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Davidson College Wrestling
Recruiting Strategy

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Introduction

Identifying and recruiting outstanding student-athletes who will be a great fit for Davidson College and for the Davidson College wrestling program is amongst the most important job functions of the coaching staff. Recruiting is the lifeblood of the program and needs to be planned, executed, evaluated and optimized on an ongoing basis.

This is a never-ending process of iteration, adaptation and improvement every year. Not only must the head coach develop a comprehensive and effective recruiting strategy, but he must effectively delegate some of the recruiting functions to the coaching staff in a way that optimizes each staff member's strengths and utilizes them in the highest-leverage manner.

My recruiting strategy outlined below is based on **four-pillars**:

1. Prospect Identification
2. Consistent Messaging
3. Parent Engagement
4. Recruiting Timeline

Each pillar is critical to realize the best possible results and may be viewed like the four legs of a chair: if each isn't equally strong, supporting the others, the entire system will not be as effective.

Prospect Identification

- **Prospect database size**
 - 15:1 funnel initially - Recruit 15 prospects for every 1 roster spot to be filled
 - Tighten up ratio as processes and messaging are optimized
- **Sources of prospects**
 - NWCA HS Scholar All-American List
 - WinSmarter email list (my own proprietary, engaged email list - over 3,300 coaches nationally)
 - Extensive personal relationships with HS and club coaches from 20 years of HS coaching
 - Prospect ID camps at Davidson - late June/early July
 - Recruiting services (e.g. NCSA Sports, etc.)
 - HS State tournament results - Folkstyle, Freestyle and Greco-Roman
 - Regional and National Off-Season Tournaments - selected via geographic analysis and historical roster composition analysis ([data attached](#))
 - Fargo
 - Super 32
 - NHSCA Nationals

- Tyrant Tournament Series
 - USAW Junior National Duals
- Involvement with USAW-NC to get access to Fargo, National Duals, etc
- Proactively canvas alumni, current SAs, HS/Club coaches of current SAs for recruiting prospects
- Monitor NCAA Transfer Portal

- **Geographic focus - top targeted states**

State	# HS Wrestlers	2022 NCAA Qualifiers
PA	9,460	45
NY	11,184	15
OH	10,313	22
NJ	9,648	30
IL	14,170	32
GA	7,943	7
VA	6,229	8

- **Classifying prospects**

- Projected weight class
- Create explicitly defined rubric, rating prospects from 1-4 along three criteria:
 - Athletics - rating based on wrestling credentials; general athleticism; years of experience (upside potential)
 - Academics - GPA adjusted for strength of coursework; test scores; extracurricular academic endeavors
 - Character - conversations with teachers, guidance counselors, etc.; coaches' observations outside of competition; social media accounts; leadership roles outside wrestling; interactions with parents, teammates; etc.
- Based on total score, prospects are classified as A, B or C prospects

- **Ongoing analysis of prospect sources**

- Statistical analysis completed yearly to evaluate value of each prospect channel
- Refine practices using Pareto Principle (i.e. 80/20 Rule) - focus more recruiting resources into the most fruitful channels

Consistent Messaging

- **Davidson Wrestling brand identity**

- As a smaller D1 program recruiting nationally, it's critical for Davidson Wrestling to create a strong brand identity that positively differentiates itself from other programs within the wrestling community.
- In some way, shape or form, all messaging should build and advance that brand.
- **Proposed Davidson Wrestling brand identity: "The best program in the country to be a part of - the WildcatWay"**
 - **A family**
 - A team with a deep culture of caring for each other; coaches who care about SAs as people first, athletes second
 - Opportunity to compete together at the highest levels of intercollegiate athletics
 - **A future**
 - Premier academic institution designed to prepare our SAs for life after wrestling
 - Robust alumni network and career development resources to help you on your journey for life
 - **A home**
 - Small school, family environment where your professors know your name, you won't get lost in the shuffle, and you'll make friends for life in and out of the wrestling program - "Davidson is home"
 - With under 2,000 students but with 21 varsity athletic teams, Davidson maintains an amazing environment for student-athletes to grow into the best versions of themselves
 - Beautiful campus and beautiful area to go to school

- **Building brand awareness**

- As a smaller D1 program recruiting nationally, it's also critical for Davidson Wrestling to engage in high-ROI strategies to build brand awareness of the program throughout the wrestling community
- Targeted use of social media to increase brand footprint with PSAs and parents of PSAs
 - Primary focus on Instagram and TikTok to reach PSAs
 - Primary focus on Facebook and Instagram to reach parents of PSAs
 - Content can be repurposed for use on Twitter as well
 - Consider using hyper-targeted sponsored posts on these platforms to surgically reach target demographics

- Social media content should be fun, engaging and feel casual - important to differentiate from what other programs are putting out
 - Short “cell phone videos”, simple pictures, etc.
 - The idea is to let viewers “behind the curtain” of our program and show some personality so they feel like insiders
 - Focus on who we are as people (both coaches and SAs) and what it’s like to be part of our program
 - Use social media posts to drive viewers to our email list and recruiting questionnaire
 - Maintain email list of HS and club coaches, as well as PSAs and their parents to send general brand-awareness-building content
 - Emails written with casual, conversational voice - should look and feel like an email to a friend, not a corporate newsletter
 - Can get into a little more detail than social media posts
 - Share the stories of the program
 - Research shows storytelling resonates strongly with PSAs in terms of building emotional connection with program
 - Larger story arc: the growth and evolution of Davidson Wrestling
 - Smaller stories within the larger story - individual SA’s journeys, etc.
 - Similar focus on who we are as people (both coaches and SAs) and what it’s like to be part of our program - let readers feel like insiders
- **360-degree view of Davidson Wrestling**
 - Content calendar built out to showcase all parts of life at Davidson to PSAs and their families over the course of their recruiting journey - this “structured storytelling” ensures there will always be fresh topics to communicate with PSAs about
 - All content designed through the lens of building and advancing the Davidson Wrestling brand: “The best program in the country to be a part of...The WildcatWay: A family, a future, a home”
 - Content designed to appeal to BOTH the emotional and intellectual side... but research shows making an emotional connection with PSAs and their parents is most impactful in their decision making process
 - 9 major areas of messaging in 360-degree view:
 - Academics - majors offered; small-school feel - professors know your names, dinner at their homes, etc.; academic support you need to be successful
 - Campus - residence halls, Vail Commons, Patterson Court, academic building, outdoor areas, etc.
 - Location - showcasing Davidson/Lake Norman/Greater Charlotte area
 - Coaches/Coaching philosophy - get to know each coach on our staff

- Culture of team - showcasing how it *feels* to be part of our program; short videos from SAs; guys hanging out before practice; eating together; showcasing community service; etc.
 - Social life/life on Davidson Campus/Davidson traditions - “Day in the life” of SA feature; campus organizations our SAs are a part of outside wrestling; first-year Cake Race; Midnight Scream; etc.
 - Alumni network/graduates/career prospects - catching up with alumni feature; Davidson Athletics Career Advantage program; Center for Career Development; grad school advising; relationship with Charlotte Chapter of Wrestler in Business Network (WIBN); etc.
 - Wrestling - videos/updates of training, traveling and competing; video updates from SAs/coaches; etc.
 - Facilities - video tours of Baker Sports Complex; Belk Arena; wrestling room; sports medicine facilities; strength and conditioning facilities; locker room; etc.

- **“The Hero’s Journey”**
 - Structure story arc of recruiting communication through the framework of “the hero’s journey”
 - Start with backstory of program
 - Articulate emotionally-resonant goal/mission for the program
 - Define obstacles/roadblocks/”enemies” we’ll encounter along the way
 - Paint PSA as “hero” whose decision to join the quest will help contribute to the ultimate “victory”, cementing their legacy, etc.

- **Frequency of contact with PSAs**
 - Contact every 6-9 days from first contact until they show up for orientation
 - Intentional contact continues after commitment to reaffirm to commit and family that they’re still valued and that they’ve made a great decision

- **Differentiation of messaging based on communication channel**
 - Text messaging/Social media direct messaging
 - Short and direct messages
 - No fluff
 - No “selling” via this channel
 - Be wary of seeming to “invasive” with messaging over social media DMs - some PSAs prefer to keep their social media world separate from their recruiting world
 - Phone calls
 - Always have “a reason” to call... keep conversations short...
 - Not particularly comfortable communication channel for this generation of PSAs

- Utilize 360-degree framework and “The Hero’s Journey” framework as context for conversation
 - Emails
 - Use conversational voice - not formal like a business letter
 - You can “sell” here - give them links, etc.
 - Non-invasive way to communicate, but be aware PSAs might not be checking their email daily
 - Utilize this channel as a hybrid between more formal letter and text message - little bit conversational, mixed with stuff they need to know - need to strike the balance
 - Written letter
 - Utilize written letters to underscore the level of seriousness you have towards that recruit, in their eyes.
- **Reframing common objections - proactively address these early in the process to control the narrative of how the issues are perceived**
 - Too small
 - The number of students might be smaller, but that means more personalized attention and closer relationships, all with the resources of a Division 1 athletic program. It’s like the best of both worlds. Plus, although there aren’t a lot of total students, there are still 21 athletic programs, which means a high percentage of students on campus are student-athletes, all with a shared experience at a school that clearly understands the student-athlete experience. Finally, while the school may be smaller, it’s hardly in the middle of nowhere. To be right near beautiful Lake Norman and all it has to offer, and also have all the resources and opportunities available right in Charlotte, gives Davidson the perfect mix for a home away from home.
 - Too expensive
 - Davidson provides one of the best educations in the country with some of the best outcomes for its graduates. 95% of the Class of 2021 was employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months of their graduation. It’s hard to beat that anywhere. While it costs Davidson a lot of money to provide this elite level of preparation, we have something called the Davidson Trust that guarantees your financial aid package from Davidson will meet 100% of your financial need with grants and campus employment - not loans - so you won’t be graduating with a ton of debt. 51 percent of the Class of 2021 received financial assistance from Davidson. The average aid package is \$45,000 a year. College does have a cost, but it’s also an investment in your future. Right now, in this period of inflation and economic uncertainty, it makes even more sense to invest in a great education, without adding a lot of debt, that will set you up for the future, regardless of the economic conditions we’ll face. I’d suggest checking out Davidson’s [Net Price Calculator](#) to get a better idea of what

your actual cost will be and then we can talk about more ways to make that work for you and your family.

- Not fully funded
 - Getting a big athletic scholarship sounds cool, but at the end of the day, it's a cool moment for a few minutes, and, then, what really matters for the rest of your life, is how your college experience - athletically, academically and in every other respect - helps you build the life you want to live. In five years from now, no one is going to care how much of an athletic scholarship you received, but what will make a huge difference is the education you've gained and experiences you've had. That's what you'll remember for the rest of your life as well. In terms of paying for your education, the real question is not how much of an athletic scholarship you're getting, anyway, but how much is it going to cost to come here. At Davidson, we might not have as many athletic scholarships as some other schools, but through the Davidson Trust we have the ability to guarantee your financial aid package will meet 100% of your financial need with grants and campus employment - not loans - so you won't be graduating with a ton of debt. 51 percent of the Class of 2021 received financial assistance from Davidson. The average aid package is \$45,000 a year.
- Doesn't have the major I want
 - The major you choose is definitely important, but what's even more important is figuring out what you ultimately want to do with that major when college is finished and how the education and experiences you receive set you up for that future. We might not have every major under the sun at Davidson, but we have exactly what each of our student-athletes need to prepare them for the career and the life they want. Tell me what you'd like to do when you graduate and I can point you to dozens of successful Davidson alumni who have followed that career path. Even more importantly, through the resources we have on campus - our Davidson Athletics Career Advantage program, our Center for Career Development, our grad school advising, and our program's unique relationship with the Charlotte Chapter of Wrestler in Business Network (WIBN) - we can connect you directly with alumni to help set you up on that path.
- Not competitive in conference
 - That's an important consideration. The beauty of athletics is how dynamic it is. The environment is constantly evolving. If it wasn't, we wouldn't need to wrestle in the SoCons or the NCAAs every year, we could just keep giving medals to the same programs over and over again. The fact is we haven't been as competitive in the conference as we'd like to be, but like everything else in the world, that's evolving and changing as well. Honestly, we're not really looking for student-athletes that are ok with the status quo, we're looking for change-makers - student-athletes that want

to come into a program and make a shift. Kids who want to do something special and be part of something significant, not just in their time here at Davidson, but in the rest of their lives after college, as well. One of the reasons we're here talking today is not just because you're a good wrestler - any college coach should want to talk to you for that reason. We're interested in you because of who we think you are as a person. Someone who's capable of leading change and building something lasting and special - at Davidson and in the rest of their lives. We're not recruiting you for who you are as a wrestler. We're recruiting you for who you are as a person.

- Academics are too challenging
 - That's a great question. Here's the truth - our academics here are challenging - and that's exactly the point. We don't exist as a wrestling program to produce great wrestlers. We exist as a wrestling program to produce great people - who also do great things on the wrestling mat. We're here to build you into the best possible version of yourself in all regards - athletically, academically, socially, professionally. That means we're going to challenge you in all of the areas to help you grow. Is it easy? Definitely not. But, we're able to do that because of the amazing support structure we have to help you be successful no matter the challenge. We have a small campus with less than 2,000 students. Your professors will know you by name - you'll probably have dinner at some of their homes. They are available to you in ways they just couldn't be at a larger school. You won't fall through the cracks because we're all invested in your success. With 21 varsity athletic programs at a school of this size, we know exactly what kinds of challenges our student-athletes face and have built an infrastructure of support to get you through those challenges. On top of all this, our athletic department has a lot of academic support resources for student-athletes available year-round to help you succeed.
- NIL access
 - As a smaller school I can see why you might think it would be more challenging to find ways to utilize NIL to defray some of your school expenses. At Davidson, though, because we have such a strong wrestling alumni network and a great relationship with the Charlotte chapter of the Wrestlers in Business Network, we have access to a wide variety of business owners and decision makers who are open to supporting our student-athletes with NIL deals.

- **Showcasing Davidson's strengths**

- Location
 - It's hard to find a better environment for college than Davidson, NC. Davidson has an absolutely beautiful campus in the middle of a thriving suburb. We have everything you need within minutes of campus - you're

not in the middle of nowhere and you're also not stuck in the middle of a giant city. We're minutes from Lake Norman - in fact we have part of our campus right on the lake - so there's a ton of outdoor recreational activities right in our backyard. We're only a short drive from the city of Charlotte and all it has to offer - restaurants, the arts, NBA, NFL and NHL teams, and plenty of networking opportunities. Davidson's location is one of its greatest assets!

- Size
 - Our smaller school size, with less than 2,000 students, means more personalized attention and closer relationships, all with the resources of a Division 1 athletic program. It's like the best of both worlds. We have 21 varsity athletic programs, which means a high percentage of students on campus are student-athletes, all with a shared experience at a school that clearly understands the student-athlete experience. Your professors will actually know your name - you'll probably have dinner at some of their homes. They are available to you in ways they just couldn't be at a larger school. You won't fall through the cracks because we're all invested in your success. When you walk around campus, you'll know people and people will know you. Davidson feels like home. Finally, while the school may be smaller, it's hardly in the middle of nowhere. To be right near beautiful Lake Norman and all it has to offer, and also have all the resources and opportunities available right in Charlotte, gives Davidson the perfect mix for a home away from home.
- Career prospects
 - Tell me what you'd like to do when you graduate and I can point you to dozens of successful Davidson alumni who have followed that career path. 95% of the Class of 2021 was employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months of their graduation. Even more importantly, through the resources we have on campus - our Davidson Athletics Career Advantage program, our Center for Career Development, our grad school advising, and our program's unique relationship with both the Charlotte Chapter of the Wrestlers in Business Network (WIBN) and our own diverse network of Davidson wrestling alumni - we can connect you directly with professionals to help set you up on that path.
- Growth opportunity in program
 - The beauty of athletics is how dynamic it is. The environment is constantly evolving. If it wasn't, we wouldn't need to wrestle in the SoCons or the NAAs every year, we could just keep giving medals to the same programs over and over again. The fact is we haven't been as competitive in the conference as we'd like to be, but like everything else in the world, that's evolving and changing as well. Honestly, we're not really looking for student-athletes that are ok with the status quo, we're looking for change-makers - student-athletes that want to come into a program and make a shift. Kids who want to do something special and be part of

something significant, not just in their time here at Davidson, but in the rest of their lives after college, as well. One of the reasons we're here talking today is not just because you're a good wrestler - any college coach should want to talk to you for that reason. We're interested in you because of who we think you are as a person. Someone who's capable of leading change and building something lasting and special - at Davidson and in the rest of their lives. We're not recruiting you for who you are as a wrestler. We're recruiting you for who you are as a person and really excited about you joining us on this journey to reinvent Davidson Wrestling and build something lasting, special and enduring. We want you to be able to make this part of your legacy as well!

- Strong academics
 - Obviously Davidson has very strong academics to help prepare you for the career and the life you want to live. We've been called a "New Ivy", a "Hidden Ivy" and a "Southern Ivy", but the fact is we're not trying to be an Ivy League School - we're trying to be Davidson College - where a student-athlete knows they can come for an amazing education and an amazing athletic experience. That might be comparable to some of the Ivy League schools but the difference between Davidson and a lot of these other schools is that Davidson is also "home". It's not this giant, cold, impersonal campus. We're smaller. Professors and students know each other here and look out for each other here. You don't fall through the crack here. You're on a campus with a very high percentage of varsity student-athletes - all with a shared experience and an environment built to support everyone becoming the best they can be on the mats, in the classroom and for the rest of their lives. It's more of a family feel here and when you're in the Davidson family, you're in the Davidson family for the rest of your life.
- Athletics Done Right
 - Athletics Done Right means we're all about helping you become the absolute best possible version of yourself - athletically, academically, socially, professionally and more. We're going to constantly challenge you to become the best you can be, but at the same time give you all the support you need to help you get there when things get difficult. The difference between Davidson and a lot of other schools is that we absolutely own the ideal that we don't need to sacrifice academics or athletics in order to be great at both. That's hard to actually do on a lot of campuses, but because of our smaller size, together with our Division-1-level resources and support, we're able to do it here and we take a lot of pride in doing just that to set our student-athletes up for success for the rest of their lives.
- Financial aid
 - We have one of the best financial aid packages in the country. The Davidson Trust guarantees your financial aid package from Davidson will

meet 100% of your financial need with grants and campus employment - not loans - so you won't be graduating with a ton of debt. 51 percent of the Class of 2021 received financial assistance from Davidson. The average aid package is \$45,000 a year.

- High % of SA's on campus
 - With just under 2,000 students on campus but also with 21 D1 athletic programs, we have a fairly high percentage of our students that are student-athletes. That means a lot of students sharing the student-athlete experience and an environment built to support everyone becoming the best they can be on the mats, in the classroom and for the rest of their lives. It lets our athletic program offer great support to help you stay on top of your classes, as well as our Davidson Athletics Career Advantage program, specifically designed to help our student-athletes build the skills and network to launch their careers quickly after graduation. It's more of a family feel here and when you're in the Davidson family, you're in the Davidson family for the rest of your life.
- Culture of Davidson Wrestling program
 - There's a lot that's great about Davidson that really sets us apart, but the biggest difference-maker is the culture of our team itself. Lots of programs like to talk about how their team is close or they have a great environment to train. Here, it's part of our DNA and our identity as a program: "The best program in the country to be a part of... The WildcatWay: A family, a future, a home". That doesn't mean things are going to be easy or we don't have disagreements, but what it means is, more than any other school, we recognize how hard it is to excel in both collegiate athletics and collegiate academics. Wrestlers like to see themselves as self-reliant, which we definitely are, but the fact is no one has ever achieved anything great in life completely on their own. You can't ever be your best without a support structure. Without a "family" to lift you up when you struggle and kick your butt when you need to be pushed. We take something you might struggle with alone and make sure you're never alone. Here, wrestling is a team sport from start to finish and that's what sets us apart.
- **Customized messaging for each PSA and their parents**
 - Focus on asking good, open-ended questions - to both PSAs and parents - and really listening to their answers. Examples:
 - What are you definitely NOT looking for in a school?
 - What did you really like about your visit to School X? What didn't you like?
 - Who is helping you make your decision about school?
 - Strategically use responses to inform our recruiting strategy for that PSA and their family going forward
 - Identifying what areas we need to emphasize or focus on
 - Identifying what areas are not as important

- Identifying who else are the influencers in that PSA's decision process - parents, coaches, etc. Make it a point to "recruit" those influencers as well with our ongoing communication.
- Each PSA has specific fears, biases, and desires as they head through the recruiting process
 - Key is to identify and adapt our messaging as we move along in the process to that specific PSA's worldview
- Personalized Development plans
 - For each PSA coming for official visit, present them with a hard-copy structured personal development plan to show them you have a plan to get them from where they are to where they want to be
 - If we're getting uncertainty about whether a kid will be taking a visit, consider getting this plan to him and his parents earlier to help tip the scale
 - Plan divided into three sections: wrestling development, academic development and professional development
 - Personalized as much as possible based on prior conversations with PSA
 - If parent is on campus, meet with them as well and present plan to them too. If not, email to parents and then call to discuss.

Parent Engagement

- **Importance of engaging parents**
 - 91% of PSAs say their parents play a "significant role" in their college decision - (Source: dantudor.com/winning-over-your-prospects-parents)
 - For most, their parents are likely the single biggest influencer on their college choice. Sometimes they are the ones who have the final say.
- **Parent psychology in the recruiting process**
 - Parents want confirmation and recognition that they did a great job raising their son. Our communication should give that to them.
 - Leverage the pride parents feel for their son to build relationship
 - Let them know as specifically as possible why we're interested in their son, what we love about him, etc.
 - Parents have likely always known their son's coach, so they want to know us as coaches
 - Psychological need to feel their son is in "good hands", so they need to trust us.
 - Establish trust through consistent and honest communication.
 - Parent want to get to know your personal side to further build trust

- Let them see who we really are as people to build rapport and comfort level
 - Who we are when we're not coaching - talk about our families, etc. - to come off as human and relatable as possible
- Parents need to know about return on their investment and feel there's a very high long-term value proposition for them and their son
 - Speak about starting salaries, job placement, grad school opportunities, career networking, internships, etc.
- Parents need to be able to clearly answer the question when asked by friends/family why their son chose Davidson
 - Stay consistent with messaging to them about return on investment, strength of Davidson's academics, Athletic Department support for SAs, networking for internships, etc.
- Parents have need to "be involved". High likelihood they've been very involved in their son's wrestling career to this point.
 - Make them feel like "part of the team" rather than passive spectator
 - Keep parents involved in the recruiting process: give them things to do related to the application process, FAFSA, planning campus visit, etc.

- **First contact with parents**

- Involve parents as early as possible
- Consider making first contact with parents before contacting PSA
- If at all possible, make first contact by phone call
- Introduce myself, introduce Davidson, let them know we'd like to recruit their son, let them know where we saw their son and what we like about him - be as specific as possible
- Don't try to "sell" them right now - don't set up the relationship as a buyer-seller relationship. This sets up adversarial relationship based on negotiation. Instead, prioritize "getting to know them" and relationship building.
- Ask them if they have any questions right now. Give them my cell phone and email and let them know they can reach out at any point in the process
- Start to position myself as "trusted advisor" in the overall recruiting process

- **Ongoing parent engagement strategies**

- Spend some time getting to know them - build rapport discussing and complimenting their professional career, their family, their house, the way they have raised their children, etc.
- Let them get to know us as people - talk about my family, career, etc. Focus on making them feel comfortable with me and our staff
- Some key questions to engage parents:
 - What are their priorities for the school they want to see their son choose?
 - Why do you see Davidson as a good fit?
 - What are you trying to get your son or daughter to focus on right now?

- What kinds of schools have you already crossed off your list or decided not to pursue?
 - What is your biggest fear as you begin talking to college coaches?
 - Is there anything about our school or program that you don't like?
 - What other schools are you looking at?
 - How do you feel about your son going to school, X hours away?
 - Bring up finances as early as possible - but not in the first conversation
 - Direct parents to Davidson's [Net Price Calculator](#) as a starting point to the conversation about money
 - Ask if that cost range is something they're able to afford for their son's education
 - Make sure to discuss the ROI of choosing Davidson - opportunities for career networking, internships, starting salaries, job placement, grad schools, etc.
 - Keep parents involved: give them things to do related to the application process, FAFSA, planning campus visit, etc.
 - "Recruit them to be recruiters"
 - Help them have logical answers to any objection their son might have
 - Ask what concerns they think their son has about Davidson and answer them factually and logically
 - As soon as we get a commitment, get the parents access to online team store or something similar so they can get Davidson Wrestling gear into their hands ASAP
- **Frequency of contact with PSA's parents**
 - At least every 3-4 weeks, more as needed - can be by email or text message, not just phone calls
- **Campus visit strategies for parents**
 - Plan itinerary for our PSA's parents, as well, while we're planning itinerary for our PSA
 - Schedule them for an admissions tour, set up a meeting with career services, schedule time with health center or counseling services, if that's important to them
 - Ask them in advance which of these different types areas would be of interest to them
- **Utilizing parents of current SAs**
 - Let PSA's parents know they're an important part of the process and how great a community of parents they're joining
 - Connect them with the parents of current freshmen SAs so they have another resource for answers to their questions - this goes a long way to show PSA's parents that you're up front and honest with them

- Set up Zoom sessions specific for parents
- Make introductions and then leave the session
- Let them talk about the school, the dorms, academics and academic support, etc.

Recruiting Timelines

- **Set fair but firm recruiting timeline for all PSAs**
 - Timeline keeps coaching staff and PSA/family on task and on the same page in regards to where they are in the process
 - Creates roadmap to continually move PSA down the funnel
 - Always let PSA know the “next step”
 - Give them a path forward and constantly nudge/help them down that path
 - They are never standing still, they are always moving closer to Davidson or further away from Davidson
 - Let’s PSAs and families know the date you plan to wrap up recruiting class
 - Timeline adds perceived value to our program
 - A PSA’s progress along the timeline provides good realtime gauge of their interest level
 - Allows us to develop internal metrics at various dates along the way to help us assess if we’re on track to hit target or if we need to make adjustments

- **Timeline implementation**
 - Explain timeline to PSA/family at beginning of recruitment
 - Discuss with them why it’s for their benefit
 - Get them to agree to a fair deadline for their final decision at the beginning of recruiting process
 - “We’re planning on wrapping up our recruiting class by late January. So, based on the timeline we discussed, you’ve got about 11 months to make your decision. Does that sound fair? Is that a timeline you’re ok with?”
 - Throughout the recruiting process, at least once every few months, continually remind them of our timeline and check-in with them on “their” timeline to make sure they haven’t accelerated their plans and we miss an opportunity
 - Now when the deadline starts to get close we don’t come off as pressuring them, since it’s a time frame agreed to early on
 - Regularly remind PSA/family where they are at that time
 - Build in benchmarks along the timeline to help them stay on course and to measure their interest
 - We need to remain disciplined in sticking to timeline

- If PSA drags feet, likely means they're no longer interested.
 - When needed ask "What else do you need to know?" to gauge response

- **Timeline milestones (will be adjusted for Davidson-specific processes)**
 - Prospect identification
 - First contact - PSA and parents (June 15 after sophomore year)
 - Recruiting Questionnaire
 - FAFSA completion
 - Initial cost of attendance discussion
 - Junior Day (after August 1 before junior year)
 - Home Visit/watching them compete
 - Unofficial Visit
 - Official Visit
 - Offer
 - Commitment
 - Signing NLI (if applicable, starting in November)
 - Application Deadline (ED1, ED2 or RD)
 - Acceptance/financial aid package
 - Deposit
 - Orientation

- **Importance of being first (or close to it) to contact PSA**
 - Accelerated recruiting timeline has been evolving over the last few years
 - Things are happening faster. PSAs and their families are making earlier decisions and taking fewer visits.
 - COVID has created more fear and uncertainty
 - Looming economic uncertainty
 - Travel expense increasing
 - Ability to get a lot of information online
 - Statistics - speaks to importance of identifying PSAs earlier and making contact with them and their parents earlier (Source: Tudor Collegiate Strategies)
 - Instead of 8-10 schools on a PSAs top list, it's more like 3-5 schools now
 - HS recruiting class of 2021 visited only three schools on average
 - 40% of kids commit to first school that contacts them
 - Allows us to shape our narrative better - we need to proactively and intentionally define Davidson and our program for PSAs and their parents BEFORE they define us in their own heads (i.e. "we tell our own story")
 - Try to be the first coach to actually ask PSA if they're ready to commit

- **First contact guidelines**

- Don't try to "sell" - don't set up the relationship as a buyer-seller relationship. This sets up adversarial relationship based on negotiation. Instead, prioritize getting a response. We want the conversation.
- Don't ask them to campus yet - too big of an ask at this point. Just work on letting them get to know us and plant seeds of relationship.
- Don't sound fake - don't be too well rehearsed. No scripts. Speak casually.
- Let them know where we saw them - what is the context through which we're contacting them
 - What attracted us to them - what jumps out about them that makes us think they'd be a good fit or that we wanted to contact them. Be as specific as possible.
 - If we saw them wrestle - where did we see them? What one or two specific things did we see that we liked?
- Let them know we're ok with not being their first choice right now
 - "We know you're probably getting a lot of contact. You have a lot of schools you're looking at. We're okay with that. We encourage it. Because we're going to be the school that's really hard to say no to later. In the end, I think we're going to be your top pick."
 - "In fact, eventually, I'd love to talk to you about other schools you're looking at besides us."
- Always ask for a reply with written communication
 - Give them "permission" to talk to you and start a dialogue
- When they reply back, ask them about their process and their next steps. Let them know our next steps. "When do you want to be committed and make a final decision?"

- **After the first contact, to keep the process moving forward:**

- Contact every 6-9 days
- Still don't do a lot of selling or do it in small drips
- Get into some ideas about why we like them
- Lay out our timeline and when we see the process finishing up for our program
 - Let them know the process you want them to go through and get them to agree on that.
 - Follow-up by asking about their timeline: "Can you walk me through your timeline?"
 - Comparing their timeline to our timeline gives us insight into how we need to handle each step of the process for that PSA
 - Continually check-in with them throughout the process, at least once every few months, on "their" timeline to make sure they haven't accelerated their plans and we miss an opportunity
- Begin sharing content based on 360-degree framework and "Hero's Journey" framework

- Always ask open-ended questions and listen carefully to responses
- **Campus visits and asking for commitments**
 - Campus visits are integral and critical piece of recruiting strategy
 - Campus visit timing and execution tie into timing and format of messaging to PSAs and their parents regarding commitment
 - This is a highly-detailed and nuanced part of overall recruiting strategy and could really be its own standalone document
 - As such, I'm excited to discuss this piece of the recruiting strategy in detail if we're able to speak further
- **After commitment, need to continue "recruiting" PSAs until they show up on campus for orientation**
 - Continue contact with them every 10-14 days
 - Get them immediate access to buying Davidson Wrestling apparel
 - Make sure they know they still matter and we still want them
 - Reaffirm to them they're making a great decision

Supporting Data

Davidson Wrestling Historical Geographic Roster Analysis

State	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	Maximum
PA	8	5	4	3	1	1	8
VA	4	2	2	1	2	3	4
GA	1	1	2	1	1	3	3
NC		1	1	2	3	3	3
MA	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
NJ	3	3	1		2	2	2
WI		1	2	2			2
CT	1	1	1	1			1
FL				1	1	1	1
HI	1						1
MI						1	1
MN	1	1	1	1			1
NY		1		1	1	1	1
OH	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SC	1	1					1
TX						1	1
WA	1	1	1	1			1
TOTAL	22	19	17	15	14	19	

HS Wrestling Participation by State (from NFHS)

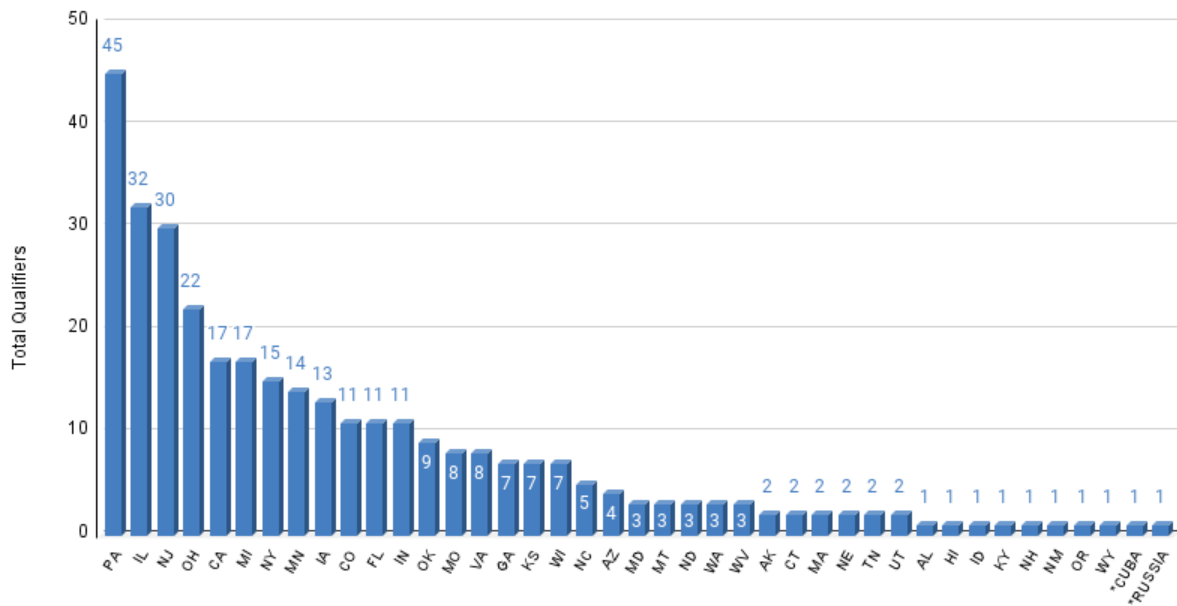
State	HS Participation
CA	22,602
IL	14,170
NY	11,184
TX	10,998
OH	10,313
NJ	9,648
PA	9,460
WA	9,251
MI	9,167
MN	8,058
GA	7,943
FL	7,789
NC	7,754
WI	6,669
IA	6,523
MO	6,458
IN	6,363
VA	6,229
CO	5,290
AZ	4,894
KS	4,724
SC	4,530
OR	4,481
NE	4,463
MD	4,415

State	HS Participation
MA	3,970
TN	3,891
OK	3,844
UT	3,323
AL	3,080
ID	2,519
CT	2,307
NV	1,976
KY	1,902
LA	1,772
WV	1,663
NM	1,629
SD	1,583
WY	1,395
MT	1,380
AK	1,249
AR	1,137
HI	1,113
ND	889
DE	872
RI	825
ME	719
NH	705
DC	183
VT	114
MS	25

NCAA Qualifiers by Home State

2022 NCAA Qualifiers by State

39 Total States Represented



2021 NCAA Qualifiers by State

