

NCAA 2008 Dynasty Mode Recruiting. Given only a scant few paragraphs of information in the tiny NCAA 2008 manual, and precious little specific information floating around online about how recruiting works. This FAQ was written to provide more of an accurate description of what all the options do, what to expect throughout the Dynasty season, and finally some solid strategies to make recruiting fun.

I'm extremely interested in your feedback. My email address is [decker12@gmail.com](mailto:decker12@gmail.com). This is the first FAQ that I've written in a very long time, and I've tried to get as many details as accurate as possible. However, I'm more than open for corrections and recommendations, and will credit you accordingly at the end of the FAQ.

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I have culled information for this FAQ from many, many sources. I regret that I can't list every contributor. There are just too many little paragraphs of information from so many different sources, all jumbled around in my brain with the stuff I figured out myself.

That being said, I have not read any official strategy guides or any of the FAQs on the EA websites. This FAQ is all information that I've experienced first hand, and because of that some of my terminology may be different than the "official" terminology. For instance, I gauge prospect's attitude as "Angry, Annoyed, Neutral, Happy, and Thrilled" – but the EA site may label those attitudes differently.

Thanks to everyone in the Gamespot NCAA X360 forums, as well as the GameFAQ forums. Finally, I'd like to thank the guys at [www.2old2play.com](http://www.2old2play.com) for all their help.

## OVERVIEW AND INITIAL STEPS

Recruiting is an integral part of Dynasty mode. You may find yourself spending as much time in Recruiting as you do playing the games each week.

We're going to assume that you've started your Dynasty already and have gotten as far as the initial Prospect Search section of the pre season.

First things first! Disable the AI assists for recruiting in your options menu, located in two places once you actually start your Dynasty. Remember to find and disable the setting for Phone Call assistance as well.

Next, you want to get an idea of what your team needs will be at the end of the season. You can use the Y button while in Pre Season recruiting to determine your needs. Most of those positions that you "need" will be filling in for the Seniors that will graduate.

You need to have a 66 to 70 man roster by the time the preseason starts for the next year.

You'll be recruiting throughout the entire season. In general, it's broken down into 3 phases:

- 1) Pre Season Recruiting
- 2) In Season Recruiting
- 3) Post Season Recruiting

#### PRE SEASON RECRUITING

In Pre Season Recruiting (PSR), your main goal will be to determine what positions you'll need at the end of the current season. You'll be searching the Prospect Database for the best possible recruits, and then you'll be ranking them on your Prospect Board. At this stage, you won't be contacting them or offering them scholarships. You'll start that when the season actually begins.

While in PSR, you will use the Y button to bring up a quick snapshot of what positions your team will need at the conclusion of the current season. Most of those positions that you'll "need" are Seniors that will be graduating.

Also in the quick snapshot Y view, you can see rough approximations of how well your squad is at their particular position. Don't despair over seeing many C and D ratings, especially if the team you chose for your dynasty is not a top 25 team. While your D- offensive line will have trouble protecting your quarterback against a A+ defense, you can easily overcome some of those mismatches with proper play calling.

The one thing where letter grades are important is your kicking and punt team. No matter how accurate you are with the analog stick, lousy kickers simply won't be able to have the strength to make 40+ yard field goals.

So your first steps in PSR is to figure out what you'll definitely NEED at the end of the season, using the Y button quick view. I use a piece of paper and I write down my needs so I don't have to continually go back and forth to the Y view when you're in Prospect Search mode.

Next, head into Prospect Search mode. You can select various search criteria in order to customize exactly what you're looking for in a prospect. To be honest, I never bothered drilling down into specific types of players other than Position and Pipeline State. I usually play mid major schools and not top 10 power houses, so I often don't have the luxury of filtering the top talent. However, your results may vary, but the game does provide you with the functionality in case you're looking for a specific type of WR or QB.

From Prospect Search, you want to start adding people to your Prospect Board, based on your team's needs. Some notes on this process:

Green dots next to their name mean they're definitely interested in your school. You will have an easier time recruiting those prospects.

Many players will have "minimal" interest in your team. This is represented in-game by a VERY small white bar in the Interest level. The game does not assign a "zero" interest level. When you see prospects that just have the tiniest amount of Interest in their bar, treat that as "Zero". When you try to select these players to add to your prospect board, their backgrounds will turn bright red.

Players with Zero/minimal interest in your team will be next to impossible to actually recruit. The game will gladly tease you with plenty of opportunities to do so, however. You can add them to your board, spend time with them every week, watch their interest rise, offer scholarships and impress them with victories as you win the BCS championship, but they will most likely ALWAYS join up with another team before the season is over. Their initial Zero/minimal interest level for your team is usually a hurdle that no amount of recruiting will ever let you get past.

Don't get discouraged if all the 5 and most of the 4 star talent has Zero/minimal interest in your team, especially if it's the start of your first dynasty season. That's just the way it goes, and unless you're a top 10 team, your initial season of recruiting will be something like a desperate bid to replace those graduating seniors with 3 and 4 star recruits (or lower).

That's fine, as most of the prospects you'll end up red-shirting their first season anyway. Your first year of a dynasty, you should aim for getting one or two solid recruits, preferably 4 stars or more, plus filling out the rest of the holes with quality 3 star recruits. Finally, you'll want to start working on establishing a new Pipeline state, for both the X360 Achievement and to make future recruiting easier (more on that later).

#### AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SETTING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

It is VERY IMPORTANT to realize that no matter how well your team does in a season, you won't be able to sign the majority of the players that you've put on your Prospect Board. Until you become a true top 10 Dynasty Powerhouse (usually after 5 or 6 seasons of solid in-conference play and BCS wins), most of them will eventually sign with other schools.

This fact can be immensely frustrating for newcomers to Recruiting and Dynasty mode. Even though successful recruiting every week takes almost as long as playing a whole game, most of your efforts will be wasted. Until you gain momentum with your Dynasty, you just have to learn to be happy with one or two 4\* (or better) actual signing Prospects per year, plus (hopefully) several 3\* Prospects.

I usually target at least double the amount of players that I need for each position. Furthermore, I try to keep the total amount of prospects below 20. Although you can put up to 35 people on your board, doing so will really limit the amount of time you can spend with each person.

Strangely, the players also seem to know what position they are on your board, so the higher they are ranked the more interest they start to gain with your school.

If your team really, truly needs 30 or more players at the end of the season, consider revising your red shirt practices. Even if you were to land all 30+ prospects, they'll all be freshman, they'll all graduate at roughly the same time, and you'll be lining yourself up for problems in the future. Don't forget the operative word is "Prospect". A 5 star freshman QB is rarely as skilled as your starting Senior QB.. but in time that 5 star prospect could be better than the Senior who graduated years ago.

Note that if you didn't disable the CPU AI "help" for your recruiting, the CPU will automatically fill in the remaining spots on your board so the total is 35. The CPU will continue to keep this number to 35 as prospects are recruited to other teams. This will be very distracting throughout the season, so I highly recommend you disable the CPU assistance.

After you've filled your board with your necessities, it's time to go back to the Quick Team "Y" button view and see where you can make improvements. Is your kicker a Junior with a C- grade? Maybe it's time to start shopping around for a freshman kicker to replace this guy in a couple of years. Are your WRs rated C+ but most of them are freshman? Sure, it may be a rough season this year.. but probably no reason to heavily recruit WRs, because your current ones will easily improve to B or B+ by the time they're seniors.

Most of the time I find myself shopping for kickers, punters, HBs, and CBs.

Finally, your last decision as far as the Pre Season Prospect Board is looking for Athletes (ATH). They are skilled but generic players that you'll shuffle around to actual positions during your off season. You'll want to check their stats by pushing down on the RS to get a better idea of what position they'll be eventually playing. Obviously don't grab a ATH with super low kicking ability to replace that Kicker position that you couldn't find when you were searching for a prospect.

ATH's have limits. I'm not certain, but I am pretty sure that a 4 Star QB will make a better quarterback than a 4 star ATH that you assign the QB position in the off season, if that makes sense.

Now that your board is filled, it's time to start putting them in order. As stated earlier, the players seem to know where they stand on your recruiting board, and players will gain more interest in your school the closer they are to #1.

**IMPORTANT:** Spending the time in the pre-season and putting all your prospects in proper order NOW will also make your In-Season Recruiting MUCH easier. TAKE the time to do it during the PSR phase or chances are you'll be making sloppy decisions later in the season!

In general, I sort my list like this:

- 1) Needed position (ie HB)
- 2) Star level of prospect (ie 5\*)
- 3) Their starting interest in me (what percentage the bar is filled, ie 30%)

So, if my team needed 2 WRs, 1 K, 1 C, and 1 CB, my initial board may look like this:

1. A.Jones	WR	5*	15%
2. B.Thomas	C	4*	20%
3. C.Nater	CB	4*	20%
4. D.Smith	WR	4*	15%
5. E.Rosch	K	4*	15%
6. F.Holmes	WR	4*	10%
7. G.Fairil	ATH	4*	20%
8. H.Sahed	ATH	4*	20%
9. I.Fox	K	3*	30%
10.J.Duem	C	3*	20%
11.K.Janton	ATH	3*	20%
12.L.McBride	ATH	3*	20%

(Note that this board is a simplification, usually I fill my board up with 20 to 25 prospects).

So as you can see, I have a couple of each position that I absolutely need, plus a few interesting looking 4\* ATH's in there, finally rounding out with less desirable 3\* players that may come in handy. Those 3\* players have something else in common: they're all from the same state. That will help me with developing a new Pipeline state.

#### PIPELINE STATES

Developing a new Pipeline state basically means that your school is becoming the Go-To spot for the prospects of a particular state. You will know if you've obtained a new pipeline state after the post-season recruiting is done.

Presumably, behind the scenes, your recruiters are out in those states more often, going to their high school games, etc. As the years of your dynasty progress, you can have an unlimited amount of pipeline states, and prospects from your pipeline states will have more starting Interest in your school. What is unknown to me however, is how the game calculates whether a state becomes a Pipeline or not. I'm not sure if it's related to the sheer amount of people you successfully recruit from the state (usually around 5 seems to trigger it), or the star quality of the players from an individual state.

I try to develop a new Pipeline state every other year. When you're in Prospect Search, you can limit your search to only Pipeline states. You'll have a much easier time recruiting players from your Pipeline states, but if you only search from your Pipeline states you run the risk of missing out on valuable talent.

The game figures out if you've developed a new Pipeline state after Post Season Recruiting is done. There is a X360 Achievement for developing a new Pipeline state.

#### CREATE-A-PROSPECT

A note about Create-A-Prospect: Don't bother with it! If you're really interested in putting you and your friends in the game, at least give them reasonable stats. Otherwise, if you generate a bunch of massive 5\* super men, that doesn't mean YOUR school will actually be able to recruit them!

They're treated JUST like any other prospect, which means that you'll have to pitch them just like all the other schools do. You could even end up having to play against them someday.

Note that there is a sort of trick/hack/cheat to generating a 1 Star "Super" Prospect. It involves creating a Kicker with very high stats in everything EXCEPT any kicking related skills. You just lower the kicking skills down as far as they can go, raise everything else up to 99's, and the game will consider him a 1 star Kicker. Then, during the off season (and assuming you've successfully recruited him), you just change the Kicker's position to something else, and viola, you have an overpowered Super Prospect that's awesome at every position (except Kicker and Punter, of course). The downside to this tactic is that these types of players leave for the NFL draft very early in their college career.

I have heard scattered reports that using any Created prospect will break any Dynasty related X360 Achievements. Meaning, if you Create a Prospect, you are considered disqualified from unlocking the various Dynasty only Achievements (Mr. February, Pipeline State, etc).

This will be VERY bad news if you're going for the time consuming "1 to 6 Star" Achievement, and years later you find out that the Create a Prospect you made for fun and giggles back in Season 2 prevented you from unlocking the Achievement!

#### CUSTOM SCHEDULE NOTES

When creating your schedule, keep a few things in mind. Unlike the real NCAA, strength of schedule is not affected by home or away games. Since the Stadium Pulse feature is gone from NCAA 2008, the actual in-game differences between playing Away and at Home are now minimal. Playing Away games at noisy, fan-friendly stadiums like USC or Florida won't change your Strength of Schedule letter grade. The more games you play at home, the more opportunities you'll have for prospects to Visit your school and watch big games in order to improve their interest. When making your schedule, you can use the D-pad to change whether a game is being played at home or on the road. You can't edit the games with a lock icon (which are usually In-Conference games).

If possible, schedule your ranked and rivalry games for the middle of the season. It takes time until a prospect gains enough interest to want to Schedule a visit, and they won't be ready on Week 1 or Week 2. That being said, I know some conferences are notorious for having huge blocks of mid

season, strictly in-conference games (the MAC is like that). If you find yourself in that situation, it's probably better to knock off those Top 10 teams as soon as you can in the season. The prospects will still be impressed, just not as impressed as if they were at the game during a Scheduled Visit.

See below for more information on Scheduled Visits.

#### IN SEASON RECRUITING (ISR)

ISR consists of contacting the prospects that you placed on your Prospect Board, discovering their interests, swaying their interests to match those of your school, offering them scholarships, and scheduling them to visit your school.

You have 10 hours each week to talk to the players on your board. Every week you should be using as much of this 10 hours as you can. Yes, it can get tedious. Yes, it's not exactly a rip-roaring good time, especially after you just won a 4th quarter nail biter against a top 10 team. No, you should NOT sim through it!

Hopefully you've already turned off the CPU AI's often disastrous "help" with recruiting phone calls. Turning it off will make sure that the CPU doesn't use up any leftover minutes calling recruits. By the same token, turning it off means that if you Sim any week's Recruiting, no phone calls from your team will take place.

Anyway, your first step for each of your recruits is to give them a call and gauge their attitude. The little football icon at the top of the screen shows their current mood. You can have Angry, Annoyed, Neutral, Happy, and Thrilled.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

If you offer them a scholarship, you'll often get a quick boost to their mood. Usually, I offer all of my 5 and 4 star recruits an immediate scholarship, the very first time I call them. Some people have reported that on Week 1 of recruiting, even 5 star recruits will jump immediately on board if you toss them a scholarship offer. I have never seen it happen myself, but I do know that if you don't offer them a scholarship, the other schools will and you'll gain Interest much slower from the prospect.

Also, if you don't offer them a scholarship they often won't sign with you until the post season, even if you're their #1 team and they have maximum interest in you. Not even the most heavily recruited, 1 star prospect seems to sign with your school unless you offer them a free ride!

Since you spent so much time in the pre-season figuring out exactly the right candidates for your school, and filtering them accordingly, you should already be willing to offer those guys scholarships. You can have up to 25 scholarships active at any given time. If you offer someone a scholarship and they decide to sign with another team, you get that scholarship back.

I have never run out of scholarships in any given year, but it could happen if you have a string of bad seasons and need to "bribe" players into coming to your school.

#### THE PHONE CALL

Let's return to the actual phone call. You are allowed one phone call to each player each week. If you call them and hang up without saying anything to them, that still counts as your phone call for the week. Note that later, when you "Set Activities for a Player's Visit" in the main Prospect Board screen, it is not treated as a phone call. So if you have a player visiting that week, it is possible to call him first, have him hang up on you by getting him Angry, and then still schedule his activities for the visit (what an awkward dinner with the coach that must be!).

During a phone call, you have three goals. First of all, discover what their interests are. Second, leave them Happy or Thrilled. Third, Sway their interests to match what your school offers. I'll go over each, one at a time.

#### STEP 1: Discover their Interests

The rankings for the schools are:

Subpar  
Fair  
Average  
Good  
Very Good  
Great  
Excellent  
Elite

This scale roughly matches to the player's Pitch Importance:

Least  
Very Low  
Low  
Average  
Above Average  
High  
Very High  
Most

Therefore, here is the table that matches School Rankings with Pitch Importances:

SCHOOL	PITCH IMPORTANCE
Subpar	<==> Least
Fair	<==> Very Low
Average	<==> Low
Good	<==> Average
Very Good	<==> Above Average
Great	<==> High
Excellent	<==> Very High
Elite	<==> Most

Keep in mind that the categories and pitches are for all intents and purposes, completely generic. Although TV Exposure and Conference Prestige might sound like "football-centric" types of interests, they're treated the same as Campus Lifestyle and Academics. The best 5 star WR prospect in the country could actually have minimal interest in playing early, being on TV, or winning the conference.

The important thing is learning how to match your school with the prospect's interests. If your school isn't good at something that the prospect highly desires, it obviously won't be as good of a match.

Your first step is to use the Find Pitch selection. Ultimately, you will want to find out each one of the player's Pitch Interests. However, keep in mind that you have only 10 hours a week to find out as much information as you can about ALL your prospects. You often only have a couple of weeks worth of discovery before they will come to visit your campus. If you don't know what they're interested in by the time they visit, you won't know what parts of your school to show them, and they won't become as interested.

When I'm faced with a recruit filled with Unknowns, their attitude is usually neutral. I pick my school's best attribute and I find their interest. The timer ticks away as I chat them up, trying to find out what they like and what they don't. Eventually, they'll fess up and their interest will appear. Sometimes it'll appear with a Lock icon, meaning you won't be able to Sway their interest any further.

Finding Interest is a boring thing for the prospect, and if you do it too long their mood will decrease. Once they get Angry, they'll hang up on you.

When using Find Pitch or later, Hard Sell and Sway Pitch, you will want to keep an eye on their mood. Simply hit A to start the process, and hit B to cancel out of the topic. During the Find Pitch phase, they will be less likely to become Angry if you're talking about something that interests them. It is possible to press B to cancel the topic, go talk about something else, and then come back the original topic and get a different response.

Rapidly tapping A during any process is the equivalent of "starting and stopping" the conversation in rapid succession. As far as I know this makes no difference and won't save you any time. Likely, I have heard reports that you talk to the prospect, for better or worse, until you see "Pitch Complete". I don't buy into this speculation. As soon as they are happy enough for me, I stop spending time with them and stop the pitch and move onto another topic.

Check the chart above to determine if their interest matches with what your school is good at. If the two ranks are close to each other, you can Hard Sell the pitch to them, which will make them Happier. You can use Hard Sells to improve their mood, and once their mood is improved, you can safely Find Interest for other categories. Don't try to Hard Sell a topic

if the interest level and pitch importance are too far apart, or you'll just decrease their Mood.

Back to my strategy. I pick my school's best attribute and pitch it to them first. Why? Because if by chance I am pitching an Excellent attribute to them and it also happens to be their Most or Very High Pitch Importance, I just killed two birds with one stone! Your initial goal with these first couple of weeks worth of prospect pitching is to discover their Most and Very High interests.

Each prospect has at least 2 Very Highs and 1 Most, and as soon as you get this information from them, you can usually pull off a decent Campus Visit for them.

Conversely, each prospect has 2 Very Lows and 1 Least.

### STEP 2: Boost the Mood

Once you've obtained some information from a prospect, remember to try to boost up his mood as much as you can before you hang up on him. You do this using the Hard Sell option. It's always better to leave a prospect Thrilled than it is to leave him Annoyed. Of course, you have to balance out the amount of time you want to spend with him. Spending 4 hours trying to get your #1 prospect to Thrilled when you don't make any progress or learn a single thing about your #2 prospect isn't a good idea.

Each week, you can also only Hard Sell a prospect so much. After a point, they just won't be receptive to your Hard Sells. You can usually only Hard Sell them for a little bit in each category, which is okay because often you have several categories that are a good match between your prospect and your school. It pays to mix it up, but if you find that they're just not getting any happier, it may be time to hang up for the week and move on to a different prospect.

Chances are, the first few weeks, you won't get to learn anything about your prospects that are ranked 15 or lower on your board. That will balance out, however, because as you learn more and more about your prospects, you'll have less reason to spend hours talking on the phone with them. Thus, you'll have more recruiting time to work on those guys ranked under 15. Remember, back in the pre-season you already sorted out these players and decided that they're under rank 15 for a reason, thus it's not critical that you recruit them as hard.

It is important to leave at least 10 or 15 minutes left on your clock to offer scholarships to those players you haven't talked to yet. A prospect with a scholarship offer in hand usually gains interest in your team faster, even if you don't talk to them that week. 10 minutes is the minimum time it takes, per prospect, to simply call them and offer the scholarship. As I said earlier, I try to offer scholarships to all my players as quickly as possible. If this means I lose an hour during my first week of recruiting, then it's a risk I'm willing to take in order to start the Interest level building in every one of my prospects.

### STEP 3: Swaying Pitches

After you've learned as much about a prospect as possible, you'll want to consider using the Sway Pitch feature. You can only Sway Pitches for things that don't have the lock icon on it. Things that are locked mean that the player just won't budge anymore on his opinion about the particular pitch.

Note that Swaying Pitches is more "expensive" in terms of mood change than simply Finding Pitches. A prospect can go from Thrilled to Angry in just 20 in-game minutes of Swaying Pitches, so you have to use this tool carefully. It's probably better to leave a prospect Happy or Thrilled than it is to Sway him too much and leave him Angry.

Refer to the now familiar School Strength / Pitch Importance Chart:

SCHOOL	PITCH IMPORTANCE
Subpar	<==> Least
Fair	<==> Very Low
Average	<==> Low
Good	<==> Average
Very Good	<==> Above Average
Great	<==> High
Excellent	<==> Very High
Elite	<==> Most

At the best, each week, every time you Sway a pitch, you're hoping to move the prospect one "step" closer to what your school's strengths are.

The fewer "steps" difference between your school's strengths and their current Pitch Importance, the more successful you will be in swaying them. For instance, take this example:

MY SCHOOL'S RANK		HIS CURRENT PITCH IMPORTANCE
Academics:	Great	Very Low
Conf Prestige:	Excellent	High
TV Exposure:	Fair	Low

Looking at the above example, it is not a good idea for me to attempt to Sway Pitch for Academics. The gap is just too big. Since he'll only sway one step, the most I can hope for during the week is bringing his Very Low up to a Low. Then I would have to sway him again next week for another step up to Average, and risk making him Angry and getting hung up on.

Swaying Prestige is a good bet. I'll most likely move his High importance up a notch to Very High, which it will then Lock.

Swaying TV Exposure is also a good bet. You'll move his Low down to Very Low, which it will then probably Lock.

But wait! If your school is so bad at a particular category like TV Exposure, why would you want to Sway the player to be happy with your school's faults?

The biggest reason is this: Other schools are also trying to recruit this player! By Swaying the prospect, you're making the player more interested in everything your school represents, for both good AND bad.

Back to the example above, let's say he's also interested at your rival, Ohio State. You can tell this by pushing down on RS and using RB/LB to find the other schools that are interested in him. OSU is rated Excellent with TV exposure, and your school is only rated Fair. So therefore, it's in your best interests to convince him as much as possible that huge amounts of TV exposure is a bad thing, by Swaying him downward! That'll make him less interested in Ohio State, and more interested in your school.

Also, the CPU will never Sway prospect pitches. That gives you a certain advantage, however the CPU also seems to have unlimited time to pitch it's prospects. That's why they're often able to schedule visits for certain players on Week 2.

Personally, I am happy if I can successfully Sway two pitches a week, per player. Usually I can only manage to Sway one pitch before their mood dips too low, and then I have to spend time Hard Selling them so when I hang up the phone, they're Happy or Thrilled.

Swaying pitches is a powerful recruitment tool, but it's very expensive in terms of time spent using it and potential to ruin the mood of your prospects.

#### SCHEDULE VISITS

Hopefully, your prospects will eventually show you a little clock icon near their name. This means they're ready to schedule a visit to your school, and is the next big step in getting the player to sign with your team.

When you schedule a visit, you give them a call and pick a Home game or BYE week for them to come see you. Before you schedule, however, make sure that you've already discovered their High, Very High, and Most pitch importances. You'll need this information in order to know what parts of your school to show them.

Ideally, your school's Rank will match fairly close to their Pitch Importance. I'll cover this more in when I discuss the actual Visiting Activities part of recruiting. However, just keep in mind that when they visit, you want to show them what they want to see the most, and you need to temper that decision with what your school is good at. I don't have any hard data on this however, it's just a general feeling I get during recruiting.

Anyway, your first step is to figure out a time for them to come and visit. After their visit, they will rate their experience at your school with a letter grade by their name (F to A+). There are several factors that make up what your final letter score will be, and it all has to do with the week you schedule them.

Here are some general guidelines on what prospects want to see during their visit:

- 1) They like to watch big wins against ranked teams.
- 2) They like to watch big wins against rival teams.
- 3) They like to watch their positions having big games.
- 4) They like to watch you win games against conference opponents.
- 5) They like to visit without other prospects being there (who play their same position).

Further information:

- 1) Obviously the prospects will be thrilled if you win a game against a top ranked team. They really, really love it if the top ranked team that you beat is also a school's rival.
- 2) If you can't schedule them to watch a game against a top team, pick them to visit when you are playing a conference rival. Winning this game gives you a better visit.
- 3) They like to see their on-field position have a big game. If the visiting prospect is a HB, then go a bit heavy on the running plays to your star HB. The prospects give you a better grade if they see success on the field in their position.
- 4) When in doubt, make sure they're coming to visit when you're playing (and plan on beating) one of your better conference opponents. Avoid having them visit when you're playing a non-conference game against an unranked rival. If you can't help this, make sure your players put up big numbers, as per #3 above.
- 5) I'm not entirely sure, but I think the prospects give you a better grade if they don't have any other prospect competition when they come visit. For instance, don't schedule 3 WRs and 2 HBs to come to watch the same game. If possible, spread them out throughout the season so each one doesn't feel like they're competing with the others for the position.

All this MUST be balanced out with the visits and offers that the other schools are giving them. If you're heavily recruiting the latest 5 star QB, you'll want to get him in to see a game as fast as possible. The CPU seems to cheat on this aspect, and will have visits scheduled for the top talent in week 2 or 3 - something that would be impossible for you to do with only 20 or 30 hours worth of Interest building for the prospect. You can check on a prospect's other offers and scheduled visits by pushing down on the RS. I personally feel that it's better to have a prospect see an Okay game early in the season than wait until Week 10 when you're playing your top 10 rival. Chances are that if you wait, he'll already sign with another team.

Finally, avoid having them visit during a BYE week. Since you're not playing any games that week, the only way you have to impress them is on the merits of matching your school's rankings vs. their pitch importances.

#### THE VISIT

When the week has arrived, you'll get a little pop up in the recruiting section telling you who's scheduled to visit that week. At this point,

you'll notice another option when you select the prospect: Set Activities for Upcoming Visit.

Note that you can (and should) still call them this week. Make sure you know what you want to show them - that is, make sure you know their High, Very High, and Most pitches, and make notes to what your school strengths are in relation to what's important to them. Finally, Hard Sell them up to leave them with a huge Thrilled grin. Note that you don't Set Activities during the phone call itself. Therefore, you can still Set Activities with them if they hang up on you, or if you run out of recruiting time.

When you Set Activities, you are given a list that will show your school's categories and their pitch importance that you discovered throughout the rest of the season. Note that you won't see how your school is ranked, so you should try to remember that from all the pitching you've been doing.

You can choose up to 3 things to show them during the visit. You want to show them what's most important to them. However, temper this with what your school is ranked in. If your school's TV Exposure is ranked Subpar, and it's their Most important thing, then you'll want to skip showing them that. Instead, choose 3 other things ranked High and Very High (that also happen to match with your school's ranks).

Finally, don't forget to hit the Start (>) button when you're done choosing the activities! It's a weird button change from all the other recruiting duties where you've been used to using A, B, and the RS. Hitting B to go back won't save the activities, so remember to use Start instead.

Quick hint: If for some reason you don't know what the players interests are yet, they'll give you a hint during the Set Activities screen. If you read the text at the top, they'll offer hints like, "I always wanted to sit down with the coach and talk strategy". This means his Very High or Most pitch importance is Discuss Depth Chart. Don't worry too much about deciphering these hints. If you've been doing your recruiting correctly, you'll already know their top Pitch Importance for a week or two before they visit.

When you start the week's game, a quick pop up will tell you who's visiting that week. As far as I know, that's the only time in-game for you to remember what positions/prospects are visiting your school. If you plan on impressing the prospects with big plays, make sure you remember who's watching that week.

#### ISR PROSPECT BOARD RE-ARRANGING

As your season progresses, you may find it necessary to make minor ordering adjustments to your Prospect Board. Try to keep a constant eye on your top Prospects and where their interests are swaying. After week 6, you may want to consider bailing on Prospects that don't yet have you in their top 8. Don't necessarily remove them from your board, just demote them down a few ranks. Try to then put prospects that may be less talented but more "on the fence" in their place.

After several prospects have you as their #1 pick, you can safely drop them a few positions on your recruiting board. You can also reduce the frequency of your phone calls to them, with the logic being that they've basically made their decision and they're waiting until the end of the season to actually sign.

Dropping their position and not calling them as often will free you up to pursue the other Prospects that don't have your team as their #1 pick. Just remember to click the RS on them every week and make sure another school isn't creeping up too high on their Interest level.

#### END OF SEASON NOTES

As the season winds down, many of your prospects will most likely sign with other teams. When this happens, they'll be put at the bottom of your Prospect Board with a big "X" icon near their name. At this point, it's time to remove them from your board, and withdraw their scholarship offer.

If you have convinced prospects to sign with your team, they will also be put at the bottom of your Prospect board. They're at the bottom because you no longer need to actively recruit them. Don't remove them from the board, or they won't sign with your team!

#### POST SEASON RECRUITING

After the season, you'll have 4 weeks (and thus 40 hours) worth of additional recruiting to further convince prospects to join with your team. During this time, your main goal is to schedule In-Home Visits with your prospects.

One very important part of Post Season Recruiting: Be careful using the Advance button! It is possible to accidentally Advance past ALL FOUR weeks of recruiting. It's not very well documented and it's very easy to accidentally think you're "advancing to the next week of Post Season Recruiting" when in actuality, you've "advanced through the entire Post Season Recruiting task".

I recommend you Save your Dynasty before you begin any Post Season Recruiting tasks, and Save after every week, just in case you accidentally Advance at the wrong time. Since you have CPU AI recruiting assists turned off, accidentally Advancing through the entire task means no phone calls and no visits will happen!

To successfully advance only 1 week worth of Post Season Recruiting, head to the Prospect Board, THEN use the Start button to advance to the next week. You will have 10 hours each week as usual.

#### IN HOME VISITS

You should be able to schedule In-Home Visits with several of your top prospects. During this time, it works very similar to the regular Campus Visits you've been seeing during the season. However, now the goal is to specifically match your school's strengths with the prospect's Pitch Interests. If you remember, back during Campus Visits, you wanted to do

this if possible, but in the Campus Visit days you probably didn't know as much about the prospect as you do now. Plus, back in Campus Visit days, it was much more important to show them a good game than it was to show them around the school.

During the In-Home Visit, you'll want to use the chart again to figure out what to talk to them about, and match up your school's ranking with the prospect's pitch importance.

SCHOOL	PITCH IMPORTANCE
Subpar	<==> Least
Fair	<==> Very Low
Average	<==> Low
Good	<==> Average
Very Good	<==> Above Average
Great	<==> High
Excellent	<==> Very High
Elite	<==> Most

Hopefully, this should be an easy task. If you've Swayed pitches in the past and done your recruiting homework, you should already have decent matches for most of the categories.

At this point in the process, the "level" of importance isn't as critical as making a "match". For example, let's assume this scenario:

	SCHOOL RANK	PITCH IMPORTANCE
Conference Prestige	Good	Average
TV Exposure	Subpar	Least
Early Playing Time	Excellent	Low
Academics	Fair	Very High

For the in home visit, out of the above choices, you would want to choose Conference Prestige and TV Exposure. Why? Regardless of how your school's ranking is, those two are the best "matches". Because it's such a mismatch, you wouldn't want to choose Early Playing time, even though your school is highly ranked. Same with Academics: even though it means a lot to the prospect, it's not a good match because your school is only ranked Fair.

Remember, you still have the ability to call them and leave them Thrilled, so by all means make sure you do that.

Since this is your last opportunity to recruit for the season, it might be a good idea to check the Prospect Search board and fill any holes that have popped up during the recruiting process.

Another note on the Y button Team Quick View. During post season recruiting, this quick view isn't entirely accurate. It doesn't seem to take into account the Seniors that graduated only weeks before, nor does it take into account the recruits that have already promised to join. This can get confusing, because during Post Season Recruiting, the Y button Team Quick View shows you what you needed at the beginning of last season!

If you don't fill the positions that are required (use the Y quick view to see who's leaving), the CPU will assign 1 star Walk Ons to those positions before the start of the next season.

Therefore, it may be a good idea to do some additional recruiting. Check the Prospect search and see if there's any talent that has a high level of interest in your team but is currently un-recruited. You will sometimes find nice surprises, such as 3 star ATHs and 3 star CBs (which you could easily turn into WRs).

Add them to the board, send them a scholarship offer, and chat them up a bit. More often than not they'll decide to join up simply because you're the only school that showed them any interest. This becomes much easier the more stars your school has, as many 2\* prospects seem to prefer being 4<sup>th</sup> string to a 5\* program than 1<sup>st</sup> string to a 3\* program.

Note that you can also cut these players before the season starts in case they end up being really poor. But, I'd rather have 2 star versatile ATHs on my team than 1 star randomly assigned Walk Ons.

Quick View gets even more messed up when you start shuffling positions around in the pre-season. I've never been able to figure out at what times in the post/pre season it recalculates the position needs of the team. Learn to mistrust Quick View at the end of PSR or you may end up shuffling around the wrong players to the wrong positions.

## PROMISES

During the Post Season Recruiting, you can also offer the prospect a Promise. You start with only a few Promises unlocked, and as you fulfill those Promises, your Coach Integrity will go up, and more Promises will become available. Note that there is also a Xbox Achievement for issuing a Promise to a prospect.

Prospects LOVE promises. They are huge mood boosters for them. However, if you fail with a promise, your coach integrity will suffer. Coach Integrity is a strange value that I've never been able to really figure out. It's easy to gain Integrity, which presumably means you'll get better job offers and more players will be interested in your school.

However, the game's idea of Coach Integrity logic is flawed. I'm not interested in job offers – if I wanted to coach a different team for my Dynasty, I would have done that in the beginning. I'm not about to bail on my team after I've spent hours and hours building up the talent with year's worth of recruiting. Next season, the initial Interest of a prospect is far more affected by your school's top 25 ranking, school's star rating, and pipeline state status. I assume Coach Integrity fits into that equation somewhere, but I'm just not sure how much.

Anyway, back to Promises. Out the initial Promises you're offered, some of them are easier to Promise than others. My favorites are Win Conference Championship and Defeat Rival. Both are usually easy to obtain, and they rely on YOUR actions instead of CPU randomness.

By that statement I mean this: I can always play a great set of games and win the conference championship or defeat a rival team. Worse case, I can save and load my Dynasty if I lose a big game. What I can't control is how the BCS standings go down for the year, if my players get injured, or how controlling the CPU is going to be with the depth charts or with substitutions (and personally, I hate micromanaging those during a season).

Therefore, promising your freshman solid playing time or that you'll win the BCS are very risky promises. The prospect could get hurt in game 3, and the game doesn't tell you what "solid playing time" actually means. Just because you're in a strong BCS conference doesn't mean you will even have the opportunity to play in the BCS championship game.

I've had this happen several times: I schedule a game with a top 10 team at the beginning of the season, they drop out of the rankings by the time I play them, and I'm left with no other top teams for the rest of my schedule. Thus I have no ability to get into the top 5, even if I go undefeated. Then my BCS Championship promise can't be completed.

Also, make sure that if you choose the "Beat a rival" promise, make sure you actually schedule a rivalry game! Ditto with "Conference Champions" – make sure you're actually part of a conference first (I'm talking to you, Army and Notre Dame).

I also avoid the No Red shirt promise. Unless you're really hurting for players in a particular position (or you have a truly stellar 5 star prospect coming in), you'll most likely be red shirting freshman prospects for the first year they are part of your team. What makes matters worse is that at this stage in the Post Season Recruiting, you don't know who you are going to Red shirt yet, because the roster isn't finalized. The game just doesn't provide you with this information yet, so the No Red shirt promise is a tricky one to plan for.

Some other promises to be wary of are the Top 10 promises. The "Top 10 in 2 years" promise can be read the wrong way. Originally, I read it as "At some point in the next 2 years, I need to be in the top 10". What it really means is this: For both of the next two years, you must end the season in the top 10. It's a hard promise to fulfill, especially if you're in a weak conference and lack the Custom Scheduled games to even play Top 10 teams.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

At this point, you should be well on your way to having a successful recruiting season. It takes a lot of time and some practice, so don't be afraid to save your Dynasty at various stages in case you make any big mistakes. NCAA 2008 doesn't provide you with a very robust way to save different versions of your Dynasty file, however, so you may have to do some File Management messing around. Personally, I use the Xbox 360's File Management tabs to do my saving and renaming instead of the built in tools with NCAA 2008.

#### ADDITIONAL TIPS

The Change Position tool during the Post Season is more powerful and easier to use than you may think. If you select a player, it will show his Overall ranking for his current position. Moving him to a different position (by pushing left or right) will show you his new Overall position. This is a very quick and easy way to determine if it makes sense to shift a player to a new position.

I often find myself with way too many defensive players, and many of them are easily swapped into offensive roles with only a minimal loss (or even gain) to their Overall rating. You may be very surprised to find out that a CB with a (70) Overall ends up being a better WR with a (75) Overall. This is a great way to fill holes in your positions.

When you start a Dynasty, keep in mind that you will be playing 25 or more games with your initial 2007 group of players. It's much easier to keep track of their positions, injuries, motivation levels, and Impact Player status if you can actually associate a name with the player. That is why it is extremely helpful to Auto-Name the rosters before you start a Dynasty. You can do this in the My NCAA 2008 options. After you Auto-Name remember to Save the Roster using the default name "ROSTER". That way it'll be auto-loaded, with names, every time you start the game.

The US Service Academies (Navy, Army, and Air Force) are unique in NCAA 2008 in that their players never leave for the NFL draft. They only leave your team due to graduation or if they transfer to another school. Army is a great team to do the "1 to 6 Star" Achievement. They start with a decent HB and QB as Impact players, and since they're Independent you'll have complete freedom with their schedules. Recruiting with Army is challenging, but highly rewarding, because you immediately see the results of signing even 3\* prospects. Just be careful with your Promises: you're not in a conference so you can't ever fulfill the Conference Champs Promise. Likewise, your only rivals are the other Service Academies, so remember to schedule them to impress your prospects and fulfill any Rivalry Win Promises.

Don't be afraid to pseudo-Simulate a few seasons to get the hang of Recruiting. Try picking a 3\*, mid major school that should have some trouble attracting the big 5\* talent, such as Fresno State or Utah. Give them a realistic Custom schedule, and perform all the Recruiting as per this FAQ. However, each week just simulate all the games instead of physically playing them. You should be able to zoom through a season in an hour or so. Since your simulating the actual games, you'll have to make do with wins and losses the CPU gives to you. However, that randomness will give you added Recruiting challenges and learning experiences.

On the forums, I've answered several questions regarding "How can you rename your coach?". While this isn't exactly part of Recruiting (it's more of a Dynasty question), here's the quick answer. You need to actually start the Season in order to have the Coach Options in the main Dynasty menu. You won't be able to change your coach's name (or appearance) until after you are done with all Pre Season tasks.

REVISION HISTORY

Version 0.9: Few paragraphs added, some clarification made on several topics. Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Version 0.8: Initial Release, Feb 8<sup>th</sup> 2008.