

## ***Athlete Recruitment in the New Decade: The Influence of Social Media on College Sports***

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Technology has become every college recruiter's best friend because any source of new technology that creates a communication advantage, more often than not, is not banned in the NCAA Recruiting Manual (Feldman, 2007). Social media, also known as social networking, is that new technology. Social Media has been defined as websites that construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, they articulate a list of users with which they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others in the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Yet, social media is no longer just websites; it encompasses every line of communication today, including the use of smart phones, netbooks, laptops, even applications on some cable television boxes (Qualman, 2009). Coaches tend to exploit any recruiting advantage that provides instant communication with a recruit until a policy is set forth by the NCAA that prohibits it (Feldman, 2007). Even if stricter policies are instilled by the NCAA, can something as powerful as the internet and social media resources such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and UStream be regulated and sufficiently enforced by the NCAA?

Research was conducted to determine how Division I intercollegiate athletic administrators believe the utilization of social media networks enhances the recruiting process of student athletes to their athletic program. An email was sent to 342 NCAA Division I athletic directors describing the study, and provided a link to the survey via [www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com). The survey consisted of Likert scale and open-ended questions to determine the use of social media networks in the recruitment process of student-athletes to their institution.

This presentation will examine the outcomes of the research, specifically focusing on the positive and negative results of implementing social media in the recruiting process for potential student-athletes. Inclusive of this examination will be an assessment of research conducted via surveys and formal interviews of athletic directors, coaches, and other college athletic administrators regarding the pros and cons of using social media to connect with prospective college athletes. Past and future trends will be studied in relation to technological advances and how they are incorporated in the recruiting process, including the constantly changing way prospective college recruits are communicating with the rest of the world via social media. Recruiting success evaluations will also be examined, including the evolution of evaluating success level in terms of return on investment (ROI), and the addition of measuring return on time (ROT) as a result of the continued advances in social media (Martin, 2009). In addition, information will be presented regarding how high school athletes can go about using new technologies to receive publicity in the recruiting world.