

Life is like a box of chocolates



COLUMN
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You never know what you're going to get from a college. Many high school athletes expect great things. They are active in class, out of class, and in their communities. They work daily to get better at their sport. Whether it be football, basketball, soccer, or track, most want a scholarship. The reality is, not everyone gets one. Maybe you don't have the natural talent; you might just deserve a full-ride. You will get one no matter what, right? No, you probably won't. You're missing a step. The number one thing that high school athletes forget is that publicity is huge to your success.

You could very well be the fastest kid in the state, but if a coach doesn't know who you are, you're not getting anything from them.

Though high school coaches may seem to be the ones to talk to, you may want to try playing for a club team as well. Most college coaches are coaching their own teams during the normal high school seasons and don't have time to come see you. That is why, most of the time, athletes are given offers off-season, when playing for a club team.

"High school coaches are usually not very involved in the recruiting process," according to Varsity Softball Coach Ron Cristian. "Club teams are made up of nearly all high quality players. On high school teams you might find one or two."

Nearly every sport has some form of a "club" team somewhere, for example, AAU with basketball or USATF for track and field. Locally, we have the USA Foothill Falcons, a track and field club team run out of Grant High. There, nationally known athletes like Shaq Thompson are working on improving their strength and speed for higher level competition.

With clubs, the level of play is also higher. With most clubs, teams recruit, and those who don't recruit already have elite athletes paying to play, so that they can get better. With more all-stars on a team, competition also becomes greater. When there's heavy competition, there is bound to be a recruiter somewhere in the crowd. Recruiters want to see high stakes and athletes who have clutch; they want athletes who make the right moves at the right times. To a coach, there is more potential in players who are willing to put in the extra off-season training.

There are organizations out there that claim they can help you get recruited, but they have issues of their own as well. The NCSA

(National Collegiate Scouting Association) is the number one organization that college coaches use to find prospective athletes. They have more connections with the NCAA and more pull than any other recruiting agency in the United States, and have matched more than 10,000 high school athletes with athletic scholarships for college each year. It sounds like a great thing right? Well it is... But there's a catch. They charge a minimum of \$765 to become a member, no matter what the sport. They claim that it is a good deal, that kind of money for a full ride. Sure, maybe; but not many families can afford that kind of cost, and many don't become aware of the NCSA until their senior year when it's nearly too late.

"There are benefits of these kinds of programs," according to the Athletic Director Bill Lum, "but some simply prey on people's hopes, not looking at reality."

The reality is, not everyone is capable of getting a scholarship. Only Division I and NAIA teams can offer large scholarships to athletes, (with the exception of Division II schools giving combinations of grants and small athletic scholarships) and unfortunately, not everyone is Division I or NAIA material.

High school seniors throw their money away to organizations that already know it is too late for the athlete, or that the athlete doesn't have the skills college coaches want to see,

yet NCSA says nothing about it until the money is already in their hands. On top of that, NCSA does not actually give scholarships to their members, so there is no

guarantee that a student who signs up will see anything at all. Yes, recruiting agencies have great programs that enable athletes to earn scholarships for sports, but it isn't something that we should have to pay for.

All in all, student-athletes who are good enough and have a certain level of self-publicity get offered money all the time. These organizations are not necessarily a must. Yes, they make it easier for some students who may not otherwise have contact with college coaches, but normally, those are the students who can barely afford it anyway.

"You can't charge students an arm and a leg for a scholarship that isn't even guaranteed," says Lum.

Be happy for the people you're helping achieve their dreams, not for the money you're getting from it. I'm not saying to stay away from the program, just be careful when and where you put your money.

The best thing an athlete can really do is to be active in the recruiting process. Call colleges. Email coaches. Be sure to get videos of yourself playing. Stay active in the recruiting process so that you show coaches you have the drive and motivation to go far. Skills and performance are huge to schools, but they also want to see dedication to a sport you love, so that they know their money is going to someone who is determined to do well. Do you think you have the skills and dedication to do it? If so, be ready for a coach to grant you that box of chocolates filled with the opportunity that will change your life.

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Girls finish with a winning season

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The girls basketball team ended their season with a record of 16-10. They made it to playoffs, but they lost in the first round to Benicia, 61-46. Leading the team in scoring for the season was Marissa Sanders with a total of 297 points.

Lawre'Il Dobbins had the second highest scoring game in the season with a total of 255 points. The team showed a lot of determination to make it to the first round of playoffs.

From the beginning of the season, the girls worked hard going through pre-season training. At their first game, they struggled against Bella Vista High, but brought their focus back to face



Kashay Johnson inbounding the ball to set up an easy basket. Photo by David Banar.

Consumnes Oaks, where they won 75-56.

They went on to a two game win streak, defeating Encina Prep by a 27 point margin.

Throughout the rest of the season, the girls had their ups and downs, but still managed to make it to the playoffs.

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NUMBERS GAME

Baseball VARSITY/JV FEBRUARY 24 at Florin 25 at Will C. Wood MARCH 1 vs San Juan 6 vs Union Mine 7 vs Folsom 9 at Valley Christian 15 vs Colfax 20 vs Bear River 22 at Lincoln 27 at Center 29 vs Placer APRIL 2-5 Cordova Tournament 10 at Colfax 12 vs Colfax 17 at Bear River 19 vs Bear River 24 vs Lincoln 26 at Lincoln MAY 1 vs Center 3 at Center 5 vs Antelope (Raley Field) 8 at Placer 10 vs Placer (Senior Day)	APRIL 11 vs Bear River 16 at Lincoln 18 at Center 20 vs Placer 25 at Colfax 27 at Bear River MAY 2 vs Lincoln 7 vs Center (Senior Game) 9 at Placer 14 Section Playoffs 19 Section Championships	Soccer Varsity/JV FEBRUARY 25 at Marshall 28 at Rio Linda MARCH 1 at Highlands 6 vs Rosemont 8 vs Natomas 9- 10 at Cal Spring 13 vs Rio Linda 15 at Grant 19 vs B Christian 22 at Colfax 27 at Bear River 29 vs Lincoln APRIL 10 vs Center 12 at Placer 17 vs Colfax 19 vs Bear River 24 at Lincoln 26 at Center MAY 1 vs Placer
Softball VARSITY/JV FEBRUARY 18 at Lindhurst (Scrimmage) 25 Jamboree (Freedom Park) MARCH 3 Natomas Tournament 6 at Natomas 8-10 Victory Preseason Tournament (Sacto Complex) 13 at Florin 15 vs Bella Vista 16-17 Lindhurst Tournament (JV) 20 vs Rio Linda 21 vs Laguna Creek 24 at Foresthill 24 at El Dorado 28 vs Colfax	Tennis Varsity/JV FEBRUARY 21 at River City 22 vs Consumnes Oaks 29 at Highlands MARCH 1 vs San Juan 2 vs Highlands 5 at Mase Verde 8 vs Liberty Ranch 15 at Colfax 20 vs Bear River 22 at Lincoln 27 at Center 29 vs Palcer APRIL 10 vs Colfax 12 at Bear River 17 vs Lincoln 19 vs Center 24 at Placer 26-27 at Auburn RC	Boys Golf VARSITY/JV FEBRUARY 28 at Rio Linda MARCH 1 vs Dixon 7 vs Rio Linda 13 vs Valley Christian 15 vs Colfax 20 vs Bear River 22 vs Lincoln 26 at Valley Christian 27 vs Center 29 vs Placer APRIL 10 at Dixon 12 at Colfax 16 PVL Tournament #1 (Diamond Oaks) 17 at Bear River 19 vs Lincoln 24 vs Center 26 at Placer 30 PVL Tournament #2 (Ancil Hoffman)

Compiled by
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