

Baseball Dad,

Sorry it has taken me some time to respond to your email but we have been on the road a lot and I'm still catching up. I will try to address your questions and comments as best I can. It is easiest for me to put my comments into the body of your email in red. That way, I can address each one of your concerns.

Please see below.

Hello Coach Smith,

I hope this email finds you well. I have some questions for you that have been chewing at me for months, and I hope you can take the time to answer me and help me figure out the ins and outs of this whole baseball recruiting thing.

My son sent you a video of himself pitching several months ago. He is only a junior in high school. You very quickly sent back a reply letter that he was not scholarship material and basically "no thanks". We try to be prompt in our evaluations of videos. We receive several every week and want to respond to every video we receive in a timely fashion.

I am very curious why you were so quick to reply and what he can do differently. Was it the mere fact that he sent the video? Was that the turn off? No, we actually encourage prospects to send us footage of them if we have not seen them in person.

Did you see something in the video that was negative? We look very closely at arm action and delivery when evaluating pitchers. Does the prospect possess a "quick arm"? What type of body does the pitcher have? In our opinion Steve did not have a quick arm, which we could see from the video. The velocity (81 mph) as indicated on his PG report supported the fact. In addition, his 5'10" frame is not what we typically recruit for RHP.

Did you look up his "stats" someplace? Are you 'Just so big' that you don't need to look at videos? We review every video we receive. If we like what we see on a video, we will prioritize seeing that prospect in the spring or summer.

Maybe you just don't need a right-handed pitcher at this time, but it was quite perplexing to me how you could just send a quick letter dismissing him. We are definitely looking for a RHP in that class. To give you a reference point, we are recruiting a couple now that are 6'5" and currently pitching at 89-91 with solid breaking stuff.

You are the only school to use such a negative approach so far. I can't speak for other schools, but I prefer not view it as a negative approach. I view it as "honest" feedback relative to our interest level. I am very aware that athletes and parents spend a lot of time and money when trying to narrow down their choices in schools, and it would be a disservice to lead a kid on if we generally did not have an interest in them as a potential player for our program. I prefer to let prospects know immediately if we have an interest or not. If so, we keep the process going. If not, it allows the prospect and his family to devote their time, efforts and money to pursuing a situation that is a better fit. In the end, it has to be a fit for BOTH sides.

I guess I could choose to lead prospects on, which a lot of schools do because they are afraid to make such decisions so early, but at the end of the day it is a waste of time for all parties involved. Time you don't have, and time we don't have. I would rather be direct and honest up front so both of us can concentrate our efforts elsewhere. I apologize if you see it as negative.

I appreciate any advice you may have for us. At the time Steve sent you his video, Indiana was one of his first choices. He has obviously cooled that opinion. I find this whole process confusing and honestly, quite subjective. No doubt it is subjective, but years of doing this and some of the best professional training one can receive, has put me in a position where I feel we honestly can eliminate some of the "guess work" and make some pretty solid decisions, even from viewing a video. Right now, Steve is a 5'10" RHP that throws 81 mph. I am a believer that ALL kids can play beyond high school at some level. It may not be division one, but they can play somewhere. 5'10" righties are not hard to find for any level. My recommendation would be for Steve to keep all his options open and not just focus on DI schools.

As a parent, I want my son to have the best choice for a college and the option for the best baseball team he can be a part of. He is a great kid, and a dedicated ball player. And you should! I say all the time that the player needs to decide how important baseball is to his college experience. For some, it is a must. For others, it is secondary to their academics, and so on. The art, or the real skill in selecting a college, is making sure the player (and family) finds the best match. All of our players currently at IU are great kids and dedicated or they wouldn't be here. I am sure Steve is a great kid and dedicated player, but in my opinion he doesn't possess what we are looking for in a RHP as we compare him to the other players we have seen across the country. I am not taking anything away from Steve, and it is no way a knock on his abilities. Simply put, he just wouldn't be a good fit for OUR program. That is the sole reason we try to provide that information to players and their families as early as possible so they can continue to look for the "right" fit.

I wish him the best of luck!

Thanks for your time,