routine is important because if your breath is too quick you will actually increase your heart-rate. Being conscious of this will help you relax and reduce your stress. Slowing your breath, staying in control of your breathing pattern, will help your heart rate return to normal faster. If you're looking for somewhere to start, Box Breathing is useful. Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds (focus on inflating your belly like a balloon, this will activate your diaphragm), hold for 4 seconds, exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds. Remember, what you believe to be true will become true. A positive approach does not have to be a fake positive, we're not cheerleaders here. We are realistic. You are only

failing if you aren't learning. Yes that last swing may have been ugly, but what have you learned? Were you on time? What is one small adjustment you can make in real-time to be successful on the next pitch?

MINDSET CHALLENGE

List 10 people who wouldn't be surprised to see you succeed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Wow! Now that's 10 people who believe in your success. Do you too?

C H A P T E R

1

STANDOUT QUALITIES

CHALLENGE

1. Write down one thing you found important or new from this chapter.
2. Write down how that information can be used to help you in your life.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

2

CHOOSING
STATES



CHOOSING STATES

When you're starting your recruiting journey, it is often tempting to start with the schools that you're familiar with. This is a great place to start ONLY if you are interested in the academic programs that they offer and the softball program available. If you want to stay close to home and you live in Tennessee, it wouldn't be a great place to start by emailing schools in Washington state only because you're familiar with the program. Are there certain states you aren't interested in going to?

ON DECK PREP

Coach S: Before some of our games we had to shovel the snow off the grass. Yes. You read that correctly. Shovel snow. Maybe this is something you want. The environment that the school is in will have an impact on your softball experience. Think about what interests you and what experience you're looking for.

Having a general idea of how far you want to go from home (whether you want to be able to drive or fly home), which states you're interested in, and the general location of a school is a quick way to start deciding on which schools to email. There are over 1600 schools that offer softball programs so narrowing the location down is the first step.

One thing our dad did that helped both of us start our recruiting journey was to print out a map of the United States and highlight places we would be interested in. You can customize this if you choose: green for states you're very interested in and yellow for states you'd like to learn more about. Avoid highlighting every state because we want this map to be easy to distinguish. Not only will this help you determine what you are looking for, but it will save you SO much time because you won't be researching schools you have no interest in going to. It will also save the coaches time because nothing gets them fired up more than athletes emailing them that aren't interested.

CHOOSING STATES

Key questions you need to ask yourself when deciding on which states:

1. Do I have a preference already of where I want to go?
2. Do I want to be able to drive home?
3. For driving time, how far away from home am I willing to go?
4. Do I want to have extra circular activities (ex. skiing, paddleboarding, etc.) that I want to be able to do while I'm at school?

If you have no idea where you want to go, that is perfectly fine. Something that makes recruiting really stressful is the thought of trying to figure out so many major decisions. Starting university, possibly moving away, and deciding what to study are huge life events. Many adults don't even have the answers to these questions. When you are deciding what you feel is best for you just remember that you're making a decision and you can always come home.

It's okay to not know what you want or where you want to go. If you have no idea and you're totally open to all

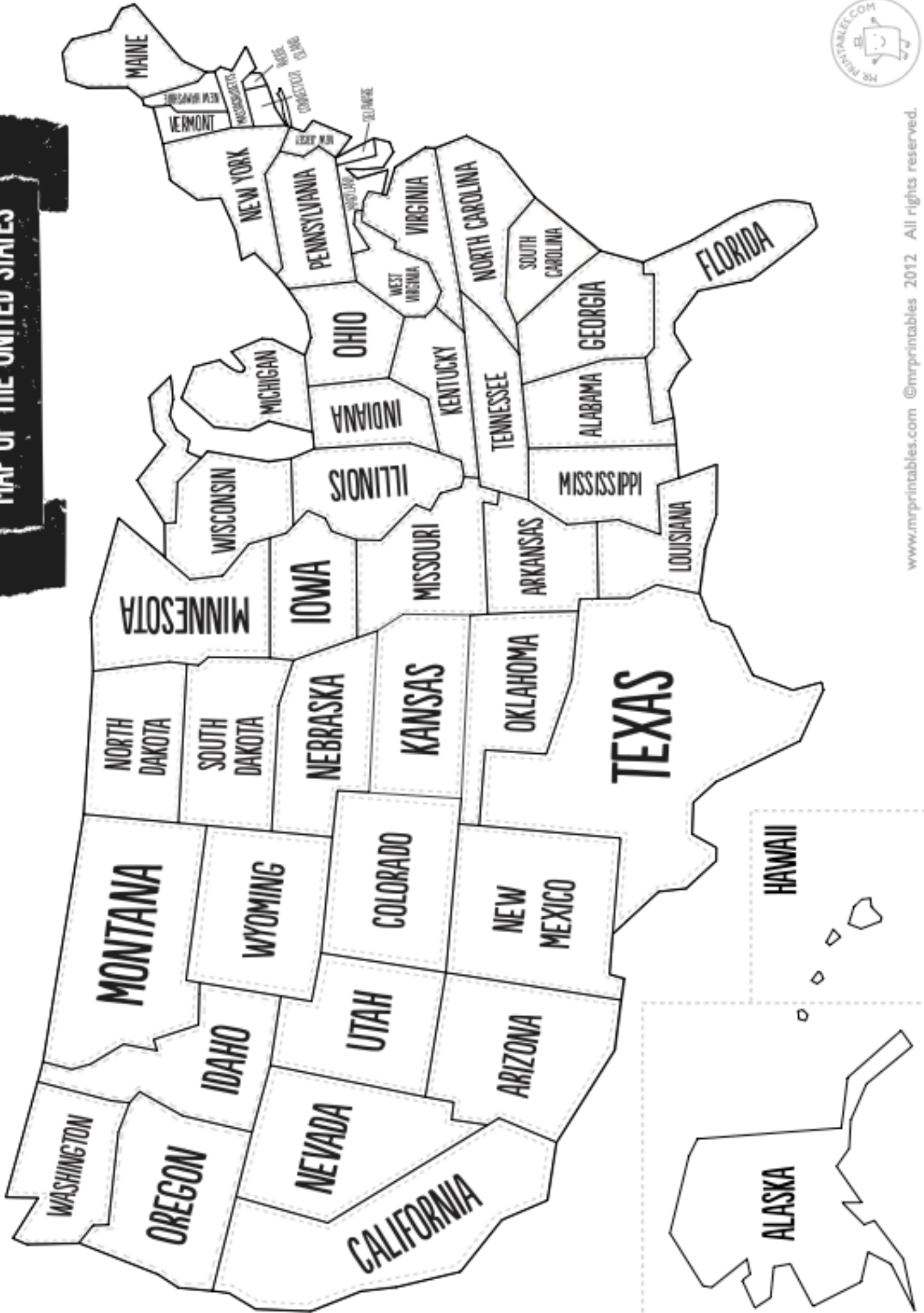
schools then you're going to have to look at other ways to narrow down which schools you want. Do some research to see what those states offer. Maybe you enjoy horseback riding in your free time so this would be the perfect opportunity to see what is offered in that state or by a school you're interested in.



ON DECK PREP

If you want to know our secret C.L.A.S.S. Formula for choosing a school make sure you look at our program. Head on over to our Instagram page and message us so we can send you the link. It's impossible to include everything you need to know in this book because there is so much to talk about.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES



C H A P T E R

2

CHOOSING STATES

CHALLENGE

1. Write down your top 5 states you're interested in.
2. Write down what life would look like in each state, can you imagine yourself there?
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

3

CONTACTING
SCHOOLS

PAGE 25

CONTACTING SCHOOLS

One of the most common questions we are asked is “When should we start contacting schools?”. Ideally, you want to start figuring out where you want to go as a sophomore. If you’re able to start narrowing down which schools you’re interested in and begin emailing them around this time it can help get your foot in the door; however, if you choose to email as a sophomore just know that there are rules about coaches speaking to you. While we would love to be able to include all those details in here, this book would be so long it would be hard to get through. If you haven’t already, check out our program Full Picture, Full Ride. This is where we have videos so we can really dive deep into the rules because we are able to explain them best this way. Just keep in mind that you really want to start around your sophomore year but also if you’re past that point and you’re just getting started then that is totally

okay too! It can help to get a head start but that isn’t the reality for a lot of athletes.

We are going to discuss two ways to reach coaches in this chapter; emails and social media.

EMAIL

We’ve read that some recruiting companies suggest making an email address specifically for speaking to schools. A secret we have to share is that coaches do not care about this. Even if your email is amazing like: theofficeisthebestshowever@gmail.com, they might think oh that’s a great email name (because we all know The Office is an amazing show) but there are no brownie points. Unless it is going to make it easier for you to keep track of the emails by having a separate email for this then go ahead. But don’t feel that this is something you need to do.

We’ve also heard of and seen athletes include their headshot in the email. While

CONTACTING SCHOOLS

you certainly can it's not necessary. The coach wants to know who you are and if you are a good fit for their program, not what your face looks like. While we all know you are beautiful, they want to see how you stand out athletically so don't stress about including a photo of your face on the emails.

STEP 1: Template

If you want to simplify this process, make a template. There are going to be certain things that you will want to include, we will cover all those things here along with the statistics that are important in Chapter 4. While you will add a sentence or two for every school for personalization, having a template will save you hours for your introductory emails. Check out the bonus chapter in this book for a template done for you.

In the template you'll want to let the coach know about how amazing you are at softball and about how hard you work for your grades. Keep in mind

that they do want to get to know you but in the first email you don't have to talk about extra curricular activities. They want you to play softball so make sure your impression you're leaving is all about what they want first, then after that initial contact you can fill them in on all the things you love in life.

STEP 2: The First Paragraph

You want to grab the coaches attention. Be quick and to the point but also give them a bit to get to know you. This is so important to include in the first paragraph because if a coach feels like they have to search for information they might move onto the next kid. Everything needs to be easy to find and simple. The key things you want in the first paragraph are your name, positions you play, grades, and a link to your Google Drive or Youtube channel. The link needs to include either game highlights or a highlight video. Showcase your skills here because this is the first

CONTACTING SCHOOLS

impression they will be seeing of your softball skills.

STEP 3: Personalize It

With your template done you can start sending out emails. If you're using our Schools, Divisions, & States Almanac, you can easily and quickly go through the list. We have it laid out so it takes you directly to the softball program from the name in the template so that it is much more time efficient for you. If you didn't purchase this and you're interested in saving your time for a low cost of \$17 then email us so we can set you up.

Everything is about first impressions and letting the coach know that you've taken the time to look into their school (even for 5 minutes) goes a long way.

Here are some examples of sentences you could include to personalize it:

#1. Coach Olexa I was so impressed when I saw that your program made it to postseason the last two years in a row. I know I'm a perfect

fit because I love gold and can't wait to contribute to a postseason run.

#2. Coach Olexa I know that your school is the perfect fit for me because I love the ocean. I saw that your school is just a 20 minute drive away from the docks, I can't wait to play softball for you so I can enjoy my two favourite things.

#3. Coach Olexa, I saw that you're from Canada! I also am from Canada and would love to follow in your footsteps.

All you're trying to do is include one or two sentences that make it unique for them. Show them that you've looked at the school. You may have noticed how we addressed the coach at the beginning of each of the examples. A key point is always address a coach with their last name until they have corrected you. Triple check their name is spelt correctly too. Copy and paste from their website so that you know there are no spelling errors off the hop.

CONTACTING SCHOOLS

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a huge tool for finding your school. While you may not think coaches are checking, they very much are. You can use your current social media page or create one just for recruiting. Make sure that whichever option you choose that the page is public. Our preference is that you create one just for recruiting. Even though it is a bit more work, from an internet safety standpoint your social media pages should be private. Even though all the things you post should be things that you would be willing to show your grandmother, I cannot in good conscious recommend that your personal social media be an open platform for the world to see.

By using this example, if you're not willing to show your grandmother your posts we would be willing to bet you probably don't want a college coach seeing them either. We get this is very subjective and

is different for everyone. A general rule: don't post anything of illegal or underage activities. While this seems self explanatory it isn't. This is also another reason why we recommend having your personal account set to private so that if there was ever something you regretted posting there is a smaller pool of people that might have seen it.

On your recruiting social media platform have videos or images of gameplay. Say your first and last name, the team you play on, and anything else softball-related that you feel is important. This public page **should not** include specific details about you (ie. where you live, the classes you're in, who your friends are, where you hang out).

If you feel that you want some assistance or more details about how to navigate this aspect of recruiting we discuss it in depth in Dreams to Varsity Diamonds Masterclass or reach out to work one on one.

C H A P T E R

3

CONTACTING
SCHOOLS

CHALLENGE

1. Write down one thing you found important or new from this chapter.
2. Write down how you will implement it in your recruiting journey today.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

4

STATS. STATS.
STATS.

Think of the stats you want to include in your email like the spotlight on you as a player. While the stats are the focal point, this is also a great opportunity to include why other teams fear playing you. Are you the kid who rises up in clutch situations? Are you the master of bunting? Can you pinpoint a slap to pick apart a defense? Do you keep the simple plays simple? Do you take strong angles to a hard-hit ball? Are you the kid who makes diving plays? Find what sets you apart from everyone else.

Offensive stats that you want to highlight:

Batting Average (AVG): the higher the batting average the better hitter you are right? Generally, yes. However, if your team doesn't face very competitive pitching and you have a .780 average, this might make a coach question your ability rather than show why you stand out. If you find yourself in this situation, highlight your AVG against better teams.

On-Base Percentage (OBP): yes this is a great way to highlight your ability to get on base, but it also shows

that you have a great eye when you're at the plate.

Slugging Percentage (SLG): we've all heard this is an important number, but do we know why? SLG represents the total number of bases per at bat. If you consistently hit doubles, for example, you will have a higher SLG than someone who has the exact same numbers and only hits singles. It is a great indication of power at the plate and sometimes speed around the bases.

Stolen Bases: if you have some speed on the bases, show off a little!

Homeruns: we acknowledge that there will be a percentage of players who won't be able to brag about this category. If you haven't hit one yet, don't stress! While Samantha was hitting it out of the park at a young age, Francais didn't hit her first one until her freshman year in college.

Defensive stats that you want to highlight:

Fielding Percentage: work hard to stay above .950! Remember, it's all a game of ratios. If you only get 15 hits to you all season, and you have

an error on one of those equals a .933 fielding percentage. Keep each play simple!

For catchers:

Caught Stealing Percentage (CS%): send those runners back to the dugout! Catchers with a CS% between 25-30% will definitely catch a coach's attention. If you're under that, work to improve your transfer, throws, and accuracy to improve your numbers.

For pitchers:

Earned Run Average (ERA): work hard with your defense to keep this number low. Francois personally liked seeing recruits with an ERA number 2.00 and under because that shows you're only giving up 2 runs per 7 innings pitched.

Innings Pitched (IP): this is a great way to show that you're a reliable pitcher for your team in combination with your ERA.

First Pitch Strike %: coaches love to see how you work ahead in the count! An ideal percentage is between 60-70%. By increasing this number, you're forcing hitters to make a decision early in

the count and giving you the upper hand as you work the count.

Overall Strike %: this can reflect how often you attack the zone, but it also shows that you're able to throw for swings and misses!

Strikeouts (K): rack 'em up! Some of the best pitchers Francois has played against and coached had a strikeout or more per inning.

Base on Balls (BB): minimize your walks! Make sure each batter you face has to compete with YOU!

Walks and Hits Per Inning Pitched (WHIP): if your travel team keeps track of this, it is a great indicator of how many batters are getting on base each inning. The lower the number, the harder you make it for the opposing team!

ON DECK PREP

If your Overall Strike % is high and your ERA is high, work on forcing bad contact! When both are high it suggests you're throwing *IN* the zone too much.

STATS. STATS. STATS.

Keep in mind that while the stats will be what attracts attention, they don't capture everything about you.

Stats don't show how many hard hits you got, how many diving plays you made, or how hard you worked between and during practices to improve.

It's important to point out that the quality that sets players apart at the next level is when you're clearly a team player. This can show through offensively when you're hitting the ball hard, or behind the runner, and finding a way to move them or score the run. Force the defense to have to rise and match your ability in order to compete. Defensively this may look like diving to keep the ball in the infield with a runner on 2nd, staying composed on a 3-2 count to strike her out, or catching the ball before trying to tag the runner in a close call situation. This will *definitely* get the right attention.

And sometimes, it also depends on the person who is actually inputting the stats. It creates a very black-and-white outlook on a game that is very grey. Stats will be what

gets coaches to your games, but your P.E.R. will be what makes them stay and watch. Being a team player goes beyond being the best on the field. It means knowing when to be a vocal leader vs a silent leader. It means knowing how to talk to those around you to raise the bar for everyone.

As we mentioned before, something as simple as how you speak to your family and teammates could be enough for a coach to skip over you no matter how great your stats are.

If you're feeling a little discouraged after looking at your stats, use this as motivation to put S.M.A.R.T. goals into place to improve your numbers. Remember, whatever your mind believes to be true either is true or will become true. Believe in yourself!

ON DECK PREP

What do you want it to look like when someone approaches you during a tough moment? What can you work on to improve your P.E.R.?

C H A P T E R

4

STATS. STATS. STATS.

CHALLENGE

1. Write down your S.M.A.R.T. goals for this season.
2. Write down which stats make *you* stand out.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

5

SCHOLAR
ATHLETE

SCHOLAR ATHLETE



The thought of choosing a school and program that you're going to study for the next 4 years to then become a career... it's overwhelming. The best way to be successful during this time is to find something you're legitimately *interested* in. This is incredibly important because playing any collegiate sport is a full-time job. You need to be able to enjoy the things that you're learning in class because you'll prioritize your time better for homework and studying.

Unfortunately, for a large majority of us, there are few opportunities to keep playing beyond college. This is why it is crucial for you to find an academic program that you want to focus on.

This is often a really scary moment, because how are you supposed to know right now what you want to do in 10 years? If you don't have that strong calling for what you want to do, pick something that can help you in multiple (potentially any) workplaces. This would include (but is not

limited to) programs like Business Administration, Financing, Communications, or Marketing.

Regardless of where you want to go to school when your grades are higher, it makes it easier for a coach to bring you onto their team. Reflect on your latest school report; do you need to find a tutor or work with someone in the class who has a better understanding? The reality of it is that your grades will drop very quickly, but it is much harder to bring them back up to a strong GPA.

If you're in a position where your GPA needs an overhaul, sit down with your guidance counselor at school to see if there are any courses you could retake or electives you could take online to help improve your GPA. If this is something you're seriously considering, then you need to commit to the courses you sign up for. No half-hearted attempts here!

SCHOLAR ATHLETE



When you start narrowing down the schools you're interested in, you can call the admissions department and ask about if they have a sliding scale. We will cover this more in-depth in our masterclass, **Dreams to Varsity Diamonds**.

The simple version is that if you score higher on your SAT or ACT some schools won't require a higher GPA for the same amount of academic scholarships. This also works in the opposite direction where if you have a high GPA you may not have to score as high on your SAT or ACT. This is something that will vary from school to school.

Even if you're not "good" at school, learning what your best study habits are now will pay off in the long run. Did you know that even after you're attending your college or university you can increase your academic scholarship? The hard work needs to continue in the classroom, just like it needs to continue on the field.

ON DECK PREP

Do you know *your* best studying habits? Here are a few ways we have heard people be successful:

- put your phone away!
- use a checklist
- find a quiet place with minimal distractions... sometimes that includes your friends too
- work when you're most focused
- cue/flashcards to quiz yourself on vocabulary or phrases
- coloured note-taking
- read the content that will be covered in class BEFORE class so it's not the first time you've heard it
- read a paragraph at a time then quiz yourself on the main points. When you can get them all correct, move to the next paragraph

C H A P T E R

5

SCHOLAR ATHLETE

CHALLENGE

1. Write down one thing you found important or new from this chapter.
2. Write down how that information can be used to help you in your life.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

6

IMPORTANCE
OF WELLBEING



IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

When we were in high school we had no idea about the importance of food. To be fair, neither did our parents. We wish someone would have told us these tips so we wanted to include them.

If you truly want to perform at the next level then fueling your body with what it needs is where you need to start. In Chapter 1, we talked about stand-out athletes. How 1% better is an achievable goal to aim for and how important it is to work on becoming a better person when people are around to applaud, but also when nobody is watching. That all comes back to one simple thing: **nurturing** your soul to be a better person. We are going to discuss how to nurture your body. Your body is depending on you. It wants to thrive. Let's support it.

Your brain is the organ of happiness. Inflammation can be a good thing. If there is a scratch, you want inflammation to help it heal. But when we have inflammation in the body that lasts for a long period of time it can cause issues.

There are certain foods that can add to inflammation and ones that can help keep it away. Obviously, your brain and body are needed to run optimally to play sports at a high level, especially at a collegiate level. **It is a myth that all fats are bad.**

ON DECK PREP

Before softball games, my mom would buy me either a mocha frappuccino from Starbucks or a Monster energy drink. They paired nicely with rice, chicken, and ranch dressing that I would eat before the game... My stomach turns now thinking about the amount of sugar I pumped into my body. Never mind the chemicals. I wish I could find out how much better I would've been (and with fewer injuries) if I had eaten to nourish my body. I don't know how I was able to perform because my body was not getting what it needed. Help your body out. Don't eat like I did. - S



IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

We are going to discuss some foods that are important for you to think twice about. This is even more important because you could be moving out soon and knowing how to fuel your body is a skill. We have both seen many of our teammates struggle with weight gain, “the freshman 15”, because they don’t know how to eat without their parent's help.

In the most simple of terms, our bodies are cells and those need proper fuel. If we are putting foods that hinder the cells instead of helping them, we will feel that. It is so important to look at food as a form of love for your body. Consuming foods that have been made by the earth and not made by us is also huge. When we started to cook, it seemed a bit intimidating. Who knows what to do all the time?! The more we did it though the more fun it became. Being able to cook a meal is a blessing. If you look at it as if it is a positive, that’s what it will be. You have a lot of meals to make in life so the sooner it becomes a positive spin, the better off you’ll be. Now is the best time to learn

about the importance of food because when you venture off to university you might have to make your own meals. It is imperative that you know the keys to what you’re looking for in your body. Here are our top 5 tips on how to nourish your body:

1. Eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables.

In an ideal world look for organic produce. Especially for the *Dirty Dozen*.

Organic does typically cost more but you’re not getting food heavy in chemicals (and no you can’t wash off the chemicals...). Look for sales and try to eat foods in season to reduce the cost.

2. Get in that protein. If you choose to eat meat look for grass-fed and pasture-raised. The saying “you are what you eat” is especially true when it comes to animals. They are what they eat, and then we consume them. If you’re eating conventionally raised animals, they are fed poor diets & hormones which leads to high stress levels. If this is something you struggle with, a small change like this can make a big difference.



IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

Additionally, grass-fed & pasture-raised are higher in nutrients so it's worth the cost.

3. Consume anti-inflammatory oils & fats.

When we look at the importance of fats there are fats that are helpful and ones that are not. The helpful ones are coconut oil, avocado oil, olive oil, and animal fats. The ones that cause inflammation in the body are canola oil, seed oils, margarine, and vegetable oil to name a few.

4. When you have aches and pains, think of more magnesium.

Magnesium is needed by your body for over *300 enzyme functions*. Not only is it needed but it's something we used to have rich in our foods. It is a metal and it comes from the ground into foods we used to consume. With the use of chemicals on foods, which are then transferred to the ground, magnesium is depleted in the soil. Why does this matter? As a college athlete, your body will be sore. Training camps are strenuous. If you find your body having aches, think of magnesium. Magnesium is

rich in chocolates which is why we crave it during our period because magnesium is what we need. Here's your excuse to find some dark chocolate.

5. Your mental health matters.

We've all had days where we haven't felt like ourselves. Those days are normal. What we don't want though is to be fighting depression or any mental health challenges. You have enough on your plate. Look after your brain because it's the organ of happiness. There are certain things that you can do to make it easier on yourself. Omega-3s (found in healthy fats) are something that we want more of in our diet than Omega-6s. Some people confuse this by thinking we don't want Omega-6 which is not true. We need it. But the ratio needs to be more Omega-3 than Omega-6. A quality fish oil or cod liver oil are great nutrients. Especially with cod liver oil, there are many other nutrients in it that pack a punch. [Formula IQ](#) and [Jigsaw](#) make a very high-quality cod liver oil.



IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

If you have the ability to purchase a red light they are really beneficial. Think back to science when they talk about the mitochondria. Red light therapy supports the mitochondria because they are *the powerhouse of the cell*. The reality is we don't know how truly amazing the mitochondria are, and we can't conceptualize how many we actually have in our cells, but we have learned one thing recently: red light can help lower blood sugar levels. Blood sugar levels that are like riding a roller coaster are going to be really hard on your body and your mind. You'll be able to tell if your blood sugar levels are more like a roller coaster ride if you experience symptoms like hanger, quick change in emotions, fatigue, carb and sugar cravings, brain fog, and PCOS. Trying for more balanced blood sugar levels isn't just for someone with diabetes, it's something we should all be conscious of. Something that can wreak havoc on your blood sugar levels is Gatorade. In 20 oz, it packs 34 grams of sugar. That's the equivalent of 7

mini doughnuts coated in powdered sugar... We wouldn't eat 7 mini doughnuts and think we were fueling our bodies for a game so think of Gatorade the same way. If you want the electrolytes pick up some Himalayan salts and lemon. Add that to water and you've got a nutrient-dense packed drink that your body loves. A great alternative is coconut water!

Here are some of our favourite tools we used when we played and/or are currently using:

Electrolytes:

These are so important and we wish we would have had a better understanding of them when we played. Whether you're lifting weights, going for a run, or even starting your day, adding minerals to water is HUGE. One of the biggest health benefits we've both found has been from adding salt to water. We have two companies for you to consider:

- LMNT - They have flavoured salts. Some are meant to be added to



IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

warm drinks (such as coffee so they're great for parents too) and some are meant for cold drinks, so ideal for ball diamonds. If you click on the name of the company above when you make your first purchase you'll *also receive a bonus sample pack.*

- Jigsaw - This company has really great supplements! They make amazing electrolytes, magnesium, whole food Vitamin C (avoid ascorbic acid), cod liver oil, and other products. They have electrolytes that come in a container and then you would scoop it into water or you can get ones that come in individual packages. They don't just contain salt, but they actually contain vitamins & minerals too.

Red Light Therapy: Injuries happen. They're inevitable. Red light can really help. They are costly (around \$500). We use one for just about everything - first thing in the morning, to help with skin repair, acne, headaches, sore throats/colds, and sore

muscles. They're super versatile and can be a great tool to go to university with.

Epsom Salts: One of the best ways to help recovery is Epsom salts. Warm a cloth first with hot water, add the Epsom salts directly on the cloth, then place on your skin where your sore muscle/ache is. Leave it on for the salts to dissolve directly on the skin. This was a huge help when Samantha had a sore arm from throwing, for Francois' back and shoulder from pitching, and when our feet were sore from our cleats.

Hot/Cold Baths: 30 seconds cold, 1 minute hot. The more ice the better. Rotate at least 3 times. You'll want two bathtubs to make it easier.

Massages: hopefully you'll be at a school with an athletic trainer, but if you don't have access a Theragun or two tennis balls taped together can help roll out those tight muscles. Rub towards the heart when possible.

CHAPTER

6

IMPORTANCE OF
WELLBEING

CHALLENGE

1. Write down one thing you learned in this section.
2. Write down 3 ways you can improve your recovery routine today for optimal performance.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

7

PARENT'S
CORNER

PAGE 51

PARENT'S CORNER

There are so many emotions that come with looking for a school. The beginning is exciting. When coaches start to respond, you can see there's interest in your daughter and her abilities. But then it can feel nerve-racking at the end as you're deciding on the school because you want her to be safe. You want her to go where she will find success. Really though, you're handing her off to someone you don't know and trusting that they will look after her. That can be a hard pill to swallow. We're going to discuss some of the things that you can do to help your daughter achieve success all while keeping in mind those above feelings that you're more than likely about to go through.

1. Your *Daughter* Is The Recruit.

The days of you playing a varsity sport have come and gone. It would be amazing to live through our kids and see the success along side them.

The reality is that you will always share in their success with them. What is important to remember though is that the school is recruiting your daughter, not you. Even though you want them to be successful and may want to do most of the work for them to get recruited, the school isn't recruiting you. They want to get to know your daughter. It is a great time to give your daughter space and guidance at the same time. Give her space to reach out to the schools, listen to what she wants in a school and where she wants to go and guide her if there is a possibility that you really feel that it is or isn't a great fit. This is the number one rule for a reason. Coaches want to talk with your daughter and not you. You'll be involved, trust us, but keep in mind she's the recruit, not you.

2. Athletic Scholarships Take Work.

As amazing as it would be to walk onto a diamond and

PARENT'S CORNER

have coaches lined up waiting to see your daughter play, that is not the reality for most players. Athletic scholarships take time and they take work. With our help, we have a clear and easy plan to follow to help that happen. Hopefully, this book has helped you and your daughter understand what to do. If you want more direction we have other programs available to really speed up the process because there are fewer questions about each step of the way. If this book has answered your questions AMAZING! But the reality is that reading this book isn't enough. There is time and commitment on your daughter's end to find a program that's the right fit. The research that goes into each school is very time-consuming. Then there are the initial emails, then follow-up emails, then finding camps that they have so you can talk in person, then visits, etc. There are scholarships out there. With over 1200 schools that offer softball scholarships

odds are your daughter will find one. But they require time and that time is going to come from your daughter because there is work she has to do to find them.

3. Your Behaviour Has An Impact.

Scouts can be at games and you might not even know they're there. Start working on behaviours that will help your daughter, and not hinder her. Stay away from the dugout. Remember rule one, your daughter is the recruit. If coaches see a parent who isn't giving their daughter space and is hovering, that might turn them away because that isn't something they want to deal with. Another thing coaches are looking for is how your daughter talks to you, and how you talk to her. If you are yelling at each other at the ballpark they aren't going to want that type of treatment from your daughter. This would be a red flag and could hinder her opportunities. Respect is so important and

PARENT'S CORNER

coaches are humans who want to have a relationship with your daughter based on respect.

Your daughter puts in hard work and effort to improve because she dreams of achieving success. What success looks like to everyone is very subjective but we are confident that she has a reason for why she trains and practices with the effort that she does. She practices to succeed, not fail.

4. Know Where Your Kid Is Going.

While you want to give your daughter some space to make a decision on where to go, when she is about to decide make sure that you have a basic understanding of where she's going. Is it a place you have to fly to and take 6 connecting flights? What is the town like? Have you ever been there before? Where is the campus and is it in a part of town you'll feel safe with her being in? Your daughter has put in lots of time to

decide on a school that she feels is the best fit for her. You now also have to research the school and coach. That coach is who you're entrusting and will take care of her if she needs anything. One of us played for a coach who had such a long list of rules that it was impossible to keep up with the dictatorship. Another played for a coach who had one rule. "Don't lie to me". That meant every one of her relationships with her athletes was centered around trust and respect. Find out who that coach is and what the coaching style is. We laid out everything above that coaches care about respect, but some don't give that to their athletes. This is something you have to be comfortable with entrusting a person like that to ensure your daughter is safe.

At the end of the day, you want to give your daughter the choice in her future but be comfortable with where she is going.

C H A P T E R

7

PARENT'S CORNER

CHALLENGE

1. Write down one thing you found important or new from this chapter.
2. Write down how that information can be used to help you in your life.
3. Share your thoughts and results on social media with us.

CHAPTER

8

BONUS - EMAIL
TEMPLATE

To olexaondeckuniversity@gmail.com

Cc Bcc

Subject Polly Cooper 2027: P/SS/U

Hey Coach Olexa,

My name is Polly Cooper and I'm waiting for the day to step onto the field at Olexa University as a Viking. I have a 3.0 GPA and excel in English and PE. This has led me to want to study Elementary Education to be a teacher when I graduate. I'm always finding new ways to become the best pitcher, shortstop, and utility player that my club team, the Diamond Dusters '08, has ever seen. I'm on my way to being there as I currently have a batting average of .298 and an OBP of .497 with a fielding percentage of .988. I've got a smooth glove and pride myself in keeping routine plays simple. Here is a link to my Google Drive with all my game highlights:

<https://www.drive.google.com/PollyCooper>

In my Google Drive, you'll also find a PDF with all of my tournaments for the upcoming season, and I will be at the Backwards K tournament on January 3-5, 2025 (just 2 hours away from campus!).

I noticed on your website that you have a camp coming up in January and I'm excited to sign up and learn from you and the coaching staff on campus!

Here is my coach's contact info:

Coach Rusty Matthews

cell: 123-456-7890

email: coachrusty@gmail.com

Thank you for your time, GO VIKINGS!

Polly Cooper

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C H A P T E R

8

BONUS - EMAIL
TEMPLATE

CHALLENGE

1. Write down at least one thing you'll be changing in your emails today.
2. Revamp your email template!
3. Send your email to us at olexaondeck@gmail.com, and we'll help spot any improvements you can make!



CONGRATULATIONS

We are so excited to be along side you on your journey. We hope that this gave you the perfect place to start in your recruiting process.

We are thrilled that you chose us to help you. We're even more excited that with this information we hope that you feel confident in your ability to talk to coaches but more so grow as a person so that you can be the best!

Want more?

The information in this e-book is just the tip of the iceberg!
Our recruiting services include:

- Structuring emails
- Preparing for tournaments and camps
- Researching schools and softball programs
- Using social media for recruiting
- Communicating with coaches
- Recruiting rules
- Saving money
- And much more!

For more information, [click here to join our community on Skool!](#) You'll get exclusive access to monthly 60-minute Q&As, messaging support, free content, early access to new courses, a community of like-minded athletes, quarterly 1-on-1 check-ins, discounts on services, and more!

xo Coach O & Coach S



Coach O has been an amazing coach and mentor for me. From helping me learn how to write good emails and narrow down my choice of schools, there are so many tips and information about the recruiting process that I would not have known if it weren't for Coach O. She has helped me so much as I went through the recruiting process, and I don't think that I would be signed or where I am in my softball career today without her!

- Samantha T.

Affiliate Links



Electrolytes

[LMNT - Get a free sample pack on your purchase with this link](#)

Supplements

(cod liver oil, magnesium, adrenal cocktail, & desiccated beef liver)

[Jigsaw Supplements](#)

Just Ingredients

(clean protein powder, flavoured water, and more)


[Use code 'samanthachandler' for 10% off](#)

Magnesium & skin care

[LOOK Organics](#)

Bedding, bed sheets, & pillows

[HUSH - Get \\$35 off](#)



xo Coach O & Coach S