

**WILSON TIGERS FOOTBALL
RECRUITING HANDBOOK
2008-2009**



THE BASICS

- THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THEY ARE DIVIDED INTO DIVISIONS I, II AND III.
- DIVISION I, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE IVY LEAGUE, AND DIVISION II SCHOOLS OFFER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS, BUT DIVISION III DOES NOT.
- ONCE THE RECRUITING BEGINS, YOU WILL KNOW VERY QUICKLY IN WHICH OF THESE DIVISIONS YOU HAVE THE BEST CHANCE FOR A SCHOLARSHIP.

DIVISION I

- DIVISION I IS REGARDED AS THE ELITE OF NCAA SPORTS AND IS GENERALLY THE MOST COMPETITIVE IN TERMS OF SKILL AND MAKING THE TEAM.
- THEY OFFER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS, AND CAN BE VERY FLEXIBLE ON ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS, BUT NOT LEGAL PROBLEMS, ALCOHOL OR DRUG VIOLATIONS, AND TROUBLEMAKING. ONE ERROR IN JUDGEMENT IS ALL IT TAKES TO DESTROY MOST ATHLETES CHANCES FOR A SCHOLARSHIP.
- EXAMPLES: TEXAS, OHIO STATE, NOTRE DAME.
- IF YOU ACCEPT A DIVISION I SCHOLARSHIP, PLAYING FOOTBALL WILL BE YOUR JOB. YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE RED-SHIRTED, WHICH MEANS YOU ARE INELIGIBLE TO PLAY YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR, ALTHOUGH YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO FULFILL ALL OTHER TEAM COMMITMENTS, AND YOU WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO PLAY IN YOUR FIFTH YEAR.
- YOU ARE UNLIKELY TO TAKE A FULL ACADEMIC LOAD EACH YEAR. AND YOU WILL PROBABLY STAY AT SCHOOL THE ENTIRE SUMMER FOR TRAINING AND SCHOOL.

IVY LEAGUE

- THE IVY LEAGUE IS DIVISION I, BUT ALL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE STRICTLY NEED-BASED.
- RECRUITING FOR THE IVY LEAGUE WORKS LIKE ALL DIVISION I RECRUITING IN EVERY OTHER ASPECT. BUT ONCE AN OFFER IS MADE AND ACCEPTED, THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE WILL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE YOU RECEIVE BASED ON YOUR FAMILY INCOME.
- THESE SCHOOLS GENERALLY GIVE A FREE RIDE TO FAMILIES WITH INCOMES LESS THAN \$50,000, AND THEY DON'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VALUE OF YOUR RESIDENCE. EXAMPLES: HARVARD, PRINCETON, BROWN.
- WHILE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AT THESE UNIVERSITIES ARE EXTREMELY HIGH, THEY ARE EASED SOMEWHAT FOR ATHLETES, WHO ARE JUDGED BASED ON A SLIDING 'ACADEMIC INDEX' THAT LOOKS AT SATS, GRADES AND CLASS STANDING. COACHES AT THESE SCHOOLS CAN BRING IN A FEW PLAYERS WITH SATS AT THE 1500 LEVEL AND A GPA OF 3.0. BUT THEIR IDEAL CANDIDATE HAS SATS OVER 1800 AND A CUMULATIVE GPA OF 3.5 OR HIGHER.
- DIVERSITY IN RECRUITS IS A BIG GOAL FOR THESE SCHOOLS.
- THESE FOOTBALL PROGRAMS ARE EXTREMELY RIGOROUS, BUT THEY DO NOT REDSHIRT AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GO HOME FOR HOLIDAYS AND PART OF THE SUMMER.

DIVISION II

- DIVISION II JUST MEANS A LOWER LEVEL OF COMPETITION OR A SMALLER SCHOOL.
- THEY OFFER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS.
- EXAMPLES: FLORIDA SOUTHERN, CARSON-NEWMAN, BOWIE STATE.
- THESE PROGRAMS ARE VERY RIGOROUS. THEY DO REDSHIRT SOME PLAYERS, BUT YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT BE REQUIRED TO STAY THERE ALL SUMMER FOR TRAINING.
- ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR ACCEPTANCE VARY FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL.

DIVISION III

- DIVISION III COLLEGES ARE VERY SMALL AND DON'T OFFER ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS.
- BUT THEY DO PROVIDE GENEROUS FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES.
- EXAMPLES: MIDDLEBURY, WILLIAMS, FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL.
- ACADEMIC STANDARDS VARY FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL, BUT THEY GENERALLY PLACE A PREMIUM ON IT.

THE RECRUITING PROCESS

SOPHMORE YEAR

- SOPHMORE YEAR IS A GOOD TIME TO BEGIN THINKING ABOUT RECRUITING.
- COLLEGES WILL BEGIN TO IDENTIFY PLAYERS IN THEIR SOPHMORE YEAR.
- UNDER NCAA RULES, COACHES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CONTACT YOU, ALTHOUGH THEY CAN PICK UP THE PHONE IF YOU CALL AND CAN RESPOND TO EMAIL.
- YOU MAY BEGIN TO RECEIVE BROCHURES AND OTHER TYPES OF GENERALIZED BULK MAILINGS.

JUNIOR YEAR

- PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT YEAR IN TERMS OF RECRUITING.
- COACHES WILL BEGIN TO SCOUT YOU, PROVIDING THEY HAVE ACCESS TO GAME TAPE OR HIGHLIGHT REELS.
- YOU ARE UNLIKELY TO RECEIVE ANY SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS, UNLESS YOU ARE THE NEXT ADRIAN PETERSON.
- COACHES ARE ALLOWED TO CALL ONCE DURING THE SPRING. THEY CAN PICK UP THE PHONE AND TALK IF YOU CATCH THEM, AND RESPOND TO EMAILS. THEY CAN ALSO SEND MAIL.
- A UNIVERSITY SHOWS ITS INTEREST BY INVITING YOU TO A RECRUITING DAY IN THE SPRING AND/OR A ONE-DAY “ELITE CAMP” IN THE SUMMER. THEY MAY ALSO SPEAK WITH YOUR COACHES AND ATTEND A GAME.
- ELITE PLAYERS MAY RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS DURING THE YEAR OR AFTER A VISIT TO AN ELITE SUMMER CAMP.

SENIOR YEAR

- YOU WILL PROBABLY KNOW BEFORE THE FIRST GAME IN THE FALL WHETHER YOU ARE IN THE RUNNING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP.
- CONTACTS BETWEEN COACHES AND PLAYERS ARE NOT LIMITED. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE FIVE PAID VISITS TO FIVE UNIVERSITIES.
- RECRUITING WILL HEAT UP AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES, AND THE TOP TIER OF PLAYERS BEGINS TO COMMIT TO THE TOP DIVISION I COLLEGES.
- YOU MAY RECEIVE AN OFFER AT ANY TIME DURING YOUR SENIOR YEAR.

HOW TO MARKET MYSELF FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

- WORK HARD AT ACADEMICS. NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT FOOTBALL, NO COACH WANTS A PLAYER WHO CAN NOT MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY.
- TAKE SATS AT LEAST TWICE: FALL AND SPRING OF YOUR JUNIOR YEAR ARE GOOD TIMES. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SAT TUTORING.
- STAY OUT OF TROUBLE! NO TRUE FRIEND WOULD EVER PUT YOU IN A SITUATION THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP. THIS IS YOUR LIFE; TAKE CONTROL OF IT AND DON'T LET SOMEBODY ELSE DETERMINE YOUR FATE.

HIGHLIGHT REELS

- PREPARE A 4-6 MINUTE HIGHLIGHT DVD THAT YOU CAN SEND TO COLLEGE COACHES, AND POST ON YOU TUBE.
- GO ONLINE TO YOU TUBE AND SEARCH FOR DANIEL POWELL, DELONTE ROBINSON, JELANI IRBY, TRAVON JAMES OR SIDNEY BALMAN TO SEE EXAMPLES.
- EVERY WILSON GAME SINCE 2007 HAS BEEN FILMED, AND THESE ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU FOR THIS PURPOSE.
- WHILE THESE TYPE OF REELS CAN COST THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS, WE'VE HAD A PROGRAM IN PLACE WITH A PROFESSIONAL FILMMAKER SINCE 2007 TO HELP YOU CREATE THESE FOR \$300 AND POST THEM ON YOU TUBE. AND YOU RECEIVE 10 COPIES OF YOUR HIGHLIGHT REEL FOR COACHES.

GET STARTED

- ALL THE INFORMATION FOR THE SPREAD SHEET CAN BE FOUND ON THE UNIVERSITY'S FOOTBALL WEB SITE, OR BY CALLING THE UNIVERSITY'S FOOTBALL OFFICE.
- MOST TEAMS WILL ALSO HAVE A WAY TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AND FOOTBALL/ACADEMIC INFORMATION ONLINE
- THE RECRUITING COORDINATOR FOR THE DC-AREA WILL BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED.
- CALL THE RECRUITING COORDINATOR FOR THE DC AREA, INTRODUCE YOURSELF, TELL HIM YOU HAVE FILLED OUT THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THAT YOU WILL BE SENDING A PACKAGE WITH A HIGHLIGHT REEL, A RESUME AND AN UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT, WHICH YOU CAN GET FROM WILSON. IF YOU DON'T REACH HIM AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS; SEND HIM AN EMAIL.
- INCLUDE A COVER LETTER THAT HIGHLIGHTS YOUR ATHLETIC, ACADEMIC AND CIVIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND INCLUDES ANY OTHER INFORMATION YOU THINK DISPLAYS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT YOU.
- MAKE CERTAIN COACH FLEMING IS AWARE OF YOUR EFFORTS WITH EVERY SCHOOL. AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, YOU MAY WANT HIM TO SEND A LETTER OR EMAIL OF RECOMMENDATION.
- IF YOU KNOW AN ALUMNI OF THAT SCHOOL, PARTICULARLY A FOOTBALL ALUMNI, ASK HIM TO SEND A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE HEAD COACH, WITH A COPY TO YOUR RECRUITING COORDINATOR.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

October 21, 2007

Dear Coach Brown,

First of all, congratulations on your thrilling victory over Delaware!

I recently received letters from you and your coaching staff, and would like to express my strong interest in football at Kent State. I have registered my interest on your recruiting web site, and returned the questionnaire sent to me a few weeks ago. But with this letter, I want to make a personal connection with you and your staff.

I am currently a junior at Woodrow Wilson Senior High School, a diverse public school and the largest in Washington, D.C. I play tackle and linebacker on the football team, and have been a varsity letterman since 10th grade in football as well as track. On the academic side, I have a 3.1 GPA, with two AP courses. For more detail, I have included a resume.

I began playing for the varsity football team at Wilson as a 10th grader, and saw limited action on special teams and at linebacker. But last year, I started at linebacker and recorded 48 tackles, three sacks, and two interceptions. Junior year has been a breakout season for me as a player. In eight games, I have recorded 65 tackles, three sacks, six pass deflections, and two forced fumbles. I am currently second in the league in tackles, eighth in sacks and was awarded defensive player of week five by the Washington Post. The District of Columbia Interscholastic Athletic Association is a very competitive league, consisting of 11 hardnosed inner-city teams. I think the pace and intensity of this league is very much like college, which makes me well-equipped to take my game to the next level. We are producing a highlight reel this season, and will send it to you in a few weeks.

My cousin played college football in the late 1970s, and as a result has many friends in the university sports community. I have spoken about Kent State with two of his friends, Bill Smith and Frank Johnson, both of whom played offensive line for Kent State during the late 1970s and early 1980s. My conversations with them about the Kent State football experience has convinced me that I would prosper both on and off the field at your school.

Respectfully,
John Smith

FOLLOW UP

- YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT HEAR FROM THE RECRUITING COORDINATOR BECAUSE HE IS NOT ALLOWED TO INITIATE CONTACT WITH YOU DURING JUNIOR YEAR.
- HE PROBABLY RECEIVED YOUR INFORMATION IF YOU BEGIN TO RECEIVE MAIL FROM THE SCHOOL.
- AFTER A FEW WEEKS, CALL OR SEND AN EMAIL TO YOUR RECRUITING COORDINATOR ASKING HIM IF YOUR REEL HAS BEEN EVALUATED.
- THESE COACHES WILL BE VERY HONEST WITH YOU ABOUT YOUR CHANCES.
- BUT REMEMBER, COLLEGE TEAMS RECRUIT 300-400 PLAYERS IN ORDER TO ENSURE 20-30 SIGNEES.

ONCE YOUR FOOT IS IN THE DOOR

- DON'T BE SHY. STAY IN CONTACT WITH YOUR RECRUITING COORDINATOR, AND UPDATE HIM REGULARLY.
- DON'T BE DISCOURAGED. IF YOU START ON THE WILSON FOOTBALL TEAM, CHANCES ARE THAT YOU WILL FIND A COLLEGE INTERESTED IN YOU.
- BE REALISTIC.
- BE PREPARED YOUR JUNIOR YEAR TO MAKE TWO VISITS TO YOUR MOST LIKELY COLLEGES: RECRUITING DAY IN THE SPRING AND ELITE CAMP IN THE SUMMER.
- THESE WILL BE AT YOUR EXPENSE. PARENTS SHOULD CONSIDER THEIR RETURN ON INVESTMENT. A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS SPENT TO LAND A \$200,000 SCHOLARSHIP!
- COMBINES CAN BE HELPFUL, BUT COACHES WHO ARE INTERESTED WILL WANT TO SEE YOU IN PERSON ON THEIR CAMPUS.
- GOOD LUCK!