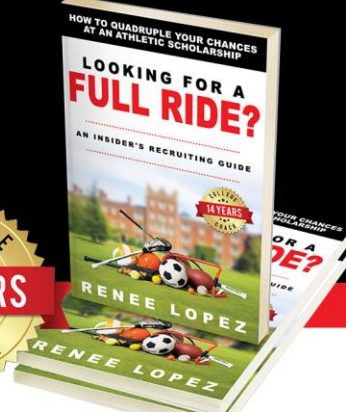


# 17 TIPS

## TO ACE A PHONE INTERVIEW WITH A COLLEGE COACH



*Performing well on a phone interview can increase your chances of attending the college of your dreams.* Although communication methods have changed over the years, many coaches still prefer phone conversations as a primary means of getting to know a recruit on a deeper level beyond the X's and O's. They are trying to get to know your character, work ethic, and determine if you are going to be the right fit for their team culture. Here are some tips to make a good first impression:

### Before the Phone Interview:

1. **Be strategic with your contact information.** Let college coaches know the easiest way to contact you. Suggest days and times when you are generally available, around school or other activities/sports. Do not just randomly cold call a college coach. Remember they speak with hundreds of prospective student-athletes. You want to make sure they have had time to review your films, transcripts, and recent emails. Some coaches will call without any advance notice. Often, they are just calling to check in and make contact to show their interest as a recruiter. If you do not have your own phone, provide the best contact number of a parent and inform the coach it is a parent's phone number.
2. **Save contact information.** If you are speaking with multiple college coaches, save their contact information along with their school so you can keep them straight. You will be better prepared for impromptu phone interviews or any return calls if you know which school is contacting you.
3. **Do your research.** *A phone interview requires just as much preparation as meeting in person.* Learn all you can about the school, coach, and program you are considering. Knowing even a little bit of background shows the coach you are interested in learning more. Do the virtual tour from their website BEFORE your session. Make sure you have also checked whether they have a few academic programs that you are interested in. Check out the admissions requirements on their website so you can discuss this with the coaching staff. Follow the team on social media and research their athletic program's website.
4. **Prepare talking points and questions.** Write down talking points and follow-up questions that you can refer to. It will help you sound prepared and make it easier to remember everything you need to address. Asking questions also shows a coach that you are interested in their program.
5. **Warm up your voice.** *Your voice matters even more when your body language and facial expressions are not visible.* It sounds a bit odd, but make sure your voice does not sound like you just rolled out of bed! A good tone of voice will make a more positive impression!
6. **Clear away distractions.** Step away somewhere where there is no background noise. Give the call your full attention. Parents often want to listen in on the conversation. This can sometimes be distracting for the student-athlete. Other teens want to have a parent listening on speaker phone in the background to help take notes. Discuss your preference with your parents PRIOR to any calls. Either route, ensure your attention is on the coach.

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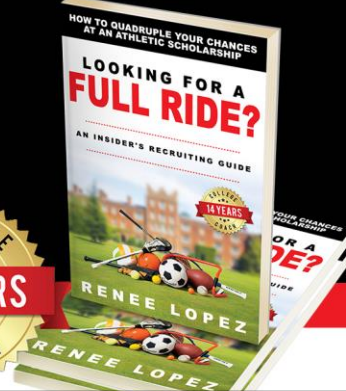
Veteran Coach Renee Lopez has been a college coach for 14 years at the NCAA Division I, II, and NAIA levels and a NCAA Compliance Director. She does college recruiting education for families at high schools and for sports organizations. She also runs a Facebook Group with over 100,000 parents and coaches of high school student-athletes. Her book *Looking for a FULL RIDE?: An Insider's Recruiting Guide* has sold over 20,000 copies. For more information, see her over 40+ blogs at [www.rlopezcoaching.com](http://www.rlopezcoaching.com) or email her at [info@lookingforafullride.com](mailto:info@lookingforafullride.com)

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### During the Phone Interview:

- 7. Be friendly and enthusiastic.** Make a strong first impression. Smile and hold your head up. Yes, even if they cannot see you! Focus on the positive aspects of the school and program so you will sound excited to discuss it.
- 8. Record everyone's name.** Oftentimes, coaches may inform you of a phone call you will receive from an assistant coach, a current player, or another faculty/staff member (advisor, financial aid, admissions, etc.). Jot down these names so you can prepare for those phone calls in the same manner you prepared for this call.
- 9. Adapt to the coach's approach.** Be yourself, but be sensitive to the style of the coach. Adjust to their level of formality and the degree of detail they are seeking. Some coaches may just ask a few general questions while others will go into great depth.
- 10. Deliver your interest statement.** Have a brief interest statement prepared about why you are interested in the school/program. This ties into the research prep. Coaches want to hear what you are excited about with this specific school/program. Show you have done your research on academics and the campus – not just sports! Mention something you saw during the virtual tour about the campus facilities and academic programs.
- 11. Avoid interrupting.** It can be difficult to judge whether someone is done speaking when you cannot see them. Pause for a second before replying to avoid any awkward interruptions.
- 12. Request feedback.** If you sense any weak areas that the coach addresses, try to revisit them. Ask them to clarify their needs so you can offer more information to strengthen your presentation to them. (Example: If they are not able to see you compete live in person in the next few months, ask if you should send more film from competitions or even training with your own team.)
- 13. Ask questions that show you are a good fit.** Ask questions that demonstrate that you have done your research. It will show that you really are interested in the school/program and give you another chance to talk about why you would be a great addition to their team. [Here are 21 questions to ask a college coach! www.rlopezcoaching.com/store](http://www.rlopezcoaching.com/store)
- 14. Walk away from every conversation clarifying the next steps in the recruiting process.** Depending on the premise of the call, coaches will generally inform you of the next steps. If they do not specifically state it, **ASK:** “What is the next step for me in the recruiting process for XYZ school?” In the early stages, they will likely say continue to stay in touch via phone, emails, and DM on social media. Eventually, they may express interest in unofficial/official visits to the campus. At this time, ask any follow-up questions you have regarding these next steps.

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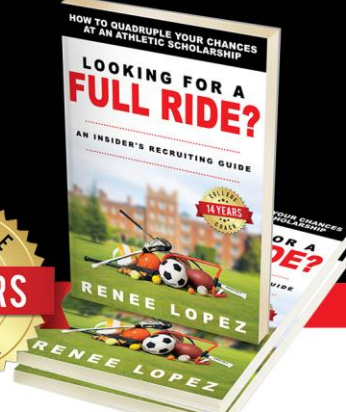
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### After the Phone Interview:

- 15. Send a thank you note.** Send a brief note expressing how much you enjoyed learning more about the college and program via email within 24 hours. It only takes a few minutes of your time, but you would be surprised how few student-athletes take this step. A lack of follow-up from the student-athlete makes a coach think you may not have left the conversation with LESS interest in the college. Make sure that they know you are even MORE interested in the school. **If you have decided this really is NOT the right for you, you need to tell them. Do NOT string them along as they have a job to do and need to move on to the next student-athlete.**
- 16. Make follow-up plans.** You are not the only student-athlete this coach is recruiting. Sending a brief check-in message every few weeks shows a coach you are still engaged even when they have not had the time to reach out.
- 17. Keep your options open.** Keep researching 20-30 schools, 5-8 each level. Do not think 1 phone call is the end of your process! There are many more steps of sorting through campus visits, application procedures, and financial packages. Coaches EXPECT you will be speaking to and researching multiple schools! They will WANT you to be able to make comparisons. Use an excel sheet to keep information organized about each college.

*Need to learn more about the recruiting process? Pick up a copy of [www.lookingforfullride.com](http://www.lookingforfullride.com)*

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