

Developing a Personal Recruiting Plan to Play NCAA Lacrosse

As with most tasks, preparation can make the path to success much easier and give you an advantage over the competition. When it comes to recruiting, a player who develops a recruiting plan will have a greater chance of becoming an NCAA lacrosse player vs. a player who hopes that a college will appear out of the blue with a scholarship offer.

Remember that you're marketing yourself, so everything that you do in the recruiting process should be done with all your effort, since your own success should be very important to you. Coaches want players who are confident in their own ability, so the way that you market yourself will go a long way in showing college coaches what kind of person you are.

Players must have a year round plan; it should start during their freshman year in high school and should probably include some of the following action items:

Initial Research

- Research colleges online to determine what kind of college you want to attend. Do you want to go to a big school or a small school? Do you want to stay close to home or go far away? What do you want to study, and does that college offer that major? Are you willing to only play at the Division I level or will you accept an offer from a Division II or III school? Remember that picking the right school is more important than picking the right lacrosse team to play for because you may get injured or decide to leave the team at some point in your college career, so make sure that you like the school. Try to develop a "short list" of 10-15 colleges that you want to consider at this point.
- Review the lacrosse team rosters of all of your potential colleges. Are there any players from local high schools on the team who you know and can talk to? Where do they recruit most of the players from? How many players are on the roster? How many upperclassmen are on the roster and how many of them play your position? Coaches may be impressed by a potential recruit who's done their homework about the school and the team. It shows that you're really interested in attending that school and playing lacrosse. This research may also help you eliminate some colleges from your list and you might be down to 8-12 colleges.
- Download a copy of the **2011-2012 NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete**. This can be found at www.ncaapublications.com. Search for

the document in the search bar and you will be directly to a page where you can download it for free. It's a 24 page document filled with information about the requirements for college bound student athletes.

- Visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website (formerly known as the NCAA Clearinghouse). You must register with the Eligibility Center if you want to play Division I or Division II NCAA sports. You can access the Eligibility Center via the www.ncaa.org home page.
- Review the NCAA recruiting calendar and the NCAA recruiting rules if you're interested in playing Division I lacrosse (visit the NCAA Recruiting Information page at www.ncaa.org for more information). This will help you understand when a coach will be able to contact you and when you'll be expected to make a decision on which school you want to attend. Division II and III schools have different recruiting rules and don't have NCAA recruiting calendars posted online.

Contacting College Coaches

- Clean up your Facebook page and any other online profiles that you use before you contact any coaches. If a coach is interested in recruiting you, they're going to do their own research on you and they're probably going to start by looking at your Facebook page, etc. Please remember that information on Facebook, etc. can be seen by a lot of people, so make sure that there's nothing that may hurt your chances of being recruited.
- Develop a recruiting video that highlights your ability. Make sure that the college coach knows who they're supposed to be watching on the video (some videos are taken from high in the bleachers during a high school game and the players are so small that it's difficult to see their uniform numbers, so it's difficult for the college coach to know which player is you). Also remember that you should highlight different parts of your game so that the coach can see how you play offense, defense, in transition, etc. It may be helpful to provide a short interview of yourself so that they can see who you are. You can burn the video onto a DVD and mail it to the coach, but it's sometimes better to upload the video to youtube.com or some other online service and email a link to the coach since email links are easier to access and DVD's get misplaced.
- Complete the college's online recruiting questionnaire. Most schools have an online form that they ask prospective athletes to complete in order to be recruited

by their school. These forms only take a couple of minutes to complete and they provide the school with a lot of very useful information so that they can determine if you're a good fit for their school. This also shows the coach that you're serious about being recruited to that school.

- Send an email to the coach expressing your interest to be recruited and tell coach why you want to go to that college. Coaches like to read emails from recruits who've done research about their school and include that in their email (i.e. ... "I want to come to your college because I want to major in Biology/Pre-Med and *ABC University* has one of the best Pre-Med programs in the United States..."). Make sure you tell them that you've completed their online Recruit Questionnaire. Make sure that you personalize the email. College coaches get a lot of emails from prospective recruits and they can tell when players spend time to personalize an email and when they're getting a mass email from a player who sent the same email to 50 colleges. Use the coach's name and the school's name in the email (don't address the email to "Dear Coach" and don't say "I want to play at *your college*" because it's clear that you're sending a mass email since you don't know the name of the coach or the college).

Tell the coach about your lacrosse experience (awards that you've received, an overview of your individual and team statistics) for both your high school and club team. Tell the coach about any other sports and school activities that you're involved with since coaches want players who are well rounded student-athletes.

Include things like your name, position, jersey number, high school, and graduation year in the subject line of the email. Put together a signature at the end of the email with your name, high school, position, jersey number, graduation year, your phone number, your GPA and SAT scores, high school coach and contact information, and club lacrosse team, club coach and contact information. This will allow the college coaches to know a lot of information about you and have it all in one place. Also make sure that you include a link to your highlight video in the email or tell the coach that you will be sending a highlight DVD so that they know it's in the mail.

Please remember that NCAA rules may prohibit the coach from returning your email. Don't get discouraged. The coaching staff will contact you when they're able.

Please remember that college coaches want to speak directly to the high school athlete. They receive a lot of emails from parents saying “my son wants to play lacrosse at your school” and they generally feel that if a high school player really wants to play for them that the player will take the time to contact the coach directly vs. having their parents contact the coach for them.

- Make sure you’re ready when a coach contacts you. They may want more information about you (additional footage from your recruiting video, school transcripts, etc.) and you need to be ready to fulfill those requests immediately. Also remember that you may be contacted by a coach from a school that’s not on your list of schools that you’re considering. Make sure that you return the email and thank them for their interest in you, even if you’re not interested in them. Remember that coaches change schools on a regular basis, and you don’t want to make a bad impression on any coach because that coach may end up getting a job at a school that you want to play at.
- Schedule campus visits at each school. These visits can start as early as your freshman year in high school. Some high school students like visiting colleges in the fall because they can watch the lacrosse team during fall practice or a fall scrimmage. Make the most out of your visit. Ask if you can speak with current players and a professor in your field of study as part of your visit. Current players may be able to give you information about the coaching staff and life at the college that may be useful. Current players may also have influence in the recruiting process, since coaches look to their current players for assistance in determining if a high school player will be a good fit in their lacrosse program.

Please remember that NCAA rules may not allow the coaching staff to speak with you during your visit, but there’s a lot of information that you can learn from other people on campus, so make sure that your college visits are a worthwhile, learning experience.

When you meet with the coaches or players at a college, you should have prepared questions, including;

- ◆ When do you practice? (Some colleges practice early in the morning, some practice late at night, and some practice in the early afternoon. All of these may affect your ability to take classes that are requirements for your major.)

- ♦ When do offseason workouts begin and what do you do? (Again, the offseason schedule may impact your ability to take certain classes.)
- ♦ What is the most popular major (field of study) on the lacrosse team? This question will allow you to learn several things; first, you will learn if the coach is involved in the academic life of his players. Second, if most of the team are business majors and you want to be a business major, it's likely that the coaches work around the class schedule of the business school and practice time and offseason workouts may not interfere with your class schedule.
- ♦ Do you allow players to play multiple sports? If you are interested in playing more than one sport in college, you need to make sure that the coaches of all the sports allow athletes to do that.

Tournaments, Camps and Showcases

- Put together a master schedule of the summer, fall and winter recruiting tournaments, camps and showcases that you will be attending and attend them with a plan for getting recruited. Most recruiting tournaments, camps and showcases post a list of college coaches who are planning to attend their event on their website. If there are colleges on the list that you're interested in, you need to contact those coaches prior to the tournament and send them your tournament game schedule and your jersey number so that they can attend your tournament games. If you don't see a particular college listed on the tournament website, contact the coaching staff anyway since some coaching staffs don't always pre-register with the tournament director so you want to make sure that they know when you're playing so that they can watch you if they attend the tournament.

If you're interested in attending a particular college or university, find out if they host a summer camp and plan to attend. This will give you a lot of personal time with the coaching staff.

Keep your Coaches and Guidance Counselor updated on your progress

- Keep your high school and club coaches and your guidance counselor updated as to which schools you've contacted. College coaches may contact one of your coaches with questions about you, so it's best if your coach is prepared to give you as much help as possible. Your guidance counselor may have existing relationships with the admissions office of the college that you're interested in and may be able to assist you with the admissions and financial aid process.