

# College coaches flock to Illinois as state benefits from new June live evaluation period

By [Scott Phillips](#) June 24, 2019 1:01 PM



*NBC SPORTS CHICAGO*

College basketball's renovated recruiting calendar had a lot of people skeptical.

The newly-appointed June live evaluation period would theoretically allow college coaches to evaluate high school prospects with their high school teams instead of their AAU teams. The period also limited the number of players who could even be seen.

Which left Illinois in a unique position entering the first June scholastic evaluation period of the modern recruiting era this past weekend.

With only 29 total events in 20 different states -- plus select teams from surrounding states -- over two weekends, there weren't a lot of events for college coaches to choose from. The NCAA's hastily-appointed June period also imposed limitations bounded by its rulebook and association with the NFHS.

However, the new rules didn't hinder anything for high school players from Illinois. With an astounding six of the 29 June-period events for the month, Illinois high school basketball players will be seen by more college coaches than any other state during this month's live evaluation period.

Since the IHSA already allowed (and encouraged) summer basketball during the month of June, Illinois high school players are accustomed to being with their scholastic teams in shootouts, college team camps and summer leagues during the month. The infrastructure was also in place for well-run events -- some already going for decades -- to easily allow for college coaches to come in and watch competitive high school events.

Most-importantly, it generated dozens of scholarship offers for the state's high school players as Riverside-Brookfield, Zion-Benton and other schools hosted hundreds of Illinois high school games during the first of two live-period weekends this past weekend.

Other states scrambled to put together camps or tournaments for college coaches to watch their high school players. For some, football or baseball is the focus for June while basketball isn't even an option

during the summer in certain states.

California, New York, Florida and Texas all chose not to host June basketball events for college coaches. North Carolina is among a group of states where public and private schools operate under different state associations. So only certain schools could participate in June events.

While other states like Georgia and the West Coast's Section 7 in Arizona also created positive reviews for quality June events, the well-known Riverside-Brookfield Shootout, along with the newly-created Illinois/Wisconsin Border Battle event at Zion-Benton, drew hundreds of Division I college coaches to Illinois.

And those college coaches saw some very competitive games at Riverside-Brookfield that gave them a unique evaluation perspective.

Illinois high school teams have been playing together most of the month, the games were more crisp at certain times than other places as college coaches had good things to say about the level of play here compared to other events. The Riverside-Brookfield final day, in particular, drew positive reviews for the level of competition as teams went hard during bracket play.

Star senior talents like Whitney Young's D.J Steward and Tyler Beard helped entice high-major coaches to attend the event which led to junior talents like Fenwick's Bryce Hopkins and Notre Dame's Louis Lesmond earning high-major scholarship offers. Mid- and low-major coaches also descended on Illinois from all over the country as senior standouts picked up waves of scholarship offers.

College coaches at all levels also got to evaluate and get early looks at younger players in the state -- some of them rising freshmen who just joined the team this month. Some freshmen and sophomores created strong future impressions for later recruiting classes as college coaches follow up with them in the future.

All of these same players will still have an opportunity to play in front of college coaches next weekend when Ridgewood and Rockford both host additional Illinois high school events. More offers should be handed out by then as certain colleges will make Illinois players a priority to watch the rest of the summer.

June also gives Illinois players a head start for the July evaluation period since college coaches can see who is worth keeping an eye on while also adding new recruitable players to their lists.

Overall, Illinois benefits from the new NCAA June period more than any other state this summer. The opening weekend was attended by hundreds of college coaches and was a huge success. Only nine total events will be played during the second weekend as Illinois should get many more coaches inside the state in the coming days.

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