

# Recruiting Guide

tips to navigating the process



Your guide to understanding the process + playing college lacrosse



**How to maximize exposure** to college coaches and get your game in front of target schools



**Highlight video tips** to ensure college coaches evaluate your game and seek you out at events



**Learn how new rules** impact the recruiting process so you're prepared when opportunities arise



**Find colleges that fit** you both on and off the field to focus on getting recruited to the right school

**Knowledge is power • Lacrosse at any level matters**



Practical tips for navigating today's recruiting process and featuring yourself to college coaches.

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## Introduction

As an online recruiting service, we work with all stakeholders in the process, including players, parents and coaches. This guide provides insight from our conversations with college coaches, recruiting nights with partners clubs and assistance to recruits and their families navigating the recruiting process.

We're direct and hope you find this guide timely, practical and robust.

Lacrosse recruiting is essentially supply and demand. In this case, the demand or number of talented, high school recruits is growing much faster than the supply or number of available roster spots on college teams.

As a result, recruiting has become increasingly competitive for high school players, as well as college admissions in general for all students. Combine this with the fact that lacrosse programs are often at great academic institutions, and you get early recruiting despite vastly different scholarship and professional opportunities than basketball and football.

What does this mean for you? Simply put, lacrosse is a tool you can use to get into a great school. Furthermore, playing lacrosse will enhance your collegiate experience and better prepare you for life after graduation.

According to a study that analyzed the admissions data at Harvard, Virginia, Middlebury and other top schools, a recruited athlete was 30% more likely to be admitted than a non-athlete.<sup>1</sup>

College lacrosse at any level matters, down the road when you're asked how have you handled adversity of been a part of a team, you're going to have a great answer whether it's Division I or III lacrosse.

The key is to find a college that you would be happy at without lacrosse. With over 1,500 college programs from club to Division I, that's over 60,000 roster spots. Our college matching service is a free resource to help recruits and their families find and evaluate schools that fit them both on and off the field.

Early recruiting led to an increase in college transfers. New NCAA recruiting rules have slowed this trend and provided more time for players and parents to develop preferences, research schools and build a roadmap to act on.

Just like on the lacrosse field, communication is key. Make sure you and your parents are on the same page throughout the recruiting process as mixed messages can provide a red flag to college coaches.

Remember, the higher your grades, the more schools that can recruit you. Ensure your social media profiles reflect the expectations of a collegiate student-athlete. While stressful at times, the recruiting process will help you navigate future internship and job searches during college.

Be proactive, college coaches have limited staff and resources, combined with restrictions on when they can evaluate you in person, so tell them which events you're attending along with sharing your player info and video.

95% of college coaches being their recruitment online.<sup>2</sup> Ensure your information is visible and reach out directly to introduce yourself.

Good luck and get ready for the experience of a lifetime.

## **New Recruiting Rules = Better College Matches**

Adopted in April 2017, NCAA Division I proposal 2017-1 makes September 1 of a recruit's junior year the starting date for all communications and contacts with college coaches.

Submitted by men's and women's college coaches through their governing bodies, this legislation effectively limits verbal commits, unofficial visits and communication between recruits, parents and college coaches. Recruits now have more time to focus on academics, test scores, player development and finding schools that fit them both on and off the field.

While unofficial visits with athletic department involvement are restricted, recruits and their families are encouraged to get on campus and message college coaches with their player info, video and upcoming events.

So what does this mean for players and parents?

Men's and women's Division I college coaches may not make off-campus contact with recruits or their families, or reach out by phone, social media or during unofficial campus visits. Simply put, you may no longer meet with the coaching staff during an unofficial visits.

This increases the relevance of on-campus, prospect days, which we believe are permitted but now limit feedback to the recruit's athletic ability, not their progress or standing in the recruiting process. Prospect days are individual events similar to showcases but often limited to one school.

Again, parents and relatives fall under the same restrictions as recruits and may not act an intermediary. In addition, club and high school coaches may not circumvent these contact restrictions such as conveying verbal offers.

It is our understanding that college coaches can still speak with club and high school coaches in an evaluative process, such as about a recruit's play at an event or their position on a college's recruiting radar. With contact between college coaches and families restricted, we believe that a recruits' coaches will increasingly assist in their recruiting process.

Based on our conversations, college coaches are still evaluating and recruiting high school underclassman. They benefit from the opportunity to see recruits play more and ultimately commit to a more developed player with a longer academic track record. Limiting verbal offers also lessens concerns over players decommitting. Both sides benefit with more time.

We strongly recommend players continue to message college coaches at their target schools with event attendance, highlight videos and academic updates. The aforementioned limitations on staff, resources and evaluation period means college coaches are building their list of target recruits and seeking them out at events well ahead of September 1 of a recruit's junior year.

This should not create alarm but avoid complacency while other recruits are messaging college coaches at your target schools. Don't leave it to chance that college coaches are on the sidelines of your games. College coaches are always evolving their event attendance and the recruits they want to see in person.

Existing verbal commitments by underclassman have been largely honored and grandfathered by college coaches. However, 2019-2021 recruits that have verbally committed, and their families, are now unable to communicate with the coaching staffs at their future schools until they are on campus.

Given this legislation is effective immediately, many recruits near a verbal commitment will have to wait. We understand this can be frustrating, we hope that the delay results in a better college decision for the recruit. Given verbal commitments are often only to the admissions process, not actual admission because test scores are not available, the recruit can now be more confident in his or her college decision.

Last, this legislation only impacts 193 Division I men's and women's teams, not the 795 Division II and III men's and women's teams, which includes new programs. We recommend recruits build a target list of over 30 schools across multiple divisions and evolve their list throughout the recruiting process. Recruits navigating our college matching service can click bookmark college to add a school to their target list. For recruits on partner clubs, this information will sync to their coaches dashboard, updating them in real-time and keeping everyone on the same page.

What's the feedback been from club and high school coaches?

Many club coaches we've spoken with are excited given committed players are more likely to miss practice and games, which can frustrate other players on the team still in the recruiting process. This creates an unhealthy dynamic that can create pressure, often premature, on other players to commit.

As mentioned, club and high school coaches may not be used to circumvent the new recruiting rules. Specifically, direct messaging or communication about verbal offers through these third parties is not permissible. It is our understanding that college coaches can still speak with club coaches in an evaluative process. Enforcing these new rules falls to compliance officers at colleges, who will be screening calls more closely as clubs can no longer set up a call between college coaches and recruits.

We believe club coaches will gain influence as a result of the new recruiting rules. High school coaches too given recruits won't be committing as underclassman. Organization will be key for club coaches as the floodgates will be opening for all recruits at once on September 1.

## The Recruiting Landscape Today

The recruiting landscape is undergoing a correction from the ten year acceleration that resulted in early recruiting and verbal commitments by high school freshman. Existing recruiting rules limited official contact by Division I college coaches to a recruits junior year, but without a restriction on receiving telephone calls from recruits, early recruiting became the norm. New recruiting legislation simplifies contact by limiting all communication.

This legislation gained steam in December 2015 when Division I men's coaches voted to support a ban to restrict recruiting until after September 1 of a recruit's junior year of high school, joining the women's coaches in a proposal that received NCAA approval in April 2017. The NCAA prefers not to address changes to one sport at a time and in fact, had been deregulating recruiting across sports, which contributed to the long approval process.<sup>3</sup>

Fear had unfortunately been a driving factor behind the growth of early recruitment as players, parents and even coaches worried about being left behind. Now players and parents have more time to make an educated choice given that college is a 40-year, not a 4-year decision.

We encourage players to find a healthy activity level within the recruiting process, which means playing in team tournaments, going to select recruiting events attended by coaches at their target schools and proactively messaging college coaches to express their interest in the program.

This does not mean playing on multiple club teams, attending every showcase you get into or signing up for every online recruiting service. Be diligent and targeted in your approach; research the teams, events and services in advance so you spend your time and money wisely. Our college matching service lists events attended by college coaches and our algorithms match you to events attended by college coaches at your target schools.

Lacrosse is so much fun. Don't let that change. Burn out is real, injuries from specialization and overuse are real. Use the new recruiting rules to your advantage. Here are a few considerations for efficient recruiting exposure:



- Which tournaments does your club team attend? Many team-based recruiting tournaments are invite only. Coaches want to see you play against strong competition, so they go where there is parity along with top teams
- Which college coaches have committed to each showcase? Reverse the process and start by figuring out which showcases and events the coaches at your target schools are attending, then apply to those
- Attend prospect days at colleges where you're already on their recruiting radar and fit their academic profile. Recruiting classes are like puzzle pieces and the position needs of coaches are different for every class
- Showcase your game online and create a recruiting profile that has all of your player information in one place, but don't feel pressure to subscribe to every online recruiting service
- Creating a highlight video from film against strong competition and share it with coaches at your target colleges, which can be more cost effective than simply attending more events

We recommend your recruiting plan include the following:

- Invest in your game and in the classroom
  - Attend camps and work with a coach, mentor or private instructor to develop strong fundamentals that college coaches look for
  - Balance recruiting events with training; the speed, footwork and ball skills you need happen “after hours” with a speed ladder and wall ball
  - Use your academics to beat your competition before you step on the field. The higher your grades, the more schools that can recruit you
  - Map your grades and test scores to target schools. Ensure eligibility by taking core classes and registering at the NCAA clearinghouse
- Create a realistic list of target schools that match your college preferences and athletic abilities
  - Lacrosse should be one of many factors, along with school size and location, student body and campus type, majors offered, cost, etc.
  - Do not weigh all of these factors equally; assign each of them a value based on importance. Focus on academic and social fit before lacrosse
  - Research the lacrosse experience, coaching staff and team culture through videos, interviews and articles about the school and program.
  - Consider the importance of playing time, many Division I athletes never or rarely see the playing field during their college careers

- Include schools where you could see yourself being happy without lacrosse in case of injury and ensure your list has enough schools on it as coaching changes can cause the recruiting trail to go cold
- Be proactive in messaging college coaches at the programs you are interested in and look for events offered by these schools or coaches
  - Your online profile is the best method of contact because it has all of your information in one place, including your highlight video
  - Provide relevant athletic and academic updates, such as being named to an all-county team or having a new transcript and test scores
  - Keep your recruit calendar updated so interested coaches know where they can evaluate your game in person and get you on their schedule
  - Attending camps, prospect days and clinics allows you to see the campus, impress the coaching staff, and learn more about the program
    - Note that new NCAA recruiting rules limit your coach contact to feedback on your athletic ability, not your recruiting process

Lacrosse is a tool, along with your grades, test scores and extracurricular activities that will help you reach your dream school. To maximize this tool, you need to proactively reach out to college coaches and get your game in front of them. Simply put, don't wait for coaches to come to you, go to them by sharing your highlight video and targeting events they are attending.

We understand it can be intimidating to reach out to college coaches, but they want to hear from you. As mentioned, college coaches have limited staff and resources. This is not college football or basketball. Combine that with the supply and demand dynamic we explained earlier and trust us, it's very important to proactively reach out to coaches at your target schools.

We have templates you can refer to and strongly recommend you mention something specific about the school, especially in your first message. An example could be "Hey coach, I saw entrepreneurship was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular thing that grads do, I'm really interested in that." Referencing the LinkedIn info.

By referencing how you've been on campus or taken the virtual campus tour, or that the school offers the majors you're interested in, you're derisking the college coaches recruitment of you by showing that there's a fit both on and off the field. You can also mention videos about the program on their profiles.

Avoid badgering college coaches and limit messages to relevant new information. Here's an example of good times to message college coaches:

- Before summer and fall events, where you'll be / events attending
- After summer and fall events, new highlight videos / any awards
- After spring and fall semester, update on grades / new transcripts

When deciding which coaches to message, we recommend always including the assistant coaches who are often the recruiting coordinators, they are more likely to watch your highlight video and often in charge of the event schedule. Copy your club and HS coaches or include their information in your message; we add this automatically to recruit messages sent through our system.

Do not get discouraged if college coaches do not reply to you directly. Depending on your graduation year, Division I and II coaches may be unable to respond due to NCAA restrictions. After viewing your player info and video, they may add you to their recruiting radar, track your event attendance, and/or follow up with your coaches to learn more about you.

## Reality Check: Lacrosse by the Numbers

Finding the right college fit is key because scholarship and professional opportunities are limited, and the 4-year cost of tuition and expenses at many lacrosse schools is approaching \$250,000. Ultimately, it's your education that sets you up for long-term success and lacrosse can be a tool to help you get admitted to a top academic institution.

The reality is Division I programs spread 12.6 full scholarships across an average men's roster size of 47 players and 12 full scholarships across an average women's roster of 31 players. The difference in roster size stems from differing substitution patterns and degree of specialization.

A "full ride" is very rare in men's lacrosse because college coaches prefer to spread scholarships across their entire roster, resulting in partial scholarships for the majority of players. In fact, the University of Virginia men's lacrosse team has only given 3 full scholarships to a single player in the last 20 years.

Division II men's and women's programs have 10.8 and 9.9 full scholarships, respectively. Division III and Ivy League schools do not offer athletic scholarships. Further, only half of the Division I and II teams are fully funded, which means many programs are unable to offer the aforementioned maximum number of scholarships allowed by the NCAA.

Using 2016-2017 NCAA statistics, there were 3,276 male athletes across 70 Division I men's teams compared to 3,424 female athletes across 111 Division I women's teams. With only 12.6 and 12 full scholarships available per team, that means 3.7 male athletes and 2.6 female athletes share every full scholarship. This assumes all of the teams are fully funded and able to offer the maximum number of scholarships, which unfortunately is not the case.

These statistics are not meant to discourage you from playing college lacrosse but rather to help you focus on the real benefits of being a collegiate student-athlete. Lacrosse will give you relationships, with your teammates and possibly future business partners, with your coaching staff and with great alumni bases who often love to hire or help an athlete. The commitment and discipline required to play college lacrosse will help you stand apart from your

competition in job interviews. Not to mention the fun, camaraderie and unique experiences you and your teammates will share.

Opportunities in lacrosse after college include Major League Lacrosse (outdoor, founded 2001, 9 teams), National Lacrosse League (indoor, founded 1987, 11 teams). The National Lacrosse League is historically Canadian players, where box lacrosse is the country's official summer sport, but is now growing rapidly.

Lacrosse professionals truly sacrifice to grow the game as they often travel across the country for Friday night practices ahead of Saturday games. Contracts are historically pay-per-play, which means players only get paid for the games they play in. They play because they love lacrosse and being part of a team. That sense of team camaraderie is what makes college lacrosse so special and why former players look back so fondly on their collegiate careers.

A few "walk-on" opportunities still exist on the women side of Division I lacrosse but are largely a thing of the past on the men's side. Due to Title IX and squad size restrictions, many men's programs do not accept walk-ons. The majority of coaches that do accept them give their recruits preference.

Lacrosse is a powerful tool in gaining admission to the best schools in the country. This is why early recruiting took hold in lacrosse, just like football and basketball, despite being a non-revenue generating sport with vastly different scholarship and professional opportunities. Enjoy the game you love at a dream school.

## Shifting Away From Early Recruiting

Early recruiting is synonymous with verbal commitments by high school underclassman and recruits being pressure to pick a school before taking their standardized tests. This pressure led to decommitments and transfers. Late bloomers often found Division I rosters were already full by their junior years.

Surprisingly, Division III programs, which do not offer athletic scholarships nor accepted verbal commitments, benefitted from landing these late bloomers. So did Division I programs that were less aggressive in early recruiting and had roster spots open; Loyola of Maryland's 2012 championship run is an example.

Early recruiting created as atmosphere of fear and pressured recruits and their families into a sport-first, not school-first decision. That's not what college recruiting in lacrosse is about. Imagine developing a passion for engineering as a junior only to realize the school you committed to did not offer that major. Or walking into a standardized test knowing your commitment rides on achieving a certain score because you committed with little to no academic track record.

That is unhealthy and why change is welcomed.

As the pendulum swings back, it's important not to become complacent. College coaches do not start recruiting on September 1 of a recruit's junior year, but seek commitments from recruits they've been targeting for awhile. Unlike with verbal commitments, all recruits are still targeted by other colleges and thus a large list of target recruits is needed. Given the aforementioned limitations on coaching staff, resources and evaluation periods, college coaches begin advancing players onto their recruiting radar as underclassman.

Early recruiting undermined the importance of official visits, which were used primarily to host committed players. Official visits are trips to campus by seniors that are funded by the school. Unofficial visits were taken by underclassman and funded by the recruit. New recruiting rules now limit unofficial visits from involving the athletics department so recruits can no longer meet with college coaches when on campus. We hope this change does not discourage recruits from getting on campus at their target schools.

Getting on campus is critical. Whether it's for a camp or prospect day led by the coaching staff or just a standard campus tour, you need to be able to envision yourself at the school. You can easily find virtual tours online to aid in your evaluation as well but nothing compares to physically being there.

We understand it's difficult to know or verbalize your college preferences as a high school underclassman. Start high level and then drill down. Are you looking for a change or do you like where you grew up? For example, a lot of northeast recruits look to southern programs after years of practicing in the cold and playing on snow. Weather and travel from home are social fit factors worth considering. The more you can target your college search, the more efficient you can be in seeking out events to play in front of those coaches.

After investing in your game and in the classroom as a freshman, you should have a frame of reference as to how you stack up athletically and academically. From there, try to weight your most important factors and begin answering your "must haves", such as academic difficulty and majors, scholarship need, size and location, etc. before seeing which college programs fit your criteria.

Be honest when considering your academic standing combined with the in and out-of-season commitments of NCAA lacrosse. Understand how this level differs for Division I, II, III and MCLA / WCLA programs and how that impacts your ability to succeed at different institutions and college majors.

With that said, as an athlete, you know that challenging yourself is how you get better so reach for the academic institutions that will set you up for long term success.

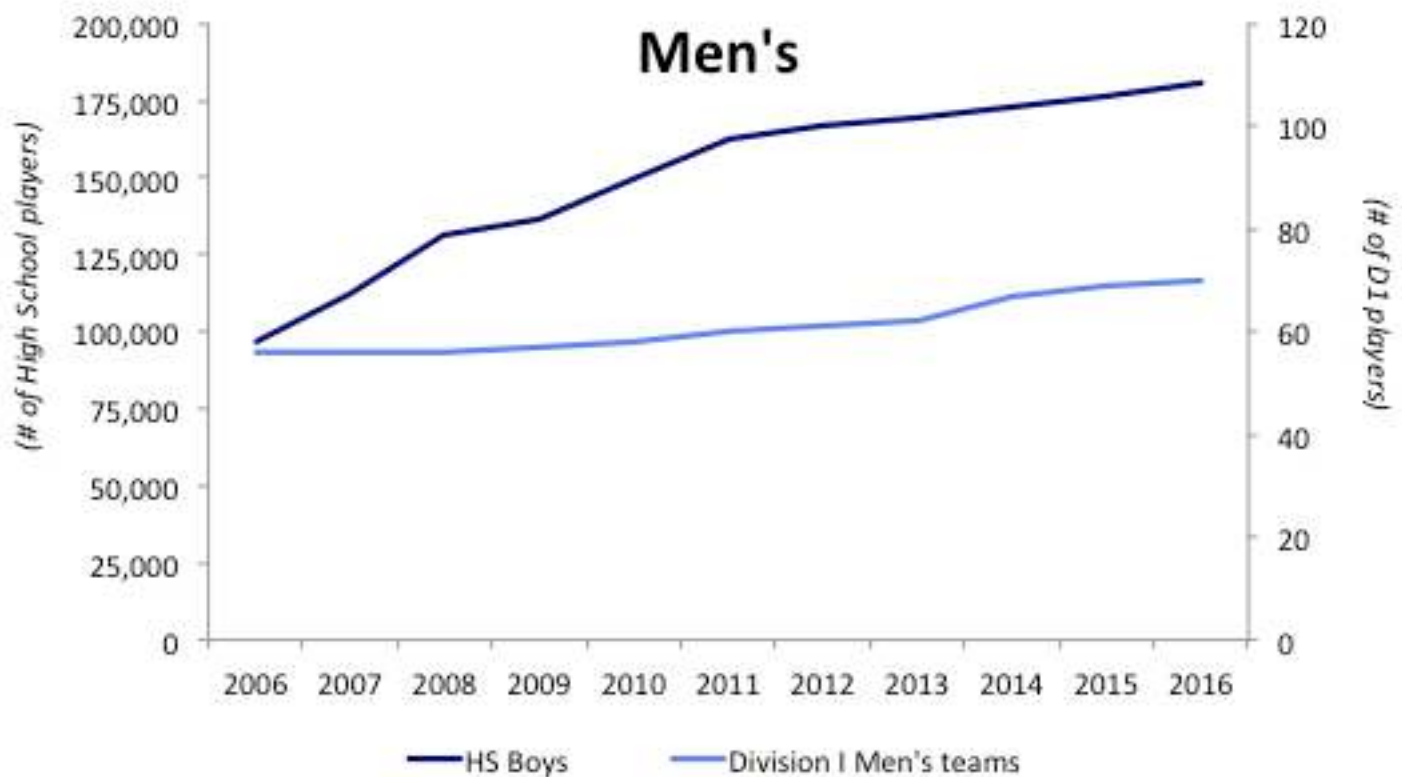
## Supply and Demand of Lacrosse Recruiting

In addition to lacrosse programs being at great academic institutions, the competitiveness of lacrosse recruiting is driven by the significant supply and demand imbalance in Division I recruiting.

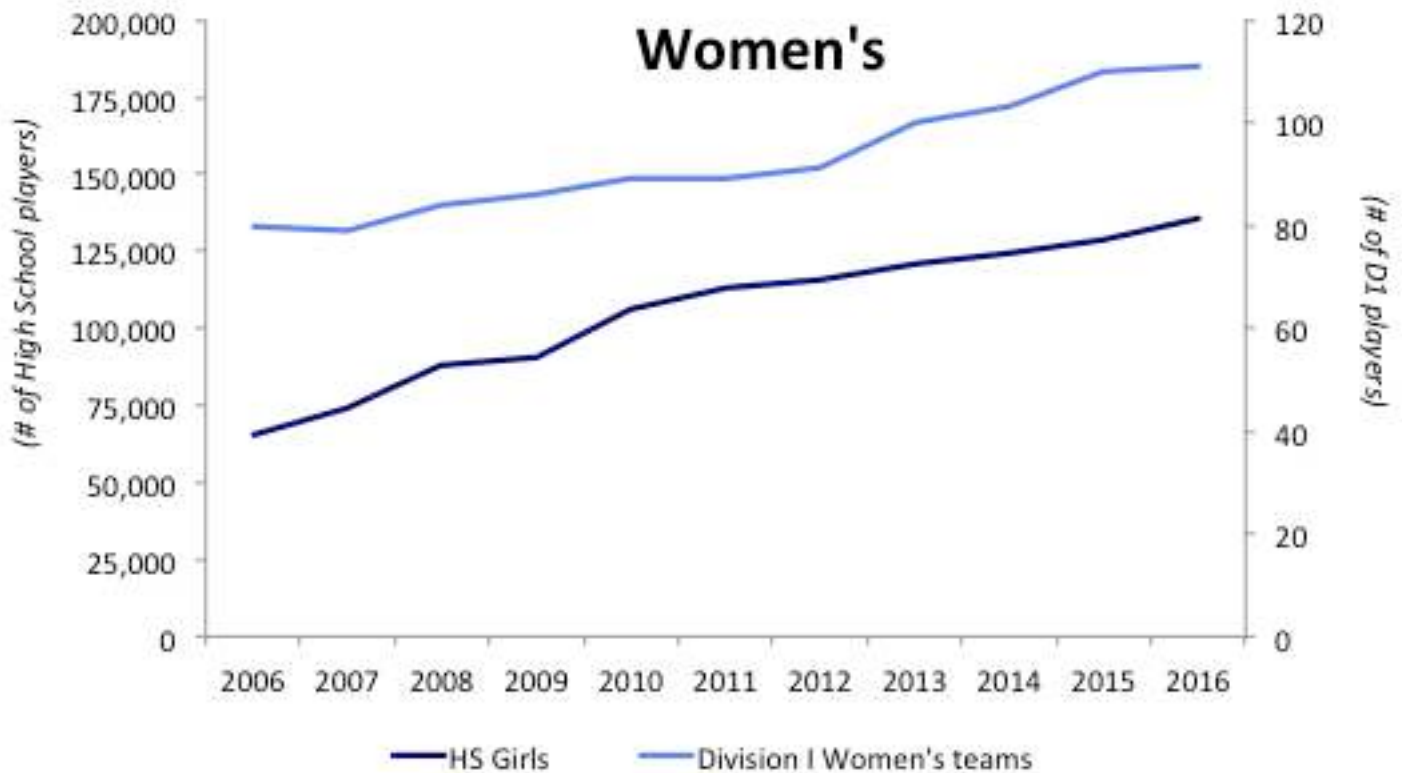
In short, the number of new teams and thus roster spots has been outpaced by the explosive growth in youth participation across the country. With 73 Division I men's teams, there are limited roster spots to go around for an ever-increasing number of players. There are 120 Division I women's teams, which has seen more growth in roster spots but remains very competitive.

More than 2,500 new high school lacrosse teams have been added since 2006, more than doubling the total to 5,617 today. This excludes over a 1,000 school-based club teams that do not report. Today, there are more than 180,000 male and 135,000 female high school lacrosse players, a significant increase over the 100,000 male and 70,000 female players there were in 2006.<sup>4</sup>

The following charts compare the number of high school lacrosse players to Division I lacrosse teams from 2006 to 2016.







In 2006, there were 40 HS players competing for every Division I men's roster spot. In 2016, there were 55 players competing for the same spot. Women's lacrosse has seen competition increase from 31 to 40 over the same period.

To summarize, Division I recruiting is similar to the game musical chairs but in this case the number of people playing the game is growing faster than the number of chairs in the game. This dynamic fueled the increase in verbal commitments as players feared they wouldn't be a chair or in this case, a roster spot for them if they waited. As a reminder, verbal commitments are non-binding for both the player and the coach. The first binding agreement between a player and coach is the National Letter of Intent, which is typically signed in November or April of the player's senior year.

The takeaway is to proactively reach out to college coaches at your target schools and take your game to them, don't assume they will come to you.

Relationships with your club and high school coaches are very important in the recruiting process as college coaches will often reach out to them about you. The more relationships you can develop with your coaches and through camps, clinics or by working with a private instructor, the more likely the college

coach or someone on his or her coaching staff will have a connection with one of your contacts. These contacts can provide insight into your game as well as a trusted opinion for the college coach to consider, which can jumpstart their recruitment of you.

The number of new college teams is beginning to grow more rapidly. Schools are seeing the strong growth of youth lacrosse and want to attract the academic and demographic profile of lacrosse student-athletes.<sup>5</sup>

The University of Michigan became the first school with a BCS football team to add varsity men's lacrosse since 1981. For Michigan athletic director Dave Brandon, the reason to elevate the MCLA lacrosse team to varsity status was clear, "Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in our country, it's growing in every way we can measure it, and it's growing in every region of the country."<sup>6</sup>

The ongoing NCAA conference realignment has affected Division I lacrosse as well. A few conferences have added lacrosse or in some cases, elevated it to Division 1 status, such as the Atlantic Sun and Southern Conference. The conference of your target schools is not of critical importance.

It is important to remember that if you are passionate about playing college lacrosse, there are over 60,000 roster spots across Division I, II, III and MCLA / WCLA teams. There is a home for just about every player looking to play at the next level, just get out there and find it.

## The Future of Lacrosse: Forecast = Hot

You already knew the cool kids played lacrosse, but in case you needed proof, review these statistics from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). The NFHS has more than 18,500 member high schools across the US. As of 2017, 25 states had formally sanctioned or recognized lacrosse, up from 13 states in 2000.<sup>7</sup>

Below is the number of high schools sponsoring each sport and their respective growth rates from 2011 to 2016.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Boys' Sports</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% growth</b>
Lacrosse	2,192	2,752	25.5%
Indoor Track	2,638	2,998	13.6%
Volleyball	2,078	2,333	12.3%
Bowling	2,454	2,683	9.3%
Water Polo	768	826	7.6%

<b>Girls' Sports</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% growth</b>
Lacrosse	1,999	2,572	28.7%
Indoor Track	2,598	2,988	15.0%
Bowling	2,436	2,708	11.2%
Ice Hockey	578	642	11.1%
Water Polo	762	827	8.5%

This underscores the growth in demand for college roster spots.

# Scholarship Myths: Important Considerations

The below helps demystify and clarify a few misconceptions about athletic scholarships.

- There are many scholarships available, including “full rides”
  - Lacrosse is an “equivalency” sport so fully funded Division I men’s and women’s programs spread 12.6 and 12 full scholarships, respectively, across their entire roster; as a result, incoming recruiting classes of 8-12 players typically share 3 full scholarships
    - Division II men’s and women’s programs have 10.8 and 9.9 full scholarships, respectively
    - Other sports are unable to divide scholarships across recruits
  - Many Division I and II programs are not fully funded and therefore offer less than the maximum amount of scholarships allowed
  - College coaches typically focus on making sure all players receive a partial scholarship, making the “full ride” a rarity in college lacrosse
- The best scholarship offers come at the Division I level
  - While Division II programs have less scholarships to offer, they also carry smaller rosters so as a recruit, you may end up receiving more
  - NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) is similar to Division II competition but separate from the NCAA and may provide a more competitive financial offer than NCAA schools provide
  - Division III programs do not offer athletic scholarships, but they provide grants and other forms of financial aid which consider your status as a recruit; these schools want to win and attract recruits too
- Scholarship offers generally come at the beginning of the recruiting process
  - Coaches typically tell players they are “scholarship candidates” but wait to formally offer the scholarship; scholarship offers can be made at any point in the recruiting process but generally come at the end
  - Players should feel comfortable asking coaches to specify a scholarship dollar amount in order to help them decide between schools
  - The National Letter of Intent typically includes the scholarship package
- Players will pay the full price of tuition and expenses without a scholarship
  - Student-athletes are eligible for need and merit-based financial aid, grants and loans; refer to the net price of a school to see what incoming freshman actually pay on average after grants and scholarship aid

- Scholarships are renewed annually and prospects who do not receive a scholarship their freshman year are eligible to receive them in later years; these one-year renewable grants are guaranteed for one year, not four but it is common practice for them to be renewed year-to-year
- College coaches may consult financial aid officers to identify non-athletic based aid you may qualify for but do not rely upon this
- Schools with large endowments may be able to offer merit-based scholarships that are more attractive than athletic scholarship offers
- Coaches only consider athletic skills and grades in offering a scholarship
  - Coaches perform an extensive background check into an athlete's character before offering a scholarship because it is a financial risk for the school that reflects upon and directly impacts the college coach
  - Ensure your social media profiles reflect the expectations of a collegiate student-athlete. 3<sup>rd</sup> party firms check this for colleges
  - Coaches may call your high school and club team coaches, guidance counselors, teachers and possibly even your friends about you
  - Make sure you are a leader and setting a positive example on the team and in the classroom; be aware of your class attendance and how you get along with teammates, demonstrate a strong work ethic and integrity in your activities

The scholarship reality in lacrosse reinforces the importance of finding schools that match you across a number of factors, budget being one of those.

# Questions & Answers: The Competitive Recruiting Landscape

- Why has recruiting intensified over the past five to ten years?
  - Supply and demand, supply is growing rapidly as lacrosse moves West and youth participation rates increase; compare the roughly 550 women's college lacrosse programs to the over 1,800 women's college basketball programs and you get the idea, demand or rather roster spots at the collegiate level is clearly lagging behind the sports growth
- What level of collegiate lacrosse am I good enough to play?
  - Division I teams account for 16% of men's and 21% of women's college programs with Division II (and NAIA), Division III and Junior Colleges making up the rest (% excludes MCLA / WCLA / NCLL)
  - With over 180,000 and 135,000 men's and women's high school players; only 1.8% and 2.5%, respectively, will play Division I lacrosse
  - Lacrosse is competitive, but you shouldn't be deterred from chasing your dream. Believing and investing in your game combined with using academics to set you apart college lacrosse much more attainable
- What are the roles of my coaches in the recruiting process?
  - Your high school coach is there for on-the-field development and may play a more passive role in your recruitment such as answering questions from college coaches about your game instead of initiating contact with college coaches on your behalf
  - Your club coaches typically play a more active role in your recruitment and advocating to colleges coaches on your behalf
  - Keep both coaches informed of your recruiting progress and college preferences, but take responsibility for driving the process forward
  - Ask coaches for their evaluation and feedback about which schools you best project to and also on drills to elevate your game after practice
  - Ask coaches for their thoughts on events to attend and nominations / letters or recommendations for invite-only events
- How do I get discovered and how do college coaches evaluate me?
  - Players on the East Coast will naturally have more recruiting exposure due to their proximity to the majority of college programs, but regardless of where you reside, your online profile is a great way to initiate contact with coaches at your target schools

- Players from the Midwest and West Coast especially need to consider joining club teams to demonstrate their abilities against top talent and improve by competing against strong competition; coaches have limited travel budgets and time so attending tournaments and showcases provides an opportunity for them to see you in person
- Target events that reflect your goals and where you are in the process; some focus on exposure or player development and other balance both
- Attending events at target schools helps you get a feel for the campus
- Assistant coaches will often evaluate your highlight video and review your academic qualifications before advancing you onto the recruiting radar of the head coach; ensure they know where to see you in person
- How many colleges should I put on my target list?
  - We recommend at least 30 schools across multiple divisions, especially to start. Your list should evolve through the recruiting process as you get feedback from events and build your academic track record
  - Manage your target list with different fit ratings, tiers and notes
  - Do not shy away from messaging college coaches at the programs you believe you can contribute to; highlight videos help them agree
  - Keep an open mind and adjust the size of your list up or down depending on if you are ahead or behind in the recruiting process

## Diligence Items: Key Questions to Ask College Coaches

- What is the role and availability of academic advisors in assisting student-athletes and the level of oversight by the coach in monitoring the players' grades and classroom performance?
- What is the coach's level of confidence in the player's ability to meet the admissions qualifications of the school?
  - Can the coach help you gain admission and if so, what grades and test scores do you need to achieve; this may include at least a 3.0 GPA, 1,800 on the SAT or 23 on the ACT
- What is the likelihood of the player receiving scholarship money, athletic or otherwise?
  - How many scholarships are available for this class and how many have been offered and / or accepted thus far
  - Are there minimum GPA requirements to maintain a scholarship
  - Again, ask if the coach can speak with advisors to help identify merit-based scholarships, grants or aid that you may qualify for
  - In case of injury, could an athletic scholarship not be renewed
  - Is the lacrosse team fully funded, and if not, what fundraising or other activities does the team do in order to meet their budget
- What is the size of the recruiting class and which positions is the coach looking to fill?
  - What is the recruiting timeline for that particular coach and program
  - How do you stack up compared to other players the coach is recruiting
- What is the coach's assessment of how well the school and lacrosse program fit you?
  - Does the coaching philosophy and style of play fit your game
  - Would the school still be a good fit if you were not a lacrosse player
- Do players graduate in four years and what are the most popular majors among players on the team?
  - Will my field of study interfere with the athletic schedule
  - Is summer school offered and if so, is it included in tuition
  - Is it possible to work part-time or do work study
- If my major requires or I prefer to study abroad, or pursue additional course work, could that become an issue?
  - How would this affect my status on the team



- Are players currently involved in student organizations in addition to their athletic and academic commitments

Feel comfortable asking college players about their coaches. Ask how the coach reacts when the team is struggling or underperforming, if the coaches are helpful if you struggle in class and what the practices are like.

While the majority of your questions will focus on the incoming recruiting class, it's important to examine the current roster size and construction. Very large classes or a disproportionate number of freshman and seniors may signal pending cuts, players quitting and transfers.

It's also worth noting the stability of the coaching staff. Any time the coaches are at their own alma mater, that's a positive sign as they clearly respect the institution and are fully vested in its development on and off the field.

## Club Teams: Recruiting Exposure

The role of club teams continues to increase as the recruiting process gets more competitive. Simply put, it is easier for college coaches with limited staff, resources, combined with restrictions on when they can evaluate you in person to travel to recruiting tournaments and see many top players at once rather than attend individual high school games. In addition, the high school season overlaps with their college season.

College coaches want to see you play against strong competition. The same goes for highlight videos, they want to see you compete against top talent, not run up the score on your high school rival. Club teams run try-outs in order to assemble to best players in an area, which serves as a filter for college coaches.

NCAA recruiting rules limit your communication with Division I and II coaches. Club coaches have traditionally served as an advocate for recruits. We believe club coaches will gain influence as a result of the new recruiting rules. High school coaches too given recruits won't be committing as underclassman.

With all that said, it is important to diligence the club teams in your area. What is the practice-to-game ratio? What tournaments will the club team play in? What is the presence of college coaches at these tournaments and are they from your target schools? What is the size and experience of the coaching staff? Club team participation is an investment of time and money so finding the right team is key.

Club teams are a great way to meet other player's passionate about lacrosse and pursuing the sport at the next level. Club team coaches, many of which played in college, are often well informed about the recruiting process and have seen where previous recruits have succeeded but also tripped up along the way. Their experience and relationships can be of great resource and help you identify college programs that fit you well.

Network with your club coaches, ask them to advise you in the recruiting process, probe them for areas to improve your game and demonstrate you are serious about playing at the next level. Players may feel pressure to make the "best" club teams in their area; however, this is often overstated and as long as

your club team plays in a fair amount of competitive tournaments, your exposure should be sufficient.

Your online recruiting profile is an efficient and cost effective way to get your game in front of college coaches, especially if your tournament schedule does not overlap with their travel. Your highlight video is key so refer to our section on tips for building a great highlight video. Endorsements from your coaches are another important way to help college coaches in their evaluation. Again, include both your high school and club coaches, as the relative role of each in a player's recruitment can differ depending on location and other factors.

With many recruiting events to attend year-round, players with ample opportunity to seek the recruiting exposure they desire, but these obligations should be weighed against player development and academic performance. US Lacrosse has called on college coaches not to attend or participate in recruiting events that infringe on the academic calendar.<sup>9</sup> Attendance has continued and it is worth noting that college coaches now run their own IMLCA convention separate from US Lacrosse. US Lacrosse is a non-profit organization founded in 1998 with the mission of growing participation and protecting the integrity of the sport.

It is important to keep in mind that many college coaches prefer athletes who compete in multiple sports. Dave Webster, head coach at Dickinson College, mirrors this belief in saying, "we like to recruit athletes. I like to see young men play several sports in high school and I think they benefit from the experience. I think the potential for growth is greater when an athlete is challenged by multiple sports and coaches rather than being focused on just one sport year round."<sup>10</sup> Manhattanville College assistant coach Ryder Bohlander committed to the University of Maryland in the spring of his senior year after sending his football highlight tape to Coach Cottle, demonstrating the importance of speed and athletic ability in the eyes of college coaches.

Ultimately, the player and parent must define their club team schedule and level of involvement, and balance tournament exposure with other sports and interests. Players and parents should be informed and aware that unlike club teams in basketball and football where full scholarships await most prospects, lacrosse is primarily a tool for admission to a great school, not a "full ride".

## **MCLA / WCLA: Competitive Lacrosse at Great Schools**

There are over 300 men's and 250 women's non-varsity, collegiate lacrosse teams across the US. Why? Lacrosse is a non-revenue sport that can be expensive to operate at the NCAA level. Fortunately, that did not stop over 15,000 college students from coming together to play the game they love. The majority of lacrosse players still choose their school based on the academic programs offered and the lacrosse program is of secondary importance.

These teams range in competitiveness, cost and obligation required. Many teams are run in a structured fashion similar to NCAA programs, including weekday and fall practices, gym routine, team functions, community engagement, etc. Over 200 of the men's teams are organized in the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association (MCLA), which has two divisions and holds division and conference championships. The MCLA is highly organized with teams traveling across the country to play 15 or more games a season. The MCLA represents the fastest growing segment of college men's lacrosse.

Colleges with Division I programs are unable to organize their non-varsity teams under the MCLA and therefore participate in the National College Lacrosse League (NCLL). The NCLL is primarily based along the Eastern Seaboard and includes more than 100 teams.

Most women's teams are organized under the WCLA, which is under the US Lacrosse umbrella and includes two divisions. Comparing the MCLA website [MCLA.us](http://MCLA.us) with the WCLA website (available at US Lacrosse) shows the relative organization and focus invested in the MCLA, which is governed by an independent executive board.

The players or officers elected to run the team along with the coach enjoy a high level of responsibility and gain valuable leadership experience. It is worth noting that this real world experience is a strong resume builder. The competition is often intense with many teams having cuts to form their roster. Players not recruited to their team should review the team's policy regarding cuts.

Team dues typically cover the cost of apparel, gloves, an equipment bag and travel but do not cover “personal” equipment including sticks, cleats and pads. The cost varies but most dues are around \$1,000 per year. Most teams have payment plans and work with families who can’t afford the full dues.

Other differences from NCAA sanctioned programs include the following: players do not need to meet NCAA eligibility standards, players may not qualify for financial or academic aid available to NCAA players, and players generally do not have full-time coaches available to monitor their academic performance.

Make no mistake; non-varsity lacrosse is not the same level of competition or intensity as the NCAA. But if the school is the right fit, it can be a great experience with lasting friendships and team memories. It can also afford opportunities such as study abroad that may not be available to NCAA players. Understanding the commitment required for a non-varsity team is important, as budgeting time can be a challenge for all college freshmen.

# Coach Interaction: 10 Tips for Making a Strong Impression

New recruiting rules restrict communication until September 1 of a recruit's junior year, but be prepared for an interview in person or over the phone.

Be mindful that your body language in games and maturity on the sidelines are monitored closely by college coaches throughout the recruiting process. Everything from communication with your coaches and parents to picking up your trash after a game gets notated by college coaches looking for high character student-athletes. Don't be a teammate that celebrates your goals but walks to the sideline when others on your team score.

## 1. Be Organized

- Write down your goals for the recruiting process and what you are looking for in a school and lacrosse program. Then create a concrete plan to execute on and start contacting college coaches
- Do not feel hesitant or uncomfortable initiating contact with coaches, whose staff has limited time and resources to find you; if you believe you can contribute to their team, by all means reach out

## 2. Be Yourself

- Be direct about your academic record and financial situation as admissibility and affordability are key factors in the recruiting process; discuss this with your family and have an honest appraisal for the coaches you speak with

## 3. Be Proactive

- The combination of NCAA rules restricting communication and the limited staff, resources and evaluation window of college coaches makes it paramount that you initiate contact with coaches at the schools you are interested in
- The first step is reaching out to coaches with your online recruiting profile, featuring your edited, highlight video
  - Most videos are screened by assistant coaches before reaching the head coach, who will then review your tournament schedule to find an event to evaluate you in-person; be sure your highlight video has clear and well-edited footage so the assistant coach can pass it up the ladder

## 4. Be Articulate

- Every time you speak with a coach, consider it an interview. Coaches want to know you're a good listener and comprehend what they are saying; communication is key on the field and thus coaches want to assess your verbal skills

## 5. Be Prepared

- The best way to be articulate is to be prepared. You should be your best cheerleader and the most honest critic of your game, as coaches will want to discuss your strengths and weaknesses. Have an answer for how you are improving on your weaknesses. Be confident but not conceited
- Be thoughtful, demonstrate excitement to be there and vocalize any questions or concerns you may have
- Have a prepared list of questions for the coach that will help you decide if the school is the right fit for you; ask questions about academics and don't be afraid to ask what happens when classes conflict with team practices
- Know why you are interested in the program and why you are good fit

## 6. Be Thorough

- Put time and thought into creating your list of target schools. Get input from various sources including your current coaches, older or former teammates and your family. Keep an open mind, stay informed and be straightforward about what you are looking for in a school and program, this will give you more confidence and control through the recruiting process
  - Don't just reach out to coaches indiscriminately to get your name out there, do your homework and contact schools that match your criteria
  - Ensure you have enough schools on your list to compensate for coaching changes at target schools that can result in a suspension or end of their recruitment of you

## 7. Be Presentable

- In short, dress in business casual and look sharp for any on-campus meetings with a coach. You can expect the coaching staff to be in business casual, which demonstrates their seriousness about the program. Most team functions are business casual and coaches want to be confident that you would be able to represent the school well

## 8. Be Personable

- Make an effort to get to know the coaches you are speaking with and let the coaches know who you are; be prepared to talk about your family, hobbies, music, etc. and try not to be robotic or stiff in your meetings

#### 9. Be Engaged

- Ask questions about the information the coach is telling you; provide the coach with any updates about your athletic and academic progress and convey your level of interest in the program when closing the meeting
- Maintain eye contact and sit upright through the entire meeting, this expresses your interest in the program and leaves a positive impression
- Feel free to take notes during the meeting on the pros and cons of your conversation

#### 10. Be Confident

- A firm handshake is an easy first step in making a strong impression; coaches want confident players so look the coach in the eye while shaking their hand

#### Additional questions to prepare for (not mentioned above):

- What other schools are recruiting you? Be honest but end by conveying your strong interest in that program
- How are your grades and test scores? What type of classes are you taking? Be direct as coaches will need to find out anyway, try to get guidance on specific numbers you need to hit to gain admission
- Do you view yourself as a leader? Hopefully the answer is “Yes”; have examples and if this is an area for improvement, tell the coaches what you are actively doing to improve
- How important is playing time to you? Convey you are both hungry and also a team player, it’s an obvious question so focus on presenting yourself in the right way
- Do you have a workout routine? Discuss your work in and out of season. Coaches are looking for speed and athletic ability and want to hear that you are lifting, running and training on your own, such as working with a speed ladder. Mention any private coaching you receive and clinics, camps and leagues you participate in



Expect every conversation to end with “What questions to you have for me?” Have a non-generic list prepared and ask questions on any of the notes you’ve written down, this conveys to the coach that you are serious about your interest in the program.

# College Preferences And Visit Checklist

Here are a few factors to consider as you evaluate your target list of colleges. Take down notes on your preferences under each criterion.

## 1. Size

- Ohio State University (Division I) has over 59,000 students and Arizona State University (club) has over 51,000 students; that is a lot of people, especially if you grew up in a small town
  - In comparison, Wells College (Division III) has around 500 students, which might feel like a deserted island to some
  - The point is that you should get on campus and see where you are most comfortable ; see virtual campus tours on college profiles
- 

## 2. Cost

- Total expenses including tuition at Dartmouth are almost \$70,000 a year while tuition is free at US service academies (Army, Navy, etc.)
  - You will likely fall somewhere in the middle but keep in mind that while student debt is deferred until after you graduate, it becomes very real as you begin your career and may limit future opportunities
  - Review how much grant and scholarship aid incoming freshman receive, this determines the 'Net Price' in our college matching service
- 

## 3. Selectivity

- From a 5% admissions rate at Harvard University to open enrollment at community colleges, the key here is to use academics to qualify for the largest number of schools possible, eliminating some of your competition before you even step on the field
- Review the test scores of incoming freshman if available
- Learn about the academic index calculator, which is used by the Ivy League and many Patriot League / NESCAC schools. It requires incoming recruiting classes to hit a certain average

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#### 4. Campus Type

- City, suburban or rural; your campus plays a big role in shaping your college experience so find a place where you feel at home
- Review housing options and if upperclassmen live on campus
- Learn where graduates live after school to see if those are locations you might be interested in; having your college network travel with you and surrounding yourself with alumni can be a positive influence

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#### 5. See What Graduates Do and Where They Work

- See if the career fields that graduates pursue and the companies they work for overlap with your interests
- LinkedIn information on this is available on our college profiles

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#### 6. Team Culture

- Check out the Twitter / Instagram feed and any YouTube videos about the program; does the team match your personality and interests
- Review the recruits that have committed to the school to see if any are from your area, reach out to them to get insight into their experience
- Consider the style of play, academic support, off-season training, facilities, class and study abroad policy, conference and roster size. Review the tenure, reputation and alma mater of the coaching staff

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#### 7. Majors Offered

- See if any of the majors offered sound interesting to you; also, check if the school offers enough majors that you feel confident in finding one
- You can filter programs by major in our college matching service
- Learn about the organization structure of lectures, class times and labs. For example, Colorado College has a unique block plan where students deep-dive into one class at a time over a month period

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## 8. Student Body

- Check out the breakdown of in-state verse out-of-state; maybe you want to meet new people from across the country and world
- Consider student gender and full-time verse part-time as campuses with a higher percentage of part-time and commuting students may seem less engaging, this is less of an issue for lacrosse schools
- Learn about religious affiliations or political associations at the school

## Tips for Building a Great Highlight Video

College coaches have limited staff and resources, combined with restrictions on when they can evaluate you in person, so highlight videos are an efficient way to get your game in front of them. When embedded in an online profile that organizes all your player info and integrates with their coach databases, even better.

For partner clubs, we include a professional highlight video with a recruit's profile because it is that important. You do not need to use our video editing services, but you need to take your highlight video seriously because college coaches receive hundreds of videos a month. If it's hard to identify you or follow the action, they simply move onto the next one.

We also bundle highlight videos with game film because college coaches rarely watch raw game film and if they do, it's usually to follow up on a player after watching their highlight video first.

Your goal is to get the college coach's attention, get on their recruiting radar and have them seek you out at events. Just because a coach is attending the same event, do not assume they will be on the sidelines of your games. Most coaches prepare their own schedule in advance based on the players already on their recruiting radar.

1. Move your best clips to the front of your highlight video, do not assume the college coach will watch your entire video
2. Show context. Start the clip 1-3 seconds early so the college coaches can see the play develop. Show the cut, not just the finish
3. Identify your competition. Clips against elite competition will be given more weight in the eyes of the coach than a high school blowout
4. Show a diversity of plays. If attack, show passing, riding the clear, time and room shooting, not just your favorite dodge from behind the cage

We include an option to replay your best clips in slow motion. This is helpful for quick action such as a skip pass or dodging through a crowd. We also limit music to songs we have the rights to, so no ads are shown over your video.

- Start by getting great film
  - Elevation is key; you can film yourself or hire someone, especially if all your games are in a stadium or field with natural elevation. Otherwise you may want to consider purchasing film from an event
  - If filming yourself, get an inexpensive tripod with a fluid head. Wear bright socks or put tape on your shoes to help them track you
  - When filming, you need to frame the action, which means zooming in when the ball is near the goal and zooming out during transitions
  - Again, you are vying for the coaches attention, amateur filming and home videos without zooming may undermine your highlight video
- Follow these editing guidelines
  - Do not over edit your video with crazy special effects, music, etc...
  - Remember your audience. It's not your friends but college coaches. Odds are your music tastes differ so no music is fine as well
  - Avoid music with cursing, again, this is your first impression
  - We recommend a ~3-5 minute highlight video. If you want to add game film to your, limit it to one quarter or half. Long form video can help coaches can see you move without the ball, ride clears, defensive positioning, athletic ability, hustle and body language between plays
  - We recommend 10 to 20 clips with your best plays at the beginning
  - Include key information such as name, graduation year, height / weight, club / HS teams with contact info, GPA, any accolades
  - Ensure your film is in a software format that can be read easily viewed; it's best to embed it within a profile or upload it to Youtube or Vimeo
- Show the range of your game
  - Show both offensive and defensive clips so coaches can see you riding a clear as well as ripping the net: include a variety of clips such as both left and right-handed goals and a number of different dodges or checks
  - Include a range of film demonstrating the entirety of your skill set
    - Offense: strong moves to the cage / cleanly beating your defender, scoring, feeding / passing, riding / defense, ground balls, off-ball movement
    - Defense: a few take-away checks, defensive positioning, footwork, off-ball awareness, clearing ability, ground balls
    - Goalie: shots from outside, in close and one-on-one stops, in-cage awareness showing you have good positioning without overextending, clearing passes, end-line play

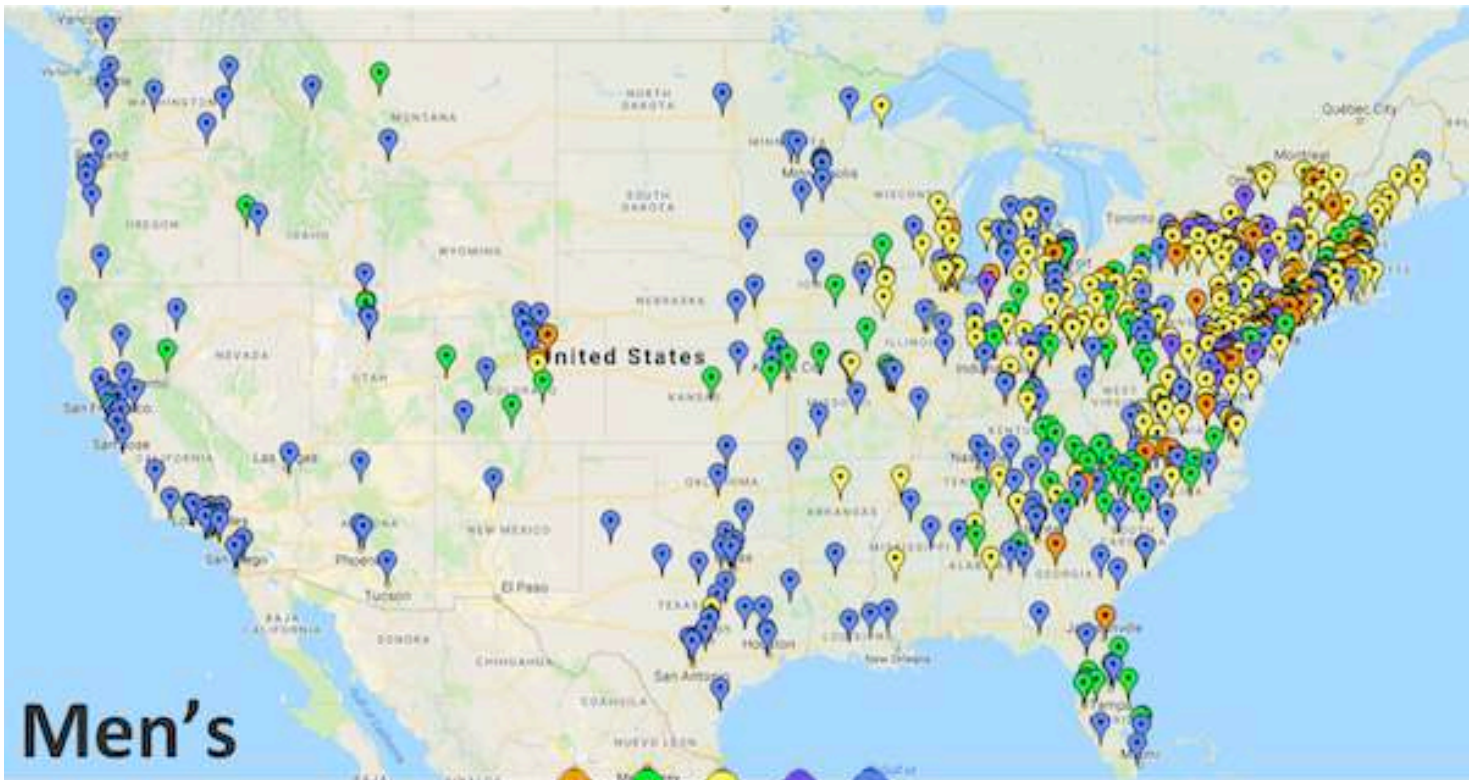
- Face-offs: Take-off speed after winning the face, how you handle the scrum, wing-play awareness, ground balls, offensive / defensive abilities
- Include film from recruiting events
  - Coaches want to see you compete against strong competition; note the tournament or opponent in your video as not all goals, saves or takeaways are the same in the eyes of college coaches
  - Film high school games against difficult opponents and identify who you are playing against; college coaches do not want to see you run up the score on your weak competition
  - Keep your highlight video up-to-date, especially if you’ve grown or improved; a new version after the summer and fall recruiting events works well but you do not need to create a new video after each event

## Why Geography Matters

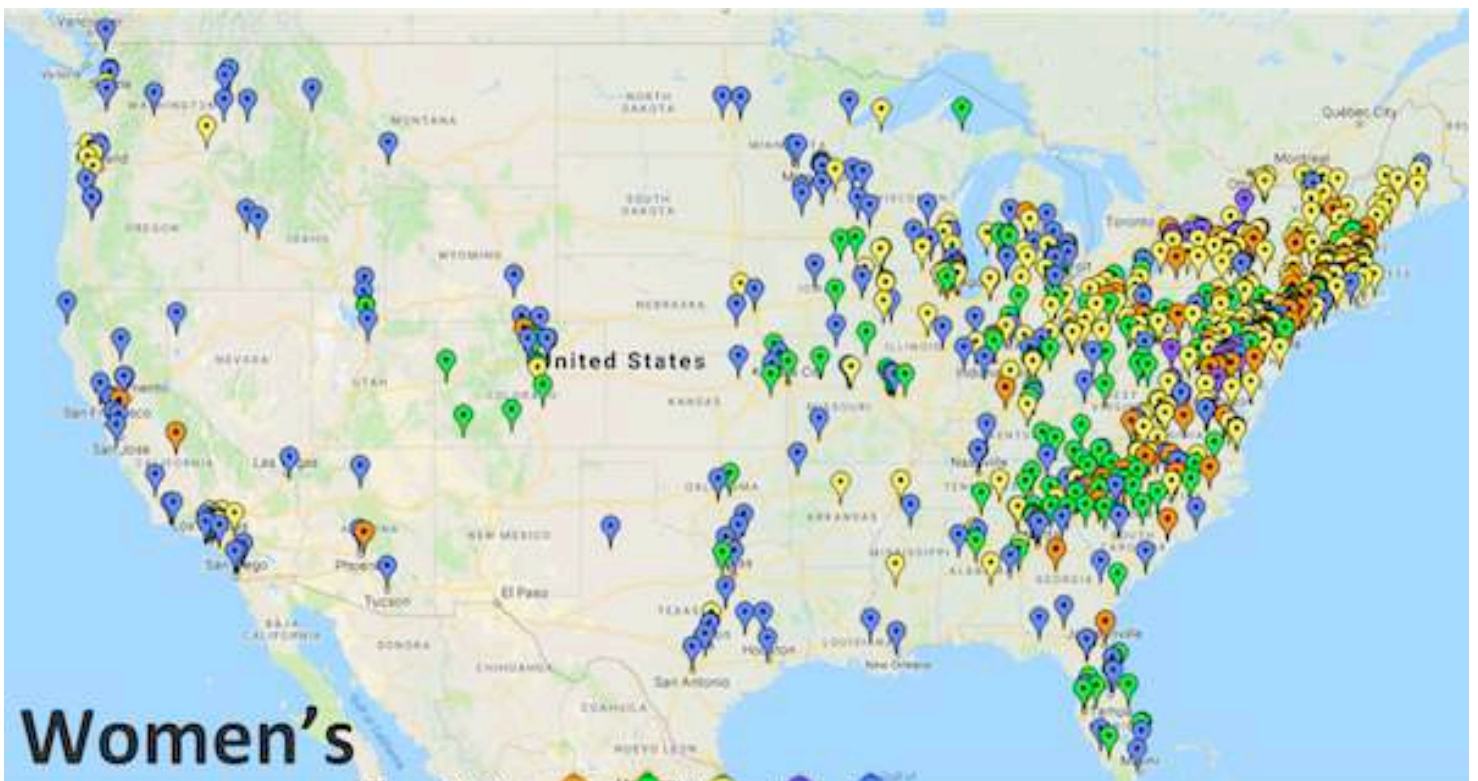
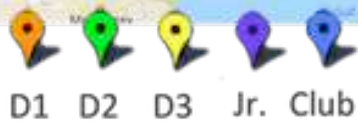
Geography can impact your recruiting plan. If you live outside the northeast, where the majority of college programs are located, the importance of club teams, highlight videos and online recruiting profiles increases.

Increased travel costs mean it’s important to refine your target list early, create a professional highlight video, connect with college coaches online and research the events you attend. Here is the location of over 1,500 collegiate lacrosse programs by division across the country.

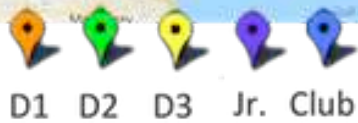
Given that travel costs can quickly elevate the costs of attending events. It is our understanding that college coaches can still speak with club and high school coaches in an evaluative process, such as about a recruit’s play at an event or their position on a college’s recruiting radar. Try messaging college coach with your coaches information so you can diligence events to target those attended by college coaches with recruiting needs at your position and at schools where you have the academic profile to get admitted.



Men's



Women's





## Sample College Visit Criteria

While recruits are encouraged to get on campus as underclassman, communication or meeting with the coach is limited until after September 1 of the recruits junior year. Your coaches may be able to help fill in the gaps.

College and coach name:

Impression of Campus:

Impression of Athletic Facilities:

Impression of Coaching Staff and Team:

Notes from Meeting with Coach

Pros:

Cons:

Coaching Style / Style of Play:

How Do I Fit in with the Recruiting Class?

How Does the Coach Think I Fit in at the School?

Admissions and Financial Aid Notes:

Follow-up Questions and/or Concerns:

# The Lacrosse Recruiting Calendar

A contact occurs any time a college coach says more than hello during a face-to-face contact with a recruit or their families off the college's campus.

The contact period is when coaches can make face-to-face contact with or in-person evaluation of recruits or their families off the college's campus.

The evaluation period is when coaches can be involved in off-campus activities designed to assess the recruit's academic and athletic ability, but no face-to-face contact with recruits nor their families off the college's campus is permitted.

The quiet period is when coaches can make face-to-face contact with recruits or their families, but only on the college's campus. No in-person evaluation of recruits are permitted off the college's campus.

The dead period is when coaches cannot make face-to-face contact nor in-person evaluation of recruits or their families on or off the college's campus, including official or unofficial visits by recruits. An official visit is paid for by the school where as an unofficial visit is paid for by the recruit. The only thing a recruit can receive during an unofficial visit is 3 tickets to a home game.

College coaches may message or call recruits or their families during the contact, evaluation and quiet period, but not during the dead period.

A National Letter of Intent is signed by a recruit when he or she agrees to attend a Division I or II school for one academic year. Schools agree to provide financial aid for one academic year to the player as long as he or she is admitted to the school and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules.

The National Letter of Intent is voluntary and not required to receive financial aid or participate in sports. It ends the recruiting process since other schools are prohibited from recruiting a player that has signed with another school. If a recruit signs a National Letter of Intent with one school but attends a different school, he or she will lose a full year of eligibility and must complete a full academic year at their new school before being eligible to compete.

Below is the NCAA Division I Men's Recruiting Calendar

The day after the first Sunday in January through Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Contact Period / No Evaluations
The day after MLK Holiday through the last day of February	Quiet Period
March 1 through the first Monday in August, except for:	Contact Period
(a) Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the spring (April) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
(b) The Friday before the DI Men's Lacrosse Championship through noon the Tuesday after it	Dead Period
(c) July 2-6 during the 4 <sup>th</sup> of July holiday	Dead Period
The day after the first Monday in August through the second Monday in August	Quiet Period
The day after the second Monday in August through Aug. 31	Dead Period
September 1 through October 31	Contact Period / No Evaluations
November 1 through the Sunday before Thanksgiving week, except for:	Contact Period
(a) Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the fall (November) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
The Monday before Thanksgiving through the Sunday after Thanksgiving week	Dead Period
The Monday after Thanksgiving through December 23	Quiet Period
December 24 through the first Sunday in January	Dead Period

Below is the Division II Men's Recruiting Calendar. Division II Women's recruiting calendar only includes dead periods during the spring and fall signing of the National Letter of Intent. There is no Division III Calendar.

The 48 hours prior to 7 am on the initial date for the fall (November) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
The Wednesday before the IMLCA Clinic to Monday noon after the clinic	Dead Period

The 48 hours prior to 7 am on the initial date for the spring (April) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
The Thursday before the DII Men's Lacrosse Championship through noon the Tuesday after it	Dead Period

Below is the NCAA Division I Women's Recruiting Calendar

January 3 through the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday in June, except for:	Contact Period
(a) Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the spring (April) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
(b) The Friday before the DI Women's Lacrosse Championship through the Sunday during it	Dead Period
Note: Evaluations may occur at one event conducted during the weekend of the NCAA DI Women's Championship, provided the event is conducted within a 100-mile radius of the site of the championship. The evaluation must be conducted on a day in which no NCAA game is conducted.	
The day after the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday in June through July 31, except for:	Evaluation Period
(a) July 3-5 during the 4 <sup>th</sup> of July holiday	Dead Period
August 1 through the first two weeks of the month	Dead Period
The second two weeks of August through August 31	Contact Period
September 1 through November 30, except for:	Contact Period
(a) Monday through Thursday of the initial week for the fall (November) signing of the National Letter of Intent	Dead Period
(b) 5 pm on Friday through Sunday of the first 3 weekends in November	Dead Period
(c) Thursday, Thanksgiving Day through the Sunday after it	Dead Period
December 1 through January 3, except for:	Contact Period
(a) December 24-26 of Christmas holiday	Dead Period
(b) December 31 through January 2	Dead Period

## Additional Resources to Review

- College Matching Service
  - A free resource to find and research target colleges that fit you both on and off the field: <http://www.connectlax.com/colleges>
- ConnectLAX Youtube Channel
  - Recruiting advice summarized from team recruiting seminars, college coach discussions, etc.: <http://www.youtube.com/connectlax>
- Private Lessons Service
  - A free resource to help players find private instructors in their community; easily search, filter, review and connect with instructors: <http://www.connectlax.com/private-lessons>
- NCAA Resources
  - NCAA Guide: <http://www.ncaapublications.com>
  - NCAA Clearinghouse: <http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>
  - NCAA Recruiting Calendar: <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/resources/recruiting-calendars>
- National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)
  - The NJCAA grants scholarships: <http://www.njcaa.org>
- Financial Aid and Scholarship Resources
  - Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
  - Fastweb (Scholarship Resources): <http://www.fastweb.com>
  - FinAid (Saving, Loans, Scholarships): <http://www.finaid.org>
- Virtual Campus Tours
  - CampusTours: <http://www.campustours.com>
  - YouVisit: <http://www.youvisit.com>
  - YOUniversity: <https://www.youniversitytv.com/category/college/>
- Relative Academic Performance Resources
  - Academic Index Calculator: <http://www.collegeconfidential.com>
- Testing and Admission Resources
  - The College Board (SAT): <http://www.collegeboard.org>
  - The ACT: <http://www.act.org>
  - The Common Application: <http://www.commonapp.org>

Any feedback and comments are welcomed. Contact [support@connectlax.com](mailto:support@connectlax.com).

## Step-by-Step Recruiting Timeline

NCAA Division I proposal 2017-1 makes September 1 of a recruit's junior year the starting date for all communications and contacts with college coaches, which provides a correction to the accelerated timeline of early recruiting.

Recruits now have more time to focus on academics, test scores, player development and finding schools that fit them both on and off the field. College is a 40-year, not a 4-year decision.

Based on our conversations and their presence on the sidelines, college coaches are still evaluating and recruiting high school underclassman. Continue to be proactive messaging and getting your game in front of college coaches while taking comfort in having more time to make a decision.

Know the numbers and be realistic. With a limited number of roster spots at NCAA programs, keep an open mind and do not let your focus on a particular team or division cause you miss other great opportunities in front of you.

Parents should be involved at every stage of the player's decision-making process so everyone is on the same page. This can include speaking with college, club and high schools coaches in addition to guidance counselors and revisiting NCAA clearinghouse guidelines. Refer to the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete for further eligibility information.

But remember, college coaches are recruiting the player first, so ensure parent participation in the process in not a wedge between the recruit and college coaches. And please, mind your behavior on the sidelines during games, college coaches are taking notes on parent as well as player behavior. This extends to interactions with club coaches because college coaches often ask them about player and parent behavior. Club coaches are incentivized to provide an honest appraisal because misleading a college coach can limit their ability to endorse future classes of players at that college.

The bullet points follow a chronological order throughout the year.

## Before High School

Enjoy lacrosse.

- Invest in the Classroom
  - The higher your grades and test scores, the more schools that can recruit you down the road. Focus now will help you increase your options and decrease the stress of the recruiting process in high school
- Build a Strong Foundation
  - Focus on balancing playing lacrosse with camps, drills, wall ball, fundamentals training and possibly private lessons. Identify weaknesses in your game and areas to grow it. Build endurance and footwork through playing multiple sports and individual training.
- Social Media
  - Social media is hilarious and fun. Don't be afraid to be yourself but keep in mind that once it's posted, you can't control it. College coaches and administrators will search for it before extending an offer.
  - The first real interview for most high school athletes is with college coaches and you will likely never know if it's social media that closes a door. You cannot control screenshots, don't let Snapchat fool you.
- Enjoy the New Legislation
  - In November 2012, the first freshman on record made a verbal commitment to a Division I men's lacrosse program, having never played a high school game.<sup>11</sup> The player and his family initiated contact with the college coach. This situation has now been corrected.

The timeline we outline is a template that you can personalized to your own recruiting plan. Move it up, shift it back, just don't get overwhelmed because you have time to come to a decision. But be proactive, limitations on coaching staff, resources and evaluation periods mean college coaches begin advancing players onto their recruiting radar as underclassman.

## Freshman Year

- Stay Active in the Fall and Winter
  - Look for fall leagues and winter camps; consider going out for fall sports with similar endurance requirements such as soccer, cross country and football; keep your stick in your hand and hit the wall
  - College coaches can easily identify a “one-trick horse”; so having multiple strengths to your game is key. Challenge yourself to learn new dodges, checks and finishing moves and keep the competition guessing
  - Prepare for a spring that will begin your separation from the competition; focus on speed and overall strength and conditioning
- Speak with Your Family
  - Discuss any high-level college preferences you have, such as the size of the school and distance from home. Just by discussing these items, not coming to an answer, you can start to formulate the criteria to consider
  - Have an honest conversation about financial parameters and understand net price, financial aid and other factors to consider
- Build Your Academic Track Record
  - Your GPA is cumulative; the grades you earn now will determine your college admissibility and initial NCAA eligibility years from now
  - The NCAA requires eligible athletes to complete 16 core courses in high school for Division I and II lacrosse and achieve a minimum GPA. Minimum test scores on the SAT and ACT are also required
  - If your target schools are very selective (Ivy League, NESCAC, Patriot conferences, etc.), try to get on track for Advanced Placement / College-level courses, which are key for admission to these institutions
- Community Service
  - Look for ways to give back to your community; try to find something you will enjoy such as volunteering as an assistant coach on recreational, youth team. Youth centers and church organizations are always looking for help and it is valued by college admissions
- Track Athletic Awards
  - This includes awards in other sports, especially if they demonstrate leadership, teamwork or skills transferrable across sports
- Communicate Your Goals



- Express your desire to play at the next level to high school and club coaches and ask them where and how to improve your game.  
Demonstrate your sincerity by bringing it in practice every day
- Meet with your guidance counselor to review your schedule and look ahead by targeting the right classes your sophomore year
- College Preferences and Visits
  - Visit a couple of nearby schools over winter break to further get an idea of what kind of colleges you are interested in; speak with teachers about schools that may be a good fit for you as well
  - Keep in mind that some states restrict your ability to attend recruiting events during the high school season, including showcases and prospect days; speak with your high school coach to protect your eligibility to avoid a violation for you and your high school team
  - If you have family or friends that are currently in college, try to visit them and ask them questions to get an inside scoop of what you should be thinking about and looking for in a prospective college
  - Build a target list of schools and message college coaches to express your interest to encourage them to evaluate your game in person; you are likely already attending events so try to get them on the sidelines
- Club Teams and Recruiting Events
  - Find camps and events that offer great instruction; look for good coach-to-player ratios so your game can get individual attention
  - Play in tournaments with a local club team to increase your exposure; do not feel pressure to play outside of your game, you have time to get in front of college coaches before they or you have to make a decision
  - Enjoy balance in your summer schedule to avoid burn out and give your body time to heal as overuse can lead to injuries and undermine your performance; remember to stay hydrated between games
  - Keep your recruiting profile up to date with the summer tournaments you are playing in so interested coaches evaluate you in person
  - Focus on player development and fun, you still have time for exposure
- Messaging College Coaches
  - Be proactive in contacting coaches at colleges you believe you can contribute to and get on their radar early in the recruiting process
  - College coaches are a community; a coach may receive your message but not have a recruiting need at your position for your class but still may share it with a coach at another school targeting your position

- Build Your Highlight Video
  - Create a highlight video to share with college coaches; HD video only
  - Follow our editing guidelines or hire a professional to make your highlight video; college coaches receive hundreds of videos so ensure the action is clear and includes player isolation
  - Review your own game film to learn from mistakes and identify areas where you can improve your game

## Sophomore Year

- Start Preparing for Standardized Tests
  - Sign up in advance to take your SAT and / or ACT early in your Sophomore year so you can familiarize yourself with the environment
  - Look into online prep courses and practice tests, speak with older friends and teammates and also seek our private tutoring if you wish
  - View your test scores as another pillar of your recruitment strategy, which can set you apart just like your performance on the field
  - You can and should plan on taking these tests multiple times
- Continue to Build Relationships
  - Continue to network with older teammates you can share their recruiting experiences along with club, high school and coaches you meet at events that can serve as references to college coaches
  - Develop a relationship with your high school guidance counselor and let him or her know you want to play sports in college
  - Prospect days and events where you play on teams coached by college coaches provide an opportunity to share your ability and tenacity
  - Be visible, but stay calm as feedback doesn't always make itself to you; sometimes it's shared with your coaches. Same as when messaging college coaches who are unable to respond directly to you, this does not mean they aren't discussing your highlight video and profile
- Get Feedback to Update Your List
  - Get feedback and evaluations from coaches and camp counselors on your game and what program level they believe you should be targeting; your target list should evolve throughout the process
  - Starting thinking of which program level or lacrosse division you would like to play in; if playing immediately is important to you, then

- consider Division III teams where you may be able to contribute on the field earlier. Again, you have time so don't feel pressure to close a door
- Consider if the team is scholarship or non-scholarship and if the scholarship program is fully funded or partially funded
  - Also consider the personality, training methods and style of play of the coach and his or her influence on the admissions process
- Fill Out Questionnaires
    - In addition to messaging, complete recruiting questionnaires on the colleges' website; include your profile link which integrates with their coach databases and will have your latest videos and event schedule
    - Questionnaires may be sent by mail as well to recruits that have expressed interest in the program and been identified by the coach; recruiting rules limit the athletic information coaches can share
  - Update Your Highlight Video
    - Share new film from recruiting events during your sophomore campaign so coaches can track how your game is progressing
    - Use a new or updated highlight video as a reason to message coaches at your target colleges along with your upcoming event schedule
  - Stay Active in Winter Leagues
    - Box lacrosse is a great way to test and improve your skills in close quarters and many college coaches now look for these skills in recruits; the success and influx of more Canadian players reflects this trend
  - Attend College Games in the Spring
    - Watch teams at your target schools to see how you stack up and if you can get on the field early in your collegiate career if that's a priority
    - Don't just follow the ball, be attentive to off-ball movements as well to understand the style of play; mention this in messages to coaches
  - Camps and Club Teams
    - Continue to attend camps and prospect days at your target schools and play in tournaments and showcases with exposure to coaches at your target colleges; it's not all of nothing, if you're not playing at your best, take time to invest in your game before returning to recruiting events
    - Verbal commitments will not fill your roster spot, you have time
    - Keep your event schedule updated and remind coaches where they can evaluate you in person; specify your team, jersey number and position
    - Train hard over the summer so you're in great shape for recruiting events and work hard to address any weaknesses in your game

- Evaluate Progress and Prioritize
  - Evaluate where you are, which coaches and at what program level you've had traction with; don't be like a horse with blinders on
  - Adjust your target list to reflect your academic performance over the last two years; always include both "reach" and "safe" schools on your list, from both an athletic and academic perspective
- Share Your Video and Profile With Coaches
  - Your recruiting profile acts as an introduction letter to coaches. Proof read your recruiting profile for any mistakes; this is your resume
  - Keep in mind that Division I and II coaches cannot reply or contact you until September 1 of your Junior year but they are still evaluating recruits; Division III and NAIA coaches can contact you at any time
  - You can message college coaches at any time in high school

## Junior Year

- Contact Coaches Again
  - Reach out to coaches again through your recruiting profile; follow up with a written letter, note any upcoming events you are playing in
  - Reintroduce yourself and your passion to play for their program
  - Your written letter should be a little more formal and treated like your resume and cover letter in one. You can refer to it as your letter of interest. Discuss your interest in the school, the program and a course of study if known. Touch on your goals and why you feel that school is a great fit. Include letters of recommendation and test scores. You can also include a print-out of your recruiting profile as reference
  - Confirm the coach's name and address are correct before sending it; review your spelling and grammar before you send it
  - Shorten your list of target schools to a more manageable 10-15 schools
  - Briefly comment on an article about the school or program or an interview with the coach to express your genuine interest in the school
- Your Final Highlight Video
  - Keep your highlight video up-to-date and focus on having both a short 3 minute video and a long 15 minute video available that is well edited
  - Refer to our tips for building an excellent highlight video as this is likely the last version you will share and very important to promoting your game to college coaches, especially at this stage of the process

- Use Academics to Stand Out
  - This is the most important academic year in your college applications
  - Take challenging classes including Advanced Placement courses
  - Focus on your test scores and share strong test scores with coaches along with updating them in your profile; time to get more aggressive
- Communication Starts September 1
  - Coaches may start emailing you questionnaires and initiating online contact; return them promptly and succinctly express your interest
  - Respond to every coach you hear from to build your network with coaches; keep in mind that email and correspondence through your club coach are the primary means of communication your junior year
  - Let coaches of schools you are not interested in know immediately; thank them for their interest and that you are focusing on other schools. Again, college coaches are a community, don't hurt your rep
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse
  - The NCAA recommends student-athletes register in the beginning of their Junior year; ask your guidance counselor any questions you have
  - Recruits considering Division I and Division II schools must register; Division III schools determine eligibility themselves, not the NCAA
  - There is no registration deadline but students must be cleared by the Eligibility Center before they receive an athletic scholarship
  - The NCAA provides release forms, the initial certification necessary to take official visits and final certification on your eligibility, which is based on your high school transcripts and SAT or ACT test scores
- Retake Standardized Tests
  - Take these tests multiple times and learn about super scoring, where colleges take the highest score on each section regardless of test date
  - Indicate NCAA Clearinghouse number (9999) to send your scores
- Spring Correspondence
  - Send coaches an updated academic information including your unofficial transcript, test scores and an updated event schedule
  - Include your most recent telephone number so coaches can reach you
  - Include your club coaches so you can try to get an idea where you stand on their recruiting list so you can narrow your target schools
  - Again, avoid Division I blinders, start reaching out to Division II, III, NAIA or club teams if you don't have traction with Division I coaches
- Camps, Club Teams and Showcases

- Look for camps offered by the college coaches you are interested in playing for as this is a great way to meet the coaching staff and team
- Club teams and recruiting events remain the best way to get exposure to college coaches, who want to see you in person competing against top competition. If your travel opportunities are limited, your recruiting profile and high school team game film can still demonstrate your abilities to the college coaches you're interested in
- September 1 Contact Period
  - This is the first time Division I coaches can officially contact or call you; do not stress if you don't hear from coaches the first day
  - Coaches will begin to extend scholarship offers at this time; if you do not get a scholarship at this point, it does not necessarily mean coaches are not interested in you, they are working through their list
  - Division II coaches can officially contact you June 15<sup>th</sup> of your Junior year; both Division I and II coaches are limited to a contact frequency of once a week, thus it's good to be patient during this period
  - Division III coaches do not have the same recruiting restrictions but generally start reaching out around the same time
  - Keep an open line of communication with the college coaches you are interested in and try to speak with them about once a month
- Fulfill NCAA Clearinghouse Requirements
  - Confirm the status of your file to avoid any eligibility issues

## Senior Year

- Refine Your Final Target List
  - Cut your list to 4-6 schools based on the letters and traction you have with colleges that fit your academic, social and financial preferences
  - Reach out to these select coaches with updated information; include a letter of recommendation from your high school and club coaches
  - Arrange on campus interviews with coaches / just get on campus
  - By October, 90% of Division I recruiting classes are full so be aggressive but realistic so you're focused on the best opportunities
- Apply to Schools
  - Tell coaches you have submitted an application to their school
  - Request coaches work with financial aid officers to provide a financial aid pre-read, which provides an estimate of your financial aid package

- Apply for financial aid with FAFSA beginning January 1
- Pursue the schools with the best academic fit; remember, you can always try walking on or playing on a club team
- Official Visits
  - You are only allowed to take five official visits and official visits taken for other sports count towards your five total permitted visits
  - Any visit that is fully or partially funded by an institution counts, this includes a Division III visit funded by a representative of athletics interests (i.e., a booster) so be mindful not to expense your allotment
  - Official visits must take place your senior year and are limited to 48 hours; do not let your guard down during the visit even when the players are showing you a good time, treat it as a job interview
  - Continue to take unofficial visits at all schools you have interest in
- Consider Early Decision or Early Action Admission
  - Also consider Early Signing for a scholarship you have been offered; early signing period is the second week of November, the regular signing period is in April for your National Letter of Intent
  - You should receive a letter that states whether it is likely or unlikely that you will be accepted to the school and receive financial aid, allowing you to make an informed decision at this time without voiding the scholarship or limiting your eligibility at other schools
  - Early Signing of your National Letter of Intent binds you to attend that institution for at least one academic year; failing to do so will cause you to lose eligibility even with a qualified release agreement
- Cross the Finish Line Academically
  - All colleges want transcripts of first semester grades so stay sharp
- Sign and Commit to a Program
  - Write all the coaches you have been working with, thanking them and informing them of your decision; hold on to these relationships
  - Get the summer workout schedule at your new program

Good luck and get ready for the experience of a lifetime.

## Conclusion: The Goal Remains The Same

The recruiting timeline in lacrosse has accelerated over the past ten years before experiencing a correction with proposal 2017-1. While players and college coaches now have more time to make a decision, the recruiting of underclassman remains. This trend was driven by recruits and their families as much as college coaches because it coincides with more students from across the world looking for admission to the great schools that have lacrosse programs. Recruiting loopholes and the supply and demand imbalance just accelerated it. Ten years ago, we didn't have super scoring on standardized tests and underclassman taking the exam multiple times.

These trends are linked. While both have become more stressful, the prize remains the same, a truly unique experience, the pride of wearing your school's name across your chest and the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with your teammates. That, along with a degree from a great school, is worth fighting for and waking up early on Sunday to run stairs at the local stadium. We hope this guide and our resources helps you define and reach your goal. Nothing worth fighting for is free.

College lacrosse at any level matters, down the road when you're asked how have you handled adversity of been a part of a team, you're going to have a great answer whether it's Division I II, III, Jr. College or MCLA / WCLA lacrosse.

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<sup>1</sup> Bowen, William G. and Levin, Sarah A. "Reclaiming the Game: College Sports and Educational Values." *Princeton University Press*. 2005

<sup>2</sup> "Scholarship Myths." *ScholarshipExperts.com*

<sup>3</sup> Walker, Childs. "Despite Reservations, College Lacrosse Coaches Recruit Younger And Younger Players." *The Baltimore Sun*. 17 Nov. 2012.

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<sup>11</sup> McLaughlin, Corey. "Freshman's Commitment Again Puts Focus On Early Recruiting." *Lacrosse Magazine*. 10 Dec. 2012.