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U.S. Collegiate Athletics: International Student Athletes Recruiting Process

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U.S. COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ATHLETES
RECRUITING PROCESS

by

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Bachelor of Arts
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This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Ciro Pazmino, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and life. Thank you for being a firm believer of women's professionalism and excellence. I dedicate this thesis to my daughter Samantha, who is a source of inspiration for me everyday. To my parents, German and Rocío Jara, and my brother Germán A. who have always loved me and support me unconditionally, and whose good examples and vision have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve. Without all of you this experience could not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

The pressure to win has grown as a result of the billions of dollars invested in collegiate athletics and the increasing national media attention, and coaches and administrators are searching for an athletic edge (Wieberg, 2008). There are a limited number of American athletes that have the skills to impact the collegiate level. Competition to attract the top domestic players is high, so coaches turn to larger, international recruiting arenas with less competition (Riley, 1997). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulates collegiate Sports in the United States, which is the only place in the world that provides the opportunity to participate in elite athletic competition while attaining a college degree.

According to statistics from the NCAA, over 17,653 International Student Athletes (ISAs) participated in Divisions I, II and III during 2009-2010. This represents 10.24% of the total number of student-athletes participating in Division I, II, and III during 2009-2010. The ISAs' participation has been constantly increasing through the years. The present study will examine the recruiting process of ISAs by exploring the following three questions:

- Do coaches mainly use their personal Network to recruit ISAs?
- Does the Network have an influence on the recruitment success rate?
- Where do coaches go to recruit internationally?

In this study, I used the qualitative research technique of in-depth interviews with 12 coaches and 10 ISAs of selected Division I and II NCAA member institutions in the state of South Carolina. I found common trends in the ISA recruiting process, grouped by level of competition. Based on the results I created a structure that describes the recruiting process of ISAs from the perspective of the Coaches and the ISAs. Results indicated that there are at least 8 methods used by coaches to identify elite ISAs; however, the coach's personal-Network is the main one. Previously known as the "talent pipeline", personal connections have evolved and expanded to become a Network. Depending on the level of competition there is a distinction in the use of the Network. Major Division I programs have better recruiting resources and prefer to do personal-recruitment of ISAs by attending International Tournaments. These coaches use the Network as an evaluating tool. On the contrary, Division I-AA and AAA and Division II coaches rely heavily on their network during the ISA recruiting process.

The other methods for ISA recruiting are: direct contact through email, agencies, academies, showcases, U.S. college transfers and U.S. high schools. Additionally, the experience of the coach also had an influence on how the Network was used. Older coaches tend to rely greatly on their well-established Network as opposed to younger coaches who used academies, agencies, and showcases as alternative ways to identify ISAs while they build their network.

Next, the recruiting success rate, usually a 5 to 1 ratio, is the same for international and domestic athletes according to the information provided by coaches during the interviews. The only exception to this ratio is when the ISA has been

recommended by the coach's personal network; then the probability of that ISA committing to the institution is close to a 1 to 1 ratio.

Finally, coaches search for athletes everywhere. The network usually brings together athletes from the same country or same background; nonetheless Networks extend beyond one country's limits and can easily cover zones of the world. Currently, the majority of ISAs in South Carolina originate from 6 countries including but not limited to Canada, Germany, England, Brazil, France and Australia.

New trends were found in regards to the large increase in ISAs' participation in Division II institutions in South Carolina. Further research should be conducted to determine if the new trend presents itself nationwide. It will also be interesting to study the athletic and economic impact that ISAs have in NCAA Collegiate Athletics. Furthermore, it would be important to examine the effectiveness of the Network in creating successful athletic programs and compare it with the effectiveness of the recruiting agencies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EC .... Eligibility Center

F .... With Football Team

ISA .... International Student Athletes

IA .... International Athlete

NCAA .... National Collegiate Athletic Association

NF .... Non Football Team

SEVIS .... Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

US Intercollegiate Athletics

One of the most popular topics nowadays is globalization and its socioeconomic impact. One of the factors that produce globalization is "mass migration and people moving." Globalization offers huge potential benefits for society and economies; nevertheless, it is also a complex topic because of the differences in culture, values, and expectations throughout the world (Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2008).

Globalization has also influenced the sports industry. As a consequence of globalization, athlete's migration has largely increased in the past 50 years. The topic becomes more complex depending on the level of play amateur or professional; and depending on the real purpose/motivation of the athlete's migration. The purpose/motivation varies depending on many variables such as gender, the nature of the sport (individual or team), amateur or professional, school-based or club-base system, the place of origin, and the destination. Migration in general involves more expenses; therefore, it is important to understand each situation in order to make more productive investments and better decisions at the management level. The International Athlete (IA) migration phenomenon has evolved over time. Athlete's migration can be divided in three clear steps: the recruitment process, the performance process, and the post performance process. This study focused on ISA recruitment process in Division I and II NCAA institutions in South Carolina.

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The main objective was to find similar patterns between schools' recruiting process of International Student-Athletes (ISAs) and to create a descriptive structure of the recruiting process.

The United States is the only place where an athlete can compete at an elite level while studying to obtain a college degree. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the governing body and focuses on the pursuit of excellence both academically and athletically (NCAA, 2014). The level of competition has driven colleges to invest in equipment, state of the art facilities, top coaching staff, scholarships for elite athletes, and many supporting services, such as tutoring, academic guidance, and medical care. Every year, billions of dollars are spent on collegiate athletics (Mayyasi, 2013). As a consequence of the dollars invested in collegiate athletics, and the increasing national media attention, the pressure to win has grown overwhelmingly. Coaches and administrators are always searching for an athletic edge (Wieberg, 2008). There are only a limited number of American athletes that have the skills to have an impact at the collegiate level. Competition to attract the top domestic players is high, so coaches turn to larger, international recruiting arenas with less competition (Riley, 1997).

1.1 OVERVIEW OF ISAs' PARTICIPATION IN THE NCAA

Over 16,000 student athletes from countries outside the United States were playing for NCAA member institutions in 2006-07 (NCAA, 2008). According to statistics from the NCAA Ethnicity Report, the number of ISAs' participation increases every year. The percentage variation between 1999-2000 and 2008-2009 school years for male ISAs increased from 1.8 to 3.8 percent, and for female ISAs increased from 1.5 to

4.3 percent of the total student-athlete population (including Division I, II and III) (NCAA, 2010). Note that the NCAA Ethnicity Report defines the ISAs as nonresident alien student-athletes, which requires the athlete to have a temporary visa that will expire at a specific point in time.

The following chart shows the largest increase of ISAs' participating in Division I, II and III in each sport between 1999-2000 to 2008 – 2009 school year.

Table 1.1 Larger increases of ISA's participation in NCAA between 99-00 to 08-09.

SPORT	% ISAs	% INCREASE	% ISAs	% INCREASE
	MALES		FEMALES	
ICE HOCKEY	22.9%	+14.0%	22.7%	+16.6%
TENNIS	20.6%	+10.1%	17.3%	+11.1%
SQUASH	17.6%	0%	17.1%	+12.0%
GOLF	7.2%	+4.5%	10.7%	+6.7%
SKIING	12.5%	+9.6%	11.0%	+8.5%
SOCCER	9.3%	+4.9%	3.3%	+2.1%

It is important to point out that all of the sports mentioned above are non-revenue sports. However this is not the case with football and men's basketball, which are central to colleges' revenues. As we might expect, the percentage of ISAs' participation in 2008-2009 in football was 0.5%, and in men's basketball was 3.9% (NCAA, 2010). These numbers confirm a greater market size of talented players in the U.S. for football and basketball. It is not surprise that on these sports U.S. is a dominant country worldwide.

"The competitive success of ISAs – both men and women – is gaining the attention and in some cases, the concern of college coaches, players, parents of junior players, member institutions, fans, and commentators" (Weston, 2006). There are three

main controversial points about the participation of ISAs in U.S. collegiate athletics: ISA amateur eligibility, fewer opportunities for American athletes whose families are taxpayers, and a concern about whether ISAs' participation undermines U.S. sports by training future opponents (Hoffer, 1994). On the contrary, other stakeholders view the participation of ISAs as beneficial for home grown Olympic hopefuls who will have to compete in a higher levels of play in amateur divisions (Ridinger & Pastore, 2001).

Based on the increase of ISAs' participation in U.S. Collegiate athletics, and after mentioning three controversial issues of ISAs' participation, it is necessary to understand various aspects of ISA recruiting in order to make more productive investments and better decisions at the management level.

1.2 PURPOUSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to define a general structure of the Recruiting Process of International Student Athletes. In addition, I will identify and describe the main factors that influence the recruiting of ISAs.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do coaches mainly use their personal Network to recruit ISAs?
- Does the Network have an influence on the recruitment success rate?
- Where do coaches go to recruit internationally?

First, it is important to know if coaches use their personal Network in order to recruit ISAs? Then, how influential is their personal network in the recruiting process? Are there other ways that coaches use to recruit ISAs? John Bale, a pioneer researcher on this topic refers to the term "talent pipeline" when referring to the coaches' personal

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Network. He stated that coaches used their personal connections in order to recruit ISAs. In 1991, when Bale published his book, *The Brwan Drain,* the traveling conditions and communications were not as sophisticated as in today's world. Technological tools such as Skype, Face Time, email, Facebook and Tweeter have improve instant communication substantially. Therefore the old model of the "talent pipelines" has been transformed or substituted.

Second, does the Network have an influence on the recruitment success rate? In average, how many ISAs should be recruited to ensure that one ISA commits to a program? And most importantly, how many committed ISAs successfully adapt and have an impact on their new teams? Current research suggest that ISA adapt better to the collegiate level because of their personal maturity, playing experience and professional-like discipline towards academics and athletics (Duchesne, Bloom & Sabiston, 2011).

Third, where do coaches go to recruit internationally? Is the recruiting done through personal contacts, important events, well-know locations or others? Are coaches recruiting from a limited market or are they really getting access to all the best international athletes? It is imperative to know if the coaches are recruiting the best ISAs worldwide.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature on the recruitment process of ISAs is very limited. Various studies have been conducted on the participation of ISAs in U.S. Collegiate Athletics. Although continuing to emerge these studies had examined different topics such as: historical description of the ISAs migration phenomenon; the coaches' perspective and their strategies when recruiting and coaching ISAs, the ISAs perspective and their motivation to participate in US collegiate athletics.

Even though the previously mentioned areas of study do not focus specifically on the process of recruiting of ISAs, they point out very important factors that influence the way in which schools and coaches have established their ISA recruiting processes. I summarized and pointed out the main ideas of each topic of study as well as the relationship of this information with further research needed.

2.1 HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF ISAs' PARTICIPATION IN NCAA

John Bale is one of the pioneer academics to research about athletes' migration. In his book *The Brawn Drain*, he focused on the migration of athletes to American universities. He referred back to the origins of the unique U.S. Collegiate Sports system when he mentioned: "Sports and community were intimately linked to the growth of the American system of higher education" (Bale, 1991, p. 13). Thus the presence of a college helped the town to grow and sports were able to generate instantaneous visibility and

support. Then, the pressure to build a visible sports program led to recruiting. When the NCAA regulated recruiting, it gave every school the possibility to recruit athletes from anywhere in the country or the world. Bale also stated that it was only since the legalization of athletic scholarships in the 1950s that the influx of foreign student athletes became significant (Bale, 1999).

Bale identified a recruitment pattern that he called the "Talent Pipeline," which was a strong link between national sources and college destinations. Some universities were well known for recruiting athletes from a specific country. Coaches built connections in a specific country through a current or ex ISA from that country.

2.2 COACHES' PERSPECTIVE ON ISAs RECRUITING AND PARTICIPATION

Some studies have been done on the topic of coaches' perspectives about ISA recruiting. Ridinger & Pastore studied the situation of coaches within the ideological basis "win at all cost" of U.S. intercollegiate athletics. In this scenario coaches needed to recruit the best players regardless of national origin. Smaller schools usually recruited internationally because they could not convince top U.S. athletes to look their way. Usually the top programs attracted the top domestic players (Ridinger & Pastore, 2001).

Some coaches view ISA recruiting as a quick fix. They also claim that ISAs bring maturity, work ethic, and a goal-seeking attitude not always seen in U.S. youth. ISAs are usually more appreciative of the training facilities, coaching, academic support and other benefits they receive. ISAs can enhance an athletic program, both athletically and culturally. Coaches also acknowledge that recruiting ISAs is complex and controversial; especially when referring to age and amateurism eligibility (Ridinger & Pastore, 2001).

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Ridinger and Pastore, pointed out three issues and concerns about recruiting internationally and the participation of ISAs in U.S. Collegiate Sports:

- Expenditure of U.S. tax-dollars in the education and training of international athletes.
- Diminished number of scholarships available for U.S. athletes.
- Effects of world class athletes on collegiate competitions.

To counteract these concerns, the authors mentioned, "the international student-athlete is a foreign investment that gives back to the community by helping his/her team win games, while fostering local pride for the university" (Ridinger & Pastore, 2001, p. 10).

Bale also presents the view of the coach in the topic of recruiting ISAs. He quoted Tom McLaughlin, track coach in Dallas, "my job is to win for our school, not develop U.S. Olympic athletes," in reference to a concern that the participation of ISAs in the NCAA might be undermining U.S. teams for future Olympic competitions. Another view was stated by Roy Benson a Florida track-and-field coach, "those who want desperately to win at all costs will go for foreigners." Nevertheless, this might not be as bad as it sounds when we take a look at an example of "instant help" as a strategy used by Clemson University soccer coach, who built a NCAA soccer championship team out of foreign talent. He later stated, "in essence we used our recruiting and scholarships to build a program American players would recognize and find attractive enough to play for" (Bale, 1991). In reference to the costs and expenses of recruiting ISAs Don McClimon of the University of Wisconsin said, "paradoxically it is often the case that

foreign recruits are actually cheaper than domestic talent" (Bale, 2001, pg. 98).

2.3 ISAs' MOTIVATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN US COLLEGE SPORTS

Researchers such as Garant-Jones, Love and Kim, Popp, Hums and Greenwell, and Gaston-Gayles, have provided an insight on the topic of foreign athletes in U.S. collegiate sports. According to Love & Kim, the existent studies on this topic can be grouped into two general categories: first, those focusing on the experiences of international athletes on American university campuses (e.g. Love & Kim; Popp, Pierce & Hums, 2010); and second, motivations of international athletes in coming to American universities (e.g., Berry, 1999; Grant-Jones, Koo, Kim, Andrew, & Hardin, 2009). Outside of these areas a lot of research still needs to be done.

The past decade has seen a nearly threefold increase in the number of international athletes coming to the United States for the purpose of participating in collegiate sports (Love, 2011). The motivation for international athletes to participate in American universities varies depending on gender and place of origin. The main motivational factors identified in previous studies are: receiving an education with a an athletic scholarship, the high level of competition in U.S. collegiate sports, the quality of training facilities located on America college campuses and the United States itself (Love & Kim, 2011).

It is interesting to point out that Love & Kim based their research upon interviews with 12 individuals who migrated to the United States in order to participate in collegiate sports. This methodology gives the advantage of being able to express individual experiences and perceptions. Some of the answers stated a clear motivation on obtaining

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an academic degree and others were not so defined when they said, "this door opened, I had to take the opportunity, and wherever it leads me is where I'm meant to be" (Love & Kim, 2011, pg. 96).

The study done by Love & Kim uses typologies to qualify migrant athletes such as: mercenary, those athletes whose experience will be financially beneficial for them in the long run; cosmopolitan, athletes interested in seeing different cultures and learning the language; settler, migrants athletes who stayed more than two years after they graduated; returnee, those who go back to their place of origin; exile, those athletes that migrated due to threats to their career, liberty, or their life; and ambitionist, those who have a desire to achieve a sport career anywhere. The findings on this study indicated that depending on the country of origin and gender, the motivation to become an immigrant athlete is different.

In other study Andrew Guest (2007) compares two soccer teams, one from U.S. and one from Malawi. He found that U.S. team members tended to view sports participation as a competitive ground, expressive outlet, and a site for self-improvement. On the other hand for the team members of Malawi, sports were viewed as a demonstration ground, a pastime, and a site for innate self-actualization. The socioeconomic situation of Malawi influenced the way the athletes view sports. (Guest, 2007).

An important study by Grant-Jones, *Motivational factors influencing International Student-Athletes to participate in the NCAA*, reveals that ISAs are influenced highly by academic factors, as well as by the chance to participate in highly

competitive leagues. Stephanie Grant-Jones also mentions the economic impact of international students coming to U.S. masters and doctoral programs and the added benefits of their presence in U.S. institutions such as: increasing the credibility of the institution, and opening the communication among countries around the world for future purposes. Grant-Jones cited, "in the United States, international students contribute more than $12 billon to the U.S. economy each year" (Altbach, 2004). Grant-Jones used factor analysis to assess which factors influence most the process of selection of international student-athletes. The questionnaire composed of multiple-choice answers and 7-point Likert scale, revealed the results summarized on Figure 2.1.

In addition to the motivations of ISAs to participate in sports, it is also important to know how each athlete viewed sports and its purpose. The study revealed that ISAs rated the competition aspect of college sports significantly lower than domestic student-athletes. ISAs from Western European nations rated good citizenship significantly lower than student-athletes from Eastern Europe, Central and South America and the United States (Popp, Hums, Greenwell, 2009). This study introduced the concepts of geographical regions, economic and political systems, and national sport policies as having great influence on the way athletes view sports.

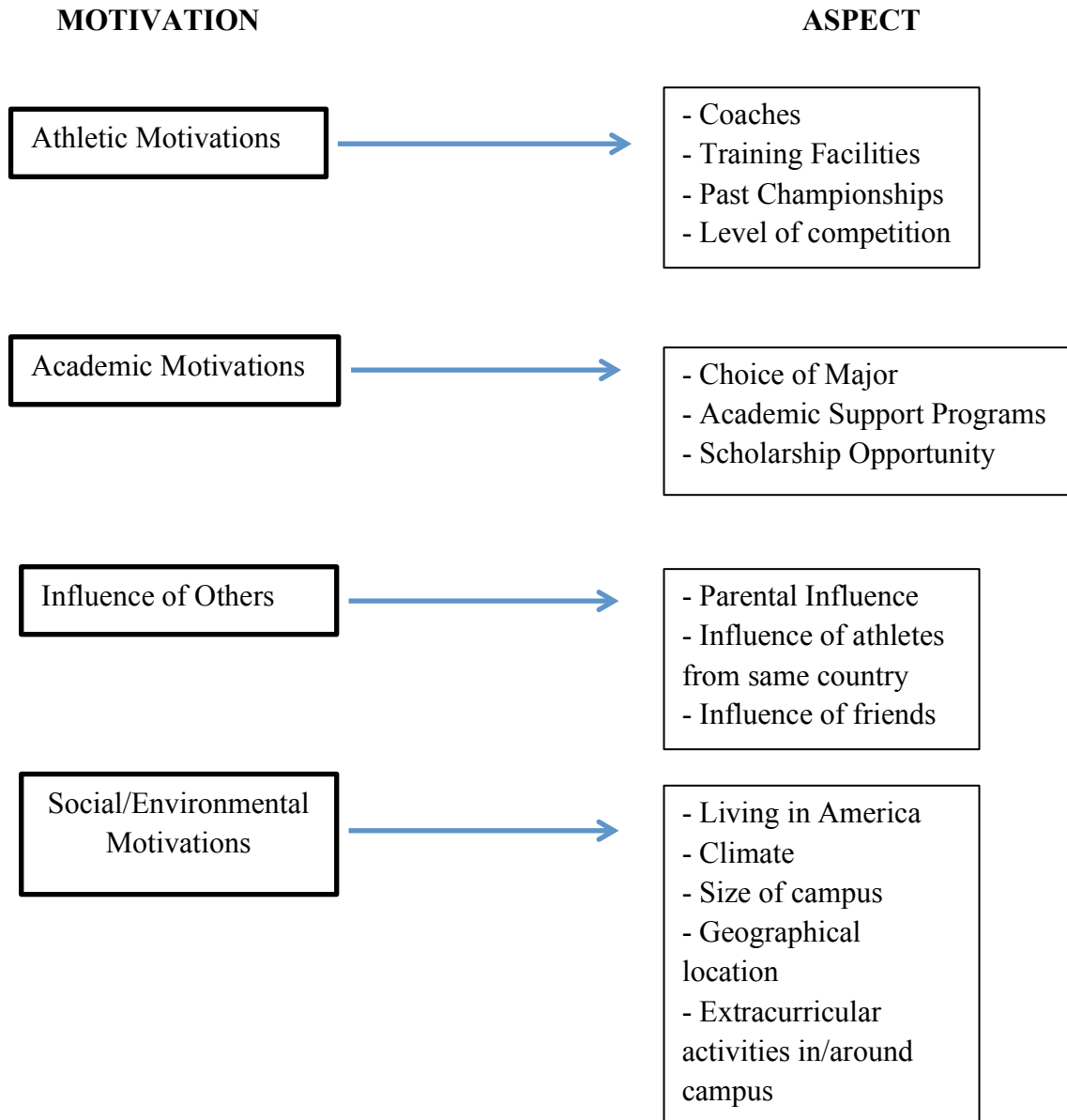| MOTIVATION	ASPECT
Athletic Motivations	- Coaches - Training Facilities - Past Championships - Level of competition
Academic Motivations	- Choice of Major - Academic Support Programs - Scholarship Opportunity
Influence of Others	- Parental Influence - Influence of athletes from same country - Influence of friends
Social/Environmental Motivations	- Living in America - Climate - Size of campus - Geographical location - Extracurricular activities in/around campus

Figure 2.1 Influencing Factors of the ISAs' decision to participate in U.S. Collegiate Sports.

The athlete's dream of using intercollegiate sports experience as a stepping-stone to a professional sport career was other motivating factor introduced in this study. I expect this factor to grow among the future generations of ISAs while professional sports become a more lucrative industry.

Popp, Hums & Greenwell on their study *Do International Student-Athletes view the Purpose of Sport Differently than United States Student-Athletes at NCAA Division 1 Universities?* mentioned other important facts such as: Over 16,000 international student-athletes during 2006-2007 participated in collegiate sports. 70% of this number of athletes participated in Division I. These numbers are still on the rise, and the number of variables that influence foreign athletes make the topic more complex. There are many areas still in need of research. This study mentioned the following areas: academic achievement, social adjustment, graduation rates, retention rates, post athletic careers, assimilation back into home culture, university selection and recruiting process.

Another important piece of information in this process is the selection process that athletes go through in order to decide what American university to attend. Popp, Pierce & Hums wrote *A comparison of the college selection process for international and domestic student-athletes at NCAA Division 1 Universities*, which presents factors that influence the athlete decision process such as: knowledge and awareness of host country, level of personal recommendations influential to the student, cost of attendance issues, physical and educational environment or climate of the institution, geographic proximity to the home country, and social links in the host country. It is very typical that the only contact between the ISA and the university is the head coach, thus the coach becomes extremely important factor in the ISAs' decision. The study did not mention if the ISA being

recruited had more than one school as options during their decision process.

Additionally, other important aspect to take into account and worth researching as part of the phenomena is, the coach of the home country and his/her willingness to help their top performers land a U.S. college scholarships (Popp, Pierce & Hums, 2011). The information produced in the suggested research will be extremely important to the NCAA governing body and the regulations they impose on international athlete participation. At the moment, the NCAA regulations limit the recruitment of international student-athletes to a certain number in Division II and III. For Division I there is no a limit on the number of ISAs that can be recruited. In addition to these regulations, the NCAA has to moderate the consideration of professionalism outside the states. Since international athletes grow up in a club-based system, most of them are exposed to some level of professionalism.

There are a lot of areas that my research can help to clarify and put into perspective, regarding international athletes in American universities. The goal is to build a structure where all the actors involved in U.S. Collegiate Sports benefit from the experience. The answer to the three-research question that I previously stated can create new insight to more effective ways to recruit ISAs, who will contribute to the development of U.S. Collegiate Sports.

2.4 THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION

Due to the nature of the ISA recruiting process I used Network Theory, also known as network analysis as the underlining theory in the progression of defining an ISA recruiting process. Barnes (1954) is credited with coining the notion of Social Networks. At its core, the Network analysis (Social Network theory) studies how the

social structure of relationships around a person, group or organization affects beliefs or behaviors.

Social networks and the analysis of their structures are an interdisciplinary academic field where social psychology, sociology, statistics and graph theory are involved. Social network analysis is a major paradigm in contemporary sociology. In general, social networks are self-organizing, emergent, and complex. The Social Network is a structure made up of a set of social actors (nodes) and a set of ties between these actors. The Network can be used to determine the social capital of individual actors. The Network of relationships can also have some important consequences in the success or failure of the actors involved. Evidence suggests that the types of Networks we form around ourselves affect everything from our health, to our career success, to our very identities (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003).

The Social Network approach to organizations and individuals can be analyzed at different stages, from micro, meso or macro levels. The analysis also includes the strength of the ties and how much they influence each node. Other key elements of the network analysis are the defining units of observation, individual, team, organization, etc. As Kilduff and Tsai mention in their book, *Social Networks and Organizations*, orienting concepts include: the embeddedness of work-related and economic transactions in patterns of social relations, social capital as a set of resources inherent in an actor's set of Network ties, and structural holes as gaps between actors or groups of actors that share no direct ties. At the level of the whole Network, important concepts include: the density of ties, the centralization of the network, the reachability of actors in the network, and the extent to which network relations are balanced. At the level of the individual tie,

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important concepts include strength, and reciprocity.

The Network ties are always changing, and with time the connections migrate and move, which produces the development of the Network. When the number of ties from a node increases then that node becomes a hub, which brings together many nodes.

The social network theory was the basic structure around which I identified key elements that interact during the recruiting process, influential factors, and tools used during the recruiting process. The main objective of this study was to build a structure that describes the process of recruiting ISAs, but additionally identifies the actors (nodes) and the relationships (ties) they have created during this process. The study also identified hubs, which are nodes with great number of ties. For the purpose of this study a hub is formed by hundreds of ties as oppose to a node that has tens of ties.

Further studies should analyze the effects of the Network during the recruiting process of ISAs. It will be important to explore the impact and influence of the Network on the actor's behavior and what kind of influence a social Network has in the success or failure of an athletic program. If the influence of the Network is significant then each coach's Network might be a valuable element to consider when hiring coaches. The Agencies service act as Network hubs, however it would be interesting to analyze the strength of these ties and the influence on the entire Network.

The following Figure 2.2 represents the elements of the Network and the differences between nodes and hubs. The links between the nodes and hubs are the relationships built between coaches, ISAs and other actors of the recruiting process such as Agencies, Academies, etc.

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The figure also shows three types of Networks: Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed.
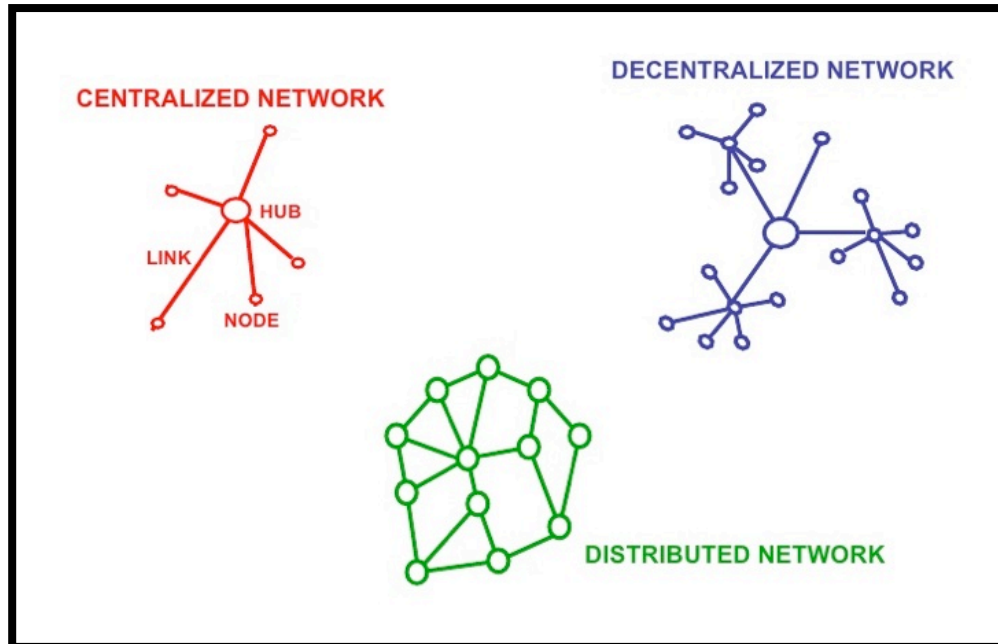
Figure 2.2 Elements of the Network and Types of Network. (Gummesson, 2009, pg. 14.)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

During the past 30 years, ISA recruiting and ISAs' participation in US Collegiate athletics have been increasing during the past 30 years. Even though, the number of ISAs participating in NCAA Division I, II and III athletics is less than 10% of the total number of SAs, their participation is perceived to have a big impact on their teams. There are many stakeholders in NCAA sports, but in this study I focused on the information from selected coaches and ISAs only.

ISA recruiting processes are different from one university to the other, because of the differences in recruiting strategies, coaches' experience, budget, and other factors. It is probable that the particular processes would also be different from one sport to the other. However, I found general trends and similar reasons why coaches look at the international market of athletes while building their teams.

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted as a Qualitative Study with the following three assumptions:

- First, coaches use their personal Network in order to recruit ISAs. John Bale stated that coaches used their personal connections in order to recruit ISAs,

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however the "Talent Pipeline" as he defined it, has developed into a more complex system.

- Second, the ISA recruiting-success rate should be higher than the Domestic recruiting-success rate. The U.S. Collegiate Athletics system is very attractive to international athletes because it gives them the opportunity to study towards a degree while competing at an elite athletic level. Therefore, the ISA recruiting-success rate should be near 100%.

- Third, since coaches use their personal Network to recruit, the location of their personal contacts determines where coaches can look to recruit internationally. Based on this assumption, the international recruiting market will be limited to the size and location of the coach's Network.

3.2 INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used for this study was semi-structured, in-depth interviews (see Appendix I and II). "In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation" (Boyce & Neale, 2006, pg. 3). This instrument offers the primary advantage of providing more detailed information about the ISA recruiting process. It is also the instrument that best fits the respondent's availability. The interviews were conducted with coaches and ISAs, who are very busy and difficult to reach. Coaches and ISAs have very little time outside of classes, practices, games, traveling, planning, and other responsibilities they have to attend. Therefore, I scheduled individual interviews at their convenience and sometimes the times had to be re-scheduled due to complications.

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On the other hand, this instrument was limited in a number of ways: it is prone to bias, time intensive and not generalizable. Nevertheless, I counteracted the bias limitation by "using effective interview techniques, such as avoiding yes/no and leading questions, using appropriate body language, and keeping personal opinions in check" (Boyce & Neale, 2006, pg. 4). The study aimed to find a common trend among ISA recruiting processes, a description of the current practices, rather than qualify them as good or bad. Having this objective in mind helped me to counteract the bias limitation.

The study also used secondary data to build the demographics of the ISAs in Division I and II schools in South Carolina. This data also served to compare and relate the results collected from the interviews. The secondary data was obtained from the rosters of each school athletic web page, the NCAA Ethnicity Report and the Equity in Athletics Website from the U.S. Department of Education.

3.3 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The instrumentation was applied to 12 coaches and 10 ISAs, who could not be used to generalize the process to the 1,281 NCAA's institutional members The selected institutions were: University of South Carolina, Coastal Carolina University, Winthrop University, Newberry College, Limestone College, Lander University, and Coker College. I intended to have a large variety of backgrounds and state or private institutions in order to have a wider range of responses.

The interviewed subjects were selected from a list of Universities in South Carolina that are members of the NCAA and participate in Division I and II (these schools offer athletic scholarships). The following tables describe the characteristics of

our interviewed subjects and the characteristics of the institution that they represent. The subject's demographics are an approximate reflection of the general population in U.S. Collegiate Athletics.

Table 3.1 Gender Distribution.

	COACH	ISA
MALE	9	5
FEMALE	3	5
TOTAL	12	10

Table 3.2 Public / Private Distribution.

	COACH	ISA
PUBLIC	8	7
PRIVATE	4	3
TOTAL	12	10

Table 3.3 Sport Distribution.

	COACH	ISA
BASKETBALL (M)	0	1
BASKETBALL (W)	1	0
SOCCER (M)	2	1
SOCCER (W)	1	1
TENNIS (M)	4	3
TENNIS (W)	3	3
GOLF (W)	1	1
TOTAL	12	10

Table 3.4 Country of Origin.

	COACH	ISA
USA	9	0
AUSTRALIA	2	1
BRASIL	1	0
ENGLAND		1
GERMANY		1
MEXICO		1
NEW ZEALAND		1
NORWAY		1
QATAR		1
SERBIA		1
SPAIN		1
VENEZUELA		1
TOTAL	12	10

Table 3.5 Competition Level Distribution.

	COACH	ISA
DIV 1 A	1	2
DIV 1 AA	2	2
DIV 1 AAA	3	2
DIV 2 NF	4	3
DIV 2 F	2	1
TOTAL	12	10

Table 3.6 Years of Coaching Experience.

COACH	
SCHOOL	YR EXPERIENCE
DIVISION I-AAA	2
DIVISION II -NF	2
DIVISION I-AA	3
DIVISION I- A	6
DIVISION II-NF	6
DIVISION II-F	8
DIVISION I-AA	10
DIVISION II-NF	12
DIVISION II-NF	17
DIVISION I-AAA	28
DIVISION II-NF	28
DIVISION I-AAA	35

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

The content of the interviews were grouped as: coaches and ISAs. The information they provided was used to find patterns and recurrent themes to answer the three research questions:

- Do coaches mainly use their personal Network to recruit ISAs?
- Does the Network have an influence on the recruitment success rate?
- Where do coaches go to recruit internationally?

Recurring information provided by the interviewed subjects was presented in quotes in which they referred to the particular question. The answers of the interviewed subjects were based on their own experiences and the characteristics of their institution, such as the level of competition, the conference in which the schools participate, and the budget that they allocated to international recruiting.

After the analysis of the primary data, I built a general structure of the Recruiting Process of ISAs and identified various actors (nodes) involved in the recruiting process. Finally, I showed the relationships between each actor as links (ties). Additionally I presented factors that influence the flow of the structure.

4.1 DO COACHES MAINLY USE PERSONAL NETWORK TO RECRUIT ISAS?

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer: Tell me about the recruiting process of International Student-Athletes?

COACH DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: A lot of the time it is through a former player who is working at an Academy. I don't deal with Agencies, they are in the business of making money by placing their players, and I am not so sure unless you have a personal relationship with that person; that you get what you think you are going to get.

COACH DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: A lot of the times it is through a former player who is working at an Academy. Very rarely we get the reach out of an ISA, in that case I've got some common contacts to provide a reference for how good the player is.

COACH DIVISION I AA W-TENNIS: All of us get emails from agencies, but maybe one of my girls we got through an agency. A lot of my former players and former teammates from X University, so I can talk to them in all this countries and ask them would she play on your team. Just for being in the business for so long I have decent contacts.

COACH DIVISION I AAA M-TENNIS: At the moment I work with agencies, or people that I know, connections. Multiple Showcases. Sometimes coaches, agencies, academies, it is always different. I am trying to get into the job, get new contacts.

COACH DIVISION II NF W-SOCCER: There are agencies out there and they send you a lot of good stuff but I'll be honest with you, it is about making relationships and connections. That is more effective! We don't land a lot of kids with agencies.

COACH DIVISION II F W-BASKETBALL: I am Australian, so I just go back to my connections and my ties in Australia. In lower Division I there are a lot of Australians.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: I have to use former players; I have many contacts especially in southern countries. I am originally form Australia so I have contacts in Australia and New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, France and Bolivia. Generally I won't recruit an international person unless they are recommended by somebody that I know. 95% of the time I have more success when I know the person that recommends these ISAs.

COACH DIVISION II F W/M-TENNIS: One of the ways I find most people is through recruiters. There is a website online call universal rating. This is a worldwide ranking, so if they play in Mexico or Russia, it shows, they are all in the same point system. I have a database of people that normally send me stuff and they are pretty reliable.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-SOCCER: I have built up a network in my 40 years of experience. In the last 10 years, it has become highly sophisticated in recruiting services; there are around 30 or 40 agencies. You might have ISA who played here in the U.S. and went back to France or Germany wherever he is from and then he'll start an agency, because he knows the system.

COACH DIVISION I AAA W-TENNIS: I go to Brazil once a year, because I am from there. And besides the tickets it costs very little to recruit there.

COACH DIVISION II NF W-SOCCER: It is about developing a network. You got to have people that you trust. You got to lean on your network. You really have to trust some folks overseas that get to see them (athletes) every day.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-SOCCER: Former players help you recruit internationally. Students always recruit for the university.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: We are not going to invest tons of money on it, just because we do not have it. That is why I say it is so important to have that network and develop those relationships with people that you trust and they trust you. Someone familiar with what you have.

COACH DIVISION I W-GOLF: I will pick 2 – 3 tournaments each year where national teams or the most elite players internationally are going to be. I am making an evaluation on them first. I have seen them at a young age and finding their talent first, and then kid of following them as they progress their young career until they get to the point at which they are at the recruit able age.

ANALYSIS

Based on the coaches' responses there is a clear distinction between the ISA recruiting processes of top Division I programs and any other program. Top Division I programs have greater recruiting resources, thus these programs exhibit the following characteristics during their ISAs recruiting process:

- Search for the "best" amateur international athlete.
- Do personal international recruiting by visit international tournaments where elite athletes from many countries compete at the same place.
- Began recruiting the elite international athlete at an earlier age.
- Follow the development of the best athlete for many years.

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- Rely less on their personal Network and more on constant research and personal evaluation of the athletes.

On the other hand, Division I AA, AAA and Division II F and NF have very restricted budgets and they do not allocate a lot of resources to the ISA recruiting process. However, they exhibited the following patterns:

- Search for the "best fit" international athlete. These programs have a different level of competition than the top Division I programs, therefore they search for a talent unique to their reality. They have to have a mix of athletic and academic skills in addition to financial resources. Additionally, these schools usually have a smaller campus, lower level of competition, and do not always offer a full scholarship.

- These programs rely heavily on their personal Network in order to find international athletes. They also use their Network to evaluate recruits.

- The older and more experienced coaches have built strong and trustworthy Networks. Their "connections" know their needs and realities and are more effective in identifying international athletes that will match the program's needs.

- The older coaches usually do not work with agencies, because they are very impersonal and do not effectively match international athletes with athletic programs in such a way that both actors would be successful in the future.

- Younger coaches are beginning to build their Network, and they do not rely solely on their Network. They tend to work with agencies, academies, and showcases more than older coaches.

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- Younger coaches look to build a personal Network including agencies, academies, showcases, recruiters, and international ranking organizations.

- International coaches bring in additional value with a strong Network in their home country and some neighboring regions as well.

- Former ISAs become an important part of the coaches' network.

Based on Network theory, agencies and academies are defined as hubs. On the other hand, former ISAs and personal connections are defined as nodes. The relationships that coaches have with the nodes and hubs are the ties. Further studies should look at the quality and effectiveness of hubs and nodes in providing successful ISA-U.S. College matches.

4.2 DOES THE NETWORK HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON THE RECRUITMENT SUCCESS RATE?

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer: How many ISAs have you recruited vs. how many have committed to come to your school?

COACH DIVISION I A W-GOLF: It depends on the year. You start out recruiting; you are looking between 5 and 10. So you are probably looking at 5 you really want for 1 scholarship you are willing to give. The first week I'll send out 40 or 50, and then start to narrow down.

COACH DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: I have 11 potential athletes and ended up getting the top three on the list.

COACH DIVISION I AA W-TENNIS: They are all the same. I wouldn't say that an American or International is any easier or any harder; it just depends on what their decision is, what their experience is. I have 10 – 15 in the mix for 2 spots.

COACH DIVISION I AAA M-SOCCER: Almost all international players we recruit end up coming. Many of our international players are passed onto us through contacts and former players, so they are pretty much locked in from the start.

COACH DIVISION II F W-BAKETBALL: 5 to 1 or 4 to 1. I am in a different spot than other people. Most American coaches, when they are recruiting Australian kids, they get an email from someone they know, with me is more direct, because I am Australian, I have worked there. My recruiting from that standpoint is a little more specific.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-SOCCER: Per position, 3 to 1. Rank them in order of options. It is a process where you try not to put all your eggs in one basket. I put a lot of time into a recruit and nothing happens, and then you do nothing and they fold in your lap. There is no recipe that we all follow and it all works. They are all over the place.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: First of all, you have to know that they are really wanting to come somewhere in the USA, then convince them to come to X University. Generally, I recruit from a former player or contact. If the contact is highly recommending them then I have a good chance. Then it might come down to what you are offering. How much can they afford? Are you close with the other schools? Then usually you got a pretty good chance of landing the kids.

COACH DIVISION II NF W-SOCCER: It is very easy. It comes down to the dollar and what you offer money-wise.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: It depends. So with that, I can focus on maybe three and then get one of those. That is other thing that depends, the skill level. If I am looking for a number 1 or 2, I probably need to get in touch with six. I'll find six that I can really recruit hard because I know that they have a lot of options. If I am looking for a 5 or 6, then I can look at three and get one of them.

ANALYSIS

All of the interviewed coaches mentioned that the recruiting success ratio (getting an ISA to commit vs. the number of athletes recruited) depends on various factors. From the 7 coaches that gave a specific ratio, the average calculated was approximately 5. On average, coaches recruit 5 ISAs in order to commit one. The following table shows the calculations.

Table 4.1 Recruiting –Success Ratio
Division I and II

ISA RECRUITED	# SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE	RATIO
5	1	20%
11	3	27%
15	2	13%
5	1	20%
3	1	33%
3	1	33%
6	1	17%
AVERAGE	23%	

$$\text{ISA RECRUITING SUCCES RATIO} = \frac{\text{SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE}}{\text{ISA RECRUITED}}$$

Figure 4.1 ISA Recruiting-Success Ratio.

The interview responses yield the following similarities and conclusions:

- Whether a recruited ISA commits or not depends on various factors such as likability of the coach, scholarship offers, and school characteristics (campus, urban, rural, weather, etc.).

- The athletic level of the ISA recruited also determines how many options the ISA has. When the level is high, the recruit has more options to choose from. Regarding the same variable, the institution's needs (top / medium talent, athletic position) also determine how many athletes the coach needs to recruit specifically for one available scholarship.

- If the ISA has been recommended by a trustworthy contact, the athlete will tend to commit easily.

- If the coach has some kind of previous/current connection with the athlete, the ISA will also commit easily. For example in the case of international coaches, it is easier for them to commit ISAs from their own countries.

- Especially for Division II, where scholarships are not offered in full, the total financial aid offered is a very important factor that ISAs consider when choosing what school to commit to.

- The recruiting success ratio of domestic athletes and that of international athletes is similar, unless a close contact or former player has recommended the ISA. In this situation, the ISA is more likely to commit.

- When recruiting ISAs, the previous athletic/academic history of the institution and other characteristics, such as campus, conference association, and popularity, are not very influential factors. In most cases ISAs are not familiar with many

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characteristics of the universities that recruit them, placing all of the institutions at the same level. At this point, the ability of the coach to sell his/her program and establish a strong relationship with the ISA becomes the main factor that will influence the ISAs decision to commit.

These statements are supported by the responses from ISAs that follow:

ISA DIVISION I A W-GOLF: I had a goal to become a professional after college. So I looked for a good coaching staff. The program was up and coming. I liked that it was on the east coast so it was close to Europe. Most of the girls that look for an American University does not know anything about them. I was a little more focus, I wanted to come to a SEC or Pac-12 school.

ISA DIVISION I A M-BASKETBALL: [The Coach] has Latin blood. He is very clear and professional in his work. I decided to come here the first day that he called me.

ISA DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: I contacted coach and he got me a visit. I love X University and I like coach he is a great person. It is a great place to be in.

ISA DIVISION I AA W-TENNIS: The coach here was really approaching. I was lead by the best impression.

ISA DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: They contacted me, or I was in contact with them, initially seven or eight. And X University was right for me and it was the best fit for me. And also the scholarship was the best for me.

4.3 WHERE DO COACHES GO TO RECRUIT ISAs?

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer: Where do you go to recruit international athletes?

COACH DIVISION I A W-GOLF: I go to Europe a lot, two or three summer tournaments a year. Some tournaments are: The European Girls Team Championship, The British Girls Championship. Also other National Amateur Championships at each country that you can look at results. They are held every year at different places. In golf there is a lot of major events, tournaments where the major countries in golf go and play each summer, and I can look at them as a whole. And if there is another tournament that I need to go to follow up the internationals I'll go. A lot of international golfers also come here to play. So it is a mix of a little bit of both where I can see some players over here, but I also have gone over there and have seen them play over there.

COACH DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: We get a lot of transfers ISAs. I do get some freshman. The process is kids come they don't really know where they are going; they don't really like where they are. The transfer is coming because of the word of mouth, they have visited, they have been here the have played here. We have a nice location, longevity with the coach, so I have a real strength with that and I use that.

COACH DIVISION I AA W-TENNIS: They are all tennis players no matter where they are from.

COACH DIVISION I AAA M-TENNIS: We have had players from all over the world. Mostly Europe and Africa.

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COACH DIVISION II NF M-SOCCER: It goes in cycles, for a a while we had Scandinavian players; we still do but not as many. Then we had a lot of English, then some French, so it kind of goes in cycles. Mainly continental Europe.

COACH DIVISION II NF W-TENNIS: I am recruiting to the level of player; I am not discriminating against South Carolina, or out of state, or international. It is all about the level. I need a certain level to be as competitive as we are.

COACH DIVISION II NF M-TENNIS: So it really depends, but you do in the past 3 or 5 years. You have a major increase of high school players coming to America and then what they try to do is get into the American ranking system, so that way it is easier for the coaches.

On the other hand, the ISAs exhibited the following patterns:

ISA DIVISION I A W-GOLF: I played a tournament that is called the British Girls, popular tournament in Europe, where a lot of college coaches were.

ISA DIVISION I A M-BASKETBALL: I played for my country at the tournament under-16. I played really well, and I met a player from U.S. He told me if I wanted to play in the States. I went to high school in Maryland, where a lot of the NBA players went.

ISA DIVISION I AA M-TENNIS: I graduated down in Florida, from a tennis X Academy. A former player was my coach at X Academy and he told me there is a great school down in South Carolina, great coach, and great team.

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ISA D<small>IVISION</small> I AA <small>W-TENNIS</small>: I made a video and post it on YouTube. Then I send an email to 100 coaches and got about 4 replies. The funny thing is that I didn't email X University. Somebody else referred me to them.

ISA D<small>IVISION</small> I AAA <small>W-TENNIS</small>: I went through an agency. They help me take a video of me playing and put it up on the Internet.

ISA D<small>IVISION</small> I AAA <small>W-TENNIS</small>: I had friend that came here before and told me that here I can study and keep playing sports. I went to an agency in Spain and I paid about $4,000 and they guarantee at least 25 offers from universities and full scholarships.

ISA D<small>IVISION</small> II NF <small>M-SOCCER</small>: I Google how to study in America and found an organization that had a showcase in Florida, 150 guys were there. We played for five days, and at the end the coaches could go and talk to you. I had around 10 offers.

ISA D<small>IVISION</small> II NF <small>W-SOCCER</small>: I went to a trial in the north of England. An English coach recruited me; he played professional football. He is a coach over here.

ISA D<small>IVISION</small> II NF <small>M-TENNIS</small>: I got recruited through an agency. In New Zealand a lot of people go through the agency. I pay about $2500 and they tried to contact coaches every day.

A<small>NALYSIS</small>

From the interviews I identified two perspectives in the ISA recruiting process: the ISAs and the Coaches perspective. Nowadays, the ISAs are taking a proactive approach to promote themselves to U.S. Coaches. Based on the personal experience of the 10 ISAs interviewed, it was confirmed that various methods were used in recruiting

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ISAs. Of the ten ISAs, three went through an agency and pay $2,500 to $4,000 to get recruited by U.S. Colleges. Two promoted themselves through direct email to the coaches. On the other hand, the coaches select their personal network as their primary recruiting and evaluating tool. From the interviews only two of the ISAs were recruited directly through the network. The complexity of this system requires expansion in order to find the most efficient ISA recruiting method used by coaches.

4.4 STRUCTURE OF THE RECRUITING PROCESS OF ISAs

Based on the responses obtained during this study the Recruiting Process of International Athletes can be described in the following general and identifiable steps:

- Identify: A Coach uses various methods to search for international athletes.

- Evaluate: after identifying ISAs the coach evaluates them based on the Institution's needs.

- Select: from a large recruiting pool, the coach selects 40-50 international athletes.

- Contact: the coach contacts the IA through various methods. His/her main goals are building a personal relationship and selling the high qualities of their program.

- Clearing House: all prospects have to pass varoius requirements established by the NCAA to be eligible to participate in US Collegiate Athletics.

- Select: the coach selects the top 5 eligible international athletes

- Scholarship Offer: the coach presents a scholarship or financial aid offer to the IA

- ISA Decision: the IA decides among 5 to 10 options where to commit.

- Sign NLI: The IA signs a National Letter of Intent with the Institution of their preference.
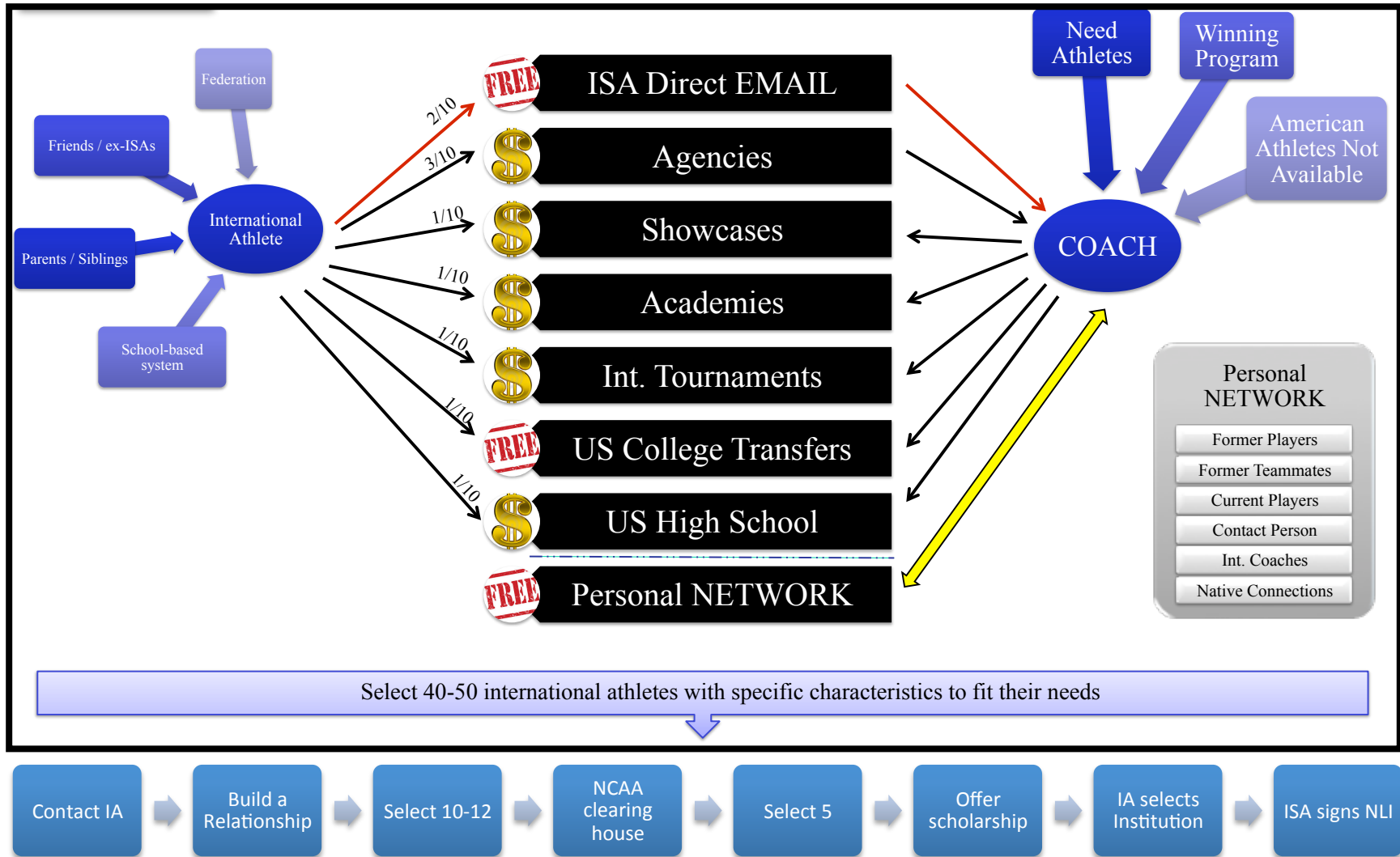
Figure 4.2. Structure of the Recruitment Process of ISAs.

The previous figure shows the 9 steps involved in the recruiting process of International Athletes (IA). The first and second steps which are Identify and Evaluate are detailed based on the responses from the interviews with coaches and ISAs. The study took into account two perspectives: the coach's perspective and the international athlete's perspective. The two actors are usually influenced by factors that prompt them to search for options to be selected by US Institutions and high-level international athletes respectively.

The International Athletes become interested in the US collegiate athletics school-based system by listening to friends, parents and siblings who have participated in US collegiate sports and had good experiences. In some cases, their country's Federation prompt them to participate in US. Collegiate Athletics. In other cases, the athlete gets to a divergent point where he/she must choose studying in a pursuit of a career or keep practicing the sport.

On the other hand, coaches from US. Institutions are influenced by the following factors.

The main factor was, the pressure to build winning programs. The interviewed coaches expressed this factor in the following:

"My goal is to build a championship program and wherever I am going to find the best talent is where I am going to go" (Coach Division I-A / golf).

"If you are going to win, you got to have international players, that is where we are in college tennis. There is some level of American players but they are going to the big schools" (Coach Division I-AA School / tennis).

Figure 4.3. Factors that influence International Athletes to participate in US Collegiate Sports.
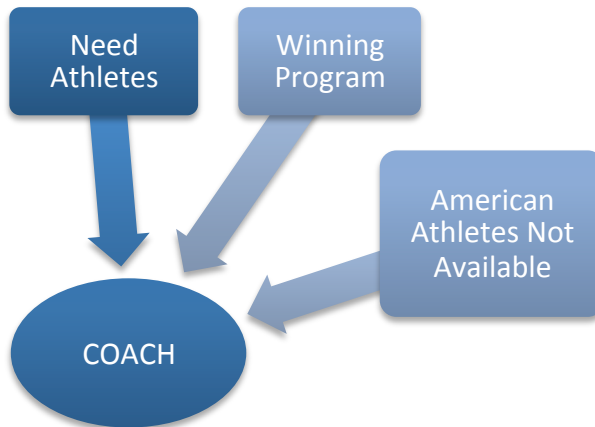

Figure 4.4 Factors that influence coaches from US Institutions to recruit ISAs

Some schools are not as attractive to the local talent as well-known schools. Most of the high-level athletes want to go to major Division I programs. And the second tier of American athletes wants to go to schools with great academic reputations and bigger programs. This is one of the reasons why smaller schools are driven to recruit international athletes.

Many international athletes seek the option of participating in U.S. Collegiate Sports (where they can participate in both academics and sports) in a proactive way. They use one or many ways to make themselves visible to US coaches.

The ISAs interviewed in this study used these methods to contact US coaches. Even though, coaches also use these methods to identify high quality athletes, the coaches' preferred method is their personal Network. In what follows, I will explain some important characteristics of each method:
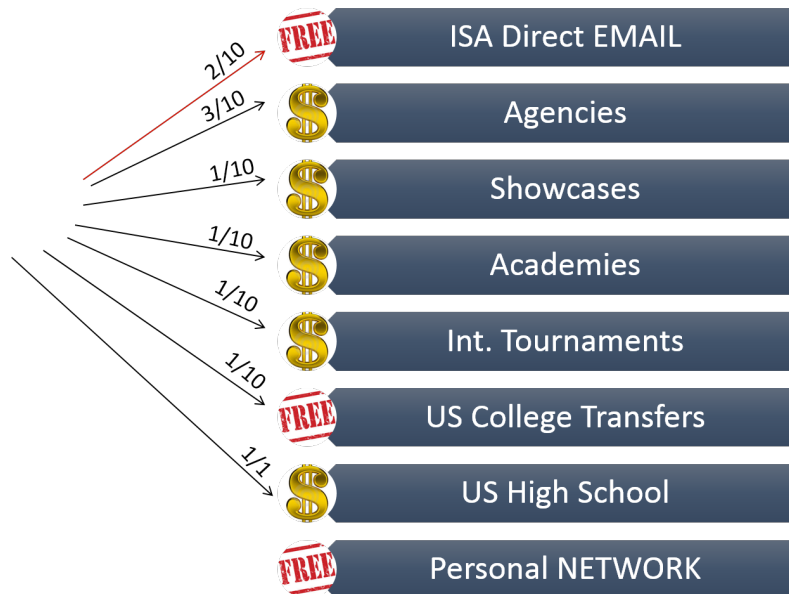

Figure 4.5 Methods ISAs used to promote themselves to U.S. coaches.

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Direct email: This method is free and was used by 2 of the 10 interviewed ISAs. Most of the coaches indicated that they prefer this method as opposed to being contacted by the agencies. However, this is not a very effective method for the athletes. One of the ISA interviewed said, "I sent 100 emails to various coaches and I got four replies, and the funny thing is that I didn't send an email to my current school, somebody referred me to them" (ISA Division I-AA / tennis).

Agencies: Athletes must pay for this method. Prices generally range from $1,000 to $4,000. From the ISAs perspective, this is the most effective method of being recruited; 3 of 10 ISA interviewed used this method. From the coaches' perspective, this is the least preferred method. Following are some coaches' opinions on the agencies: "In the last 10 years it's become highly sophisticated in recruiting services. Most of those people do not do a good job, because for the most part they are just trying to make money. They are not really concerned about the kid's best interest" (Coach Division II). Even though coaches do not prefer this method, they get multiple emails from agencies every day. The number of agencies is increasing whether they are American-based or foreign-based. Only the major Division I programs exclude this method completely. The head coach of a major Division I golf program said, "I have never had any company come in and show me somebody that is better, or sell me somebody. Especially the domestic ones don't have any credibility" (Coach Division I-A).

Showcases: these events are set up as one-week tournaments or even a one-day event. Showcases can be held in the States, with American and International athletes participating or internationally, with athletes from various countries participating. This method has a cost for the athletes that participate. Coaches usually go to these events if

they had specific interest in somebody or if they are close to the city where the showcase is going to take place.

Academies: these are private training institutes for elite youth athletes. The academies offer top athletic, and intense training in addition to high school academics for athletes from all over the world. Athletes can opt to join an academy for a tournament, for a summer session, or for a complete year. The cost of one year of participation, including boarding, is approximately $70,000. One of the ISAs interviewed went to an Academy in Florida. In his case, the Athletic Federation of his country pay for it. "Because I am in the national team of X country, I was traveling for tournaments all around the world. In my senior year, the Federation decided to send me to an Academy in the United States because that would help me to play in college" (ISA Division I-AA). On the other hand, coaches try to have a contact person in these academies since top athletes both domestic and international can be recruited from there.

International Tournaments: This is a specific option for major Division I schools, due to the high budget required to use this method for recruiting. However, this allows coaches to see and evaluate the best athletes from various countries and various ages at the same tournament. "I will pick 2- 3 tournaments each year, where national teams or the most elite players internationally are going to be" (Coach Division I-A).

US College Transfers: ISAs transfer from one school to another. Within the U.S. coaches often mentioned transferring as one of the main risks of having ISAs. In other cases, it can be viewed as another method to recruit top athletes. It can be turned into a recruiting strength depending on the situation. "We get a lot of transfers. The process is

kids come they don't really know where they are going, they don't really like where they are." (Coach Division I-AA) This coach takes advantage of one of the negative characteristics of having ISAs. Transferring from one school to another might be more common among ISAs because of the lack of knowledge about the school, the sports program, the town or city and others. Most of the international athletes being recruited never visit the school before deciding where to commit. This is a factor that strongly influences the ISAs' transferring. A further study might be carried out to determine the rate of ISAs' transferring and possible reasons and outcomes from this phenomenon.

US High School: another method ISAs use to be recruited by American coaches is to become involved in the American ranking system. One of the athletes interviewed was part of a High School basketball team in Maryland. He moved to the US for his senior year in High School with hopes of being recruited by a major Division I program.

Finally the most used method to identify international athletes and evaluate every prospect is through the coach's personal Network. Each coach builds his/her own network through the years, consisting of former and current players, former teammates, and personal connections. In this case foreign coaches usually have a big network of other coaches in their native countries. The Network becomes a very valuable asset for each coach. Most of the schools do not have a budget that allows them to travel internationally for recruiting, thus the network becomes a key element in identifying, evaluating, and recommending prospects to the head coach, in addition to selling and promoting the college to the international athletes.

In the following quotes coaches express how important the Network is for them. "Generally, I won't recruit an international person unless they are recommended by somebody that I actually know" (Coach Division II). "It is about developing a network. You got to have people that you trust. You got to lean on your network. You really have to trust some folks overseas that get to see the athletes every day" (Coach Division II).
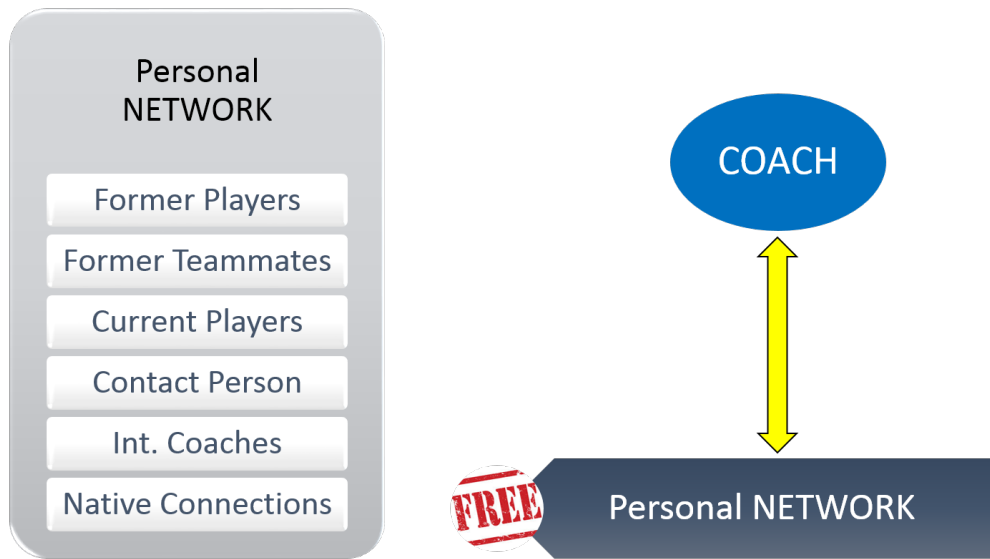

Figure 4.6 Coaches' personal Network.

Table 4.2 Main Recruiting methods used by Coaches and Coaches' Experience.

	NETWORK	EX-PLAYERS	AGENCIES	ACADEMY	NATIVE COUNTRY	EX-TEAMMATE	SHOWCASES	INT. TOURNAMENTS	TRANSFERS	TOTAL METHODS	NOVICE MEDIUM EXPERIENCE	OBSERVATIONS
DIVISION I- A	1					1		1		3	6 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION I-AA	1	1		1					1	4	10 YR	EX-PRO-PL
DIVISION I-AA	1	1				1				3	3 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION I-AAA	1									1	35 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION I-AAA	1	1	1				1			4	2 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION I-AAA	1			1	1					3	28 YR	
DIVISION II-F	1				1					2	8 YR	
DIVISION II -NF	1	1	1	1						4	2 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION II-NF	1		1							2	12 YR	
DIVISION II-NF	1	1					1			3	28 YR	EX-PLAYER
DIVISION II-NF	1				1					2	17 YR	
DIVISION II-NF	1		1	1						3	6 YR	EX-PLAYER
TOTAL	12	5	4	4	3	2	2	1	1			

Table 4.3 Methods used by ISA to get recruited
in relation to the Coaches' years of experience.

	AGENCY	DIRECT EMAIL	INT TOURNAMENTS	US HIGH SCHOOL	ACADEMY	TRANSFER	SHOWCASE	YEARS EXPERIENCE
DIVISION I- A			1					6
DIVISION I-A				1				7
DIVISION I-AA		1						3
DIVISION I-AA					1			10
DIVISION I-AAA	1							2
DIVISION I-AAA	1							28
DIVISION II-F		1						24
DIVISION II -NF	1							2
DIVISION II-NF						1		12
DIVISION II-NF							1	17
TOTAL	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	

Note: The methods highlighted in yellow are
Network related

After identifying, researching and evaluating many international athletes, the coach will pick 40 to 50 athletes that fit the need of the U.S. program. The needs of each school vary, by sport, and personal characteristics (athletic, academic, personality). The coach makes the first contact through email, and then he/she starts building a relationship with the international athlete. The tools that the coach generally use are Skype, Face Time, phone calls, Facebook and Tweeter. The goal of the coach is to get to know the international athlete, their personality, and their parents (if they speak English). The coach also promotes his/her school, their athletic program, and familiarizes the international athlete with the campus (virtual tours), their academic options among other

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information. A new selection is made, this time the coach picks 10-12 international athletes that have shown interest in the school and seem to be a good fit for the athletic program.

The next step is going trough the NCAA eligibility process. This is a time-consuming process, and difficult for the ISAs to complete by themselves. Agencies make a big difference on this step of the process because they help and guide the ISAs to keep in the right track and under the timelines that are required. Nonetheless, the process can be done independently by completing the following requirements: SAT and TOEFL scores, admission to the U.S. Institution translation and equivalent of High School grades, NCAA academic eligibility, approval of the amateur eligibility through the NCAA Eligibility Center, student Visa I-20, registration in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) at the Department of Homeland Security website, and the immunization forms necessary for the school and insurance purposes. In some cases this is just a lengthy process in other cases thing can be more difficult in the Visa request, and immunization fulfillment specially. The eligibility process has become stricter in order to guarantee an equal competition environment. International information is nowadays easily obtainable and competitions are clearly divided in amateurs and professionals. The age limits also has made the window of opportunity for ISAs much smaller.

From the ISAs that become eligible, the coach makes a final selection of the top five athletes that better fit his/her program, and ranks them in their preference order. At this point some schools will invite the prospect athlete to an official visit. Only major Division I School would pay for the athlete to travel internationally. And even those programs try to take advantage of situations were the international athlete would already

be in the States for other reasons (family vacations, competition, etc.). The majority of ISAs do not visit the school; in this study 3 of 10 ISAs had an official visit, 1 of 10 had an unofficial visit. From the 3 ISA that had an official visit, neither of them traveled internationally.

At this point the U.S. Institution makes a financial offer to the ISA. Depending on the Division of the institution the offer can be a full scholarship, a percentage, or a package with an academic component, a sports component and financial aid component. The ISAs usually has 5 to 10 options to pick from and their decisions are usually based on two things: the relationship established with the coach and the scholarship offer. There was a statement from a Division II school that indicated, "The Scandinavian countries will give the students money to go to school anywhere in the world. They might get a stipend every month. They can get academic scholarships, grans from their country. Sometimes we get Europeans because of the cost factor. We can save some scholarship money with this players" (Coach Division II). This is not a common situation at the moment and further research should be done on this topic in order to identify the influence this might have on U.S. College Athletics.

Finally the ISA commits to a U.S. Institution and moves from their native country. Even tough, it is not the purpose of this study, it is important to mention that in this study only 2 of 10 ISAs had a clear intention of becoming a professional athlete after graduation. Both athletes participate in a major Division I program. The rest of interviewed ISAs acknowledge that the opportunity to compete in elite sports will only last until their college career ended.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion drawn from the results of the current study shows that the recruiting process of ISAs has evolve through time and with the aid of communication technology. There are many methods used by coaches to identify elite athletes however the coach's personal-Network is the main one. Many years ago it was known as "talent pipeline" but nowadays it has expanded and become a Network.

International athletes are more proactive nowadays and are willing to pay significant amounts of money to companies that will promote their skills to U.S. Collegiate Institutions.

Major Division I programs have bigger budgets and therefore are able to perform in-person recruiting at International Tournaments. They also keep track of elite athletes from earlier ages and follow their development until they have the minimum age to be recruited. However, the rest of Division I and all Division II Institutions use their personal Network and the free-communication tools such as Skype and Face Time, thus the process of recruiting ISAs becomes cost-free. It is important to note that these institutions do not search for "the best international athlete", in contrast they search for a "good fit" that includes the right level of play, good academic standings, and good financial resources (those athletes usually have to pay a percentage of tuition).

Additionally, the recruitment success rate is the same for international and domestic athletes; usually a 5 to 1 ratio, according to the information provided by coaches during the interviews. The only exception to this ratio is when the ISA was recommended by a contact (node) of the coach's personal Network, and then the probabilities of that ISA committing to the Institution are much higher.

Finally, Coaches search for athletes everywhere. They do not refer to a specific country or even continent. They try to find the international athlete that best fits their program and wants to attend their school. The Network usually brings together athletes from the same country or same background; nonetheless Networks extend beyond one country's limits and can easily cover zones of the world. At the moment the majority of ISAs in South Carolina originate from 6 countries specially but not exclusively from Canada, Germany, England, Brazil, France and Australia. The following Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of countries of origin based on secondary data obtained from the Team's rosters published on their Website and the Equity in Sport Website.

The Division I has as many as seventy different nationalities among its ISAs participating in South Carolina Institutions. However the Network is heavily distributed among 6 countries that sum up to 50% of the total number of ISAs in South Carolina. It would be interesting to further analyze what kind of connections has been established with those six main countries.

The Division II has as many as fifty-nine different nationalities among its ISAs participating in South Carolina Institutions. However the Network is heavily distributed among the same six countries as Division I.
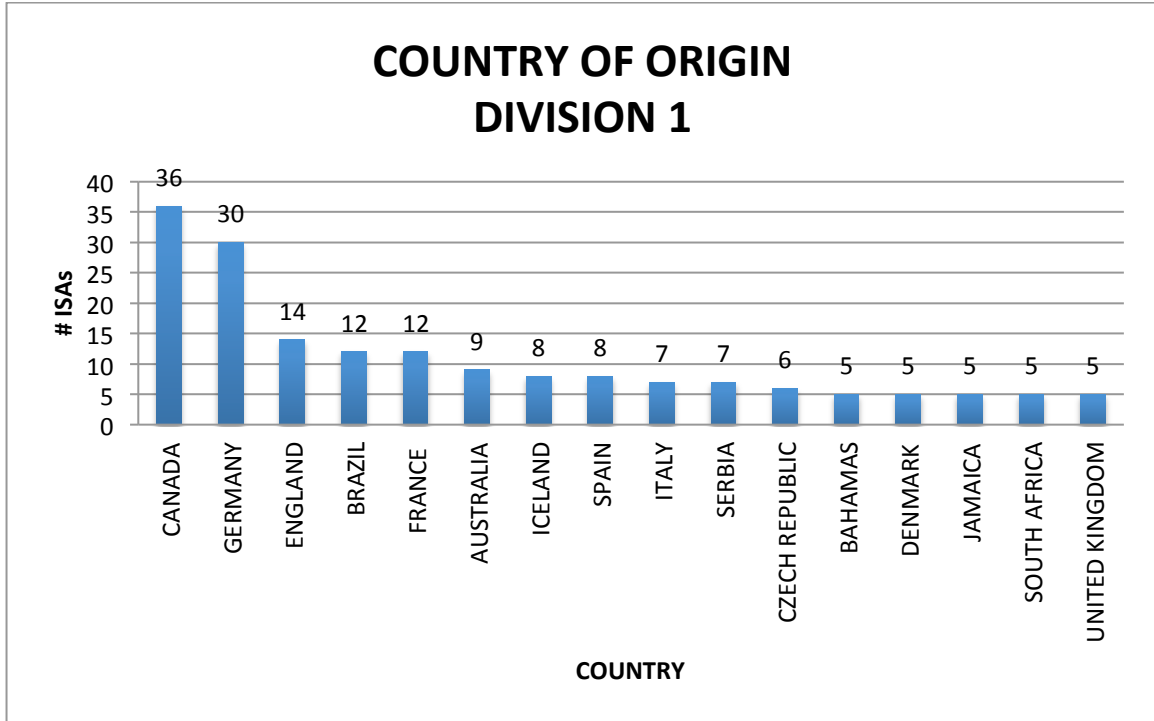
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Figure 5.1 Distribution of Country of Origin among Division I ISAs in South Carolina.
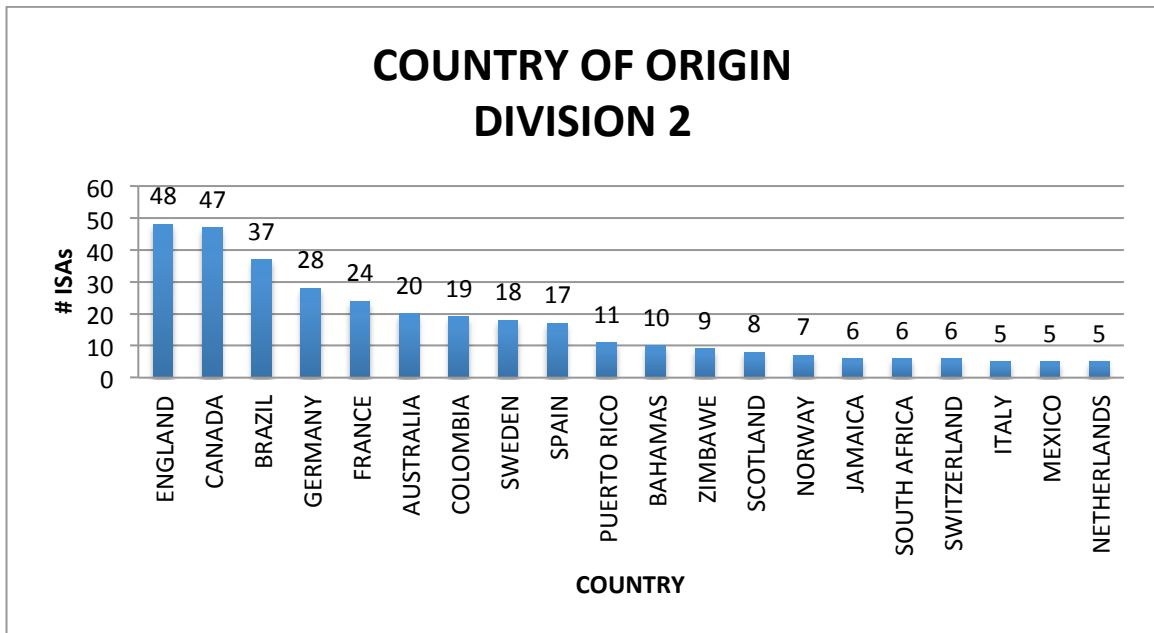

Figure 5.2 Distribution of Country of Origin among Division II ISAs in South Carolina.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations associated with the current study, some of which arise from the sample size. Big differences where found on the recruiting process of Major Division I-A schools and the other Division I and II schools. The sample on this study included 1 Coach from a major program and 2 ISAs from a major program. Therefore, there is the need of more information to support or contrast the information given by our subject. For future research, it will be important to choose a bigger sample and include more subjects from the Major Division I program.

Another limitation was the availability of coaches from sports such as basketball and swimming where there is also large number of ISAs participating in South Carolina Institutions.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

The total number of ISAs participating in NCAA Institutions in South Carolina is greater in Division II than Division I, which is different from what the NCAA has published in its reports up to 2009-2010. Further study should be done on the impact that ISAs are having on the level of play in Division II Institutions as well as Division I.

The participation of ISAs in South Carolina is greater in sports such as tennis, golf, soccer and basketball. The development of athletes on tennis and golf specially require a big investment, which lead me to believe that the ISAs that are participating in U.S. colleges have good economic situations in their countries. Further study should analyze the economic impact that ISAs have on Division II schools as well as Division I.

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There is a visible trend of the involvement of agencies in the recruiting process of ISAs. It will be interesting to analyze what effect will this involvement have on the U.S. Institutions that use their recruiting services as oppose to those who do not use their services.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - COACH

The following list of questions was used as an outline for the interviews. Where

appropriate, the interviewed subjects were asked to expand upon their answers.

1. Please, tell me about the recruiting process of International Student-Athletes?

2. What drives you to recruit internationally?

3. How often do you recruit internationally?

4. What is the % of budget destined to International Recruiting compared to domestic
   recruiting?

5. What tools do you use for international recruiting? (Facebook, Skype, visits?)

6. How many ISA have you recruited vs. how many have committed to coming here to
   your school?

7. Where do you go to recruit ISAs?

8. What are the benefits or risk of recruiting ISA?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - ISAS

The following list of questions was used as an outline for the interviews. Where

appropriate, the interviewed subjects were asked to expand upon their answers.

1. Tell me about your experience of being recruited?

2. Did you know about US Collegiate sports before being recruited? (Was coming here something that you pursued)

3. How many Universities recruited you? Which ones?

4. How did you get in contact with the coaching staff from your USA University?

5. Briefly describe your athletic experience since you were a kid? Did you play for school, national teams?

6. Do you think you are in advantage or disadvantage from the other SA on your team?

7. Do you consider that being an ISA from your country is an exception or is your case very usual? Why?

8. In the athletic aspect do you think you are improving in USA more than you would in your home country?

9. What do you plan to do after graduation?