

**CONNECTLAX**

**Recruiting Handbook**

**Your Guide to Navigating the Lacrosse  
Recruiting Landscape and Playing**

**COLLEGE LACROSSE**

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## Introduction

Recruiting has become increasingly competitive for high school lacrosse players, as well as college admissions in general for all students. The number of high school lacrosse players and qualified college applicants continues to outpace the number of available roster spots and seats in the classroom.

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

It goes without saying that high school student-athletes can experience elevated stress while trying to find both the right lacrosse program and academic institution. There is no easy answer to remove the stress of today's accelerated recruiting landscape, but by providing more pertinent and quality information along with a roadmap for players and parents to act on, we hope to make the recruiting process a positive one.

To aid in this process, we have organized over 1,400 collegiate lacrosse programs in our college directory to help players and parents find schools that fit them on and off the field. Lacrosse should be one of many factors considered when creating your list of target schools, alongside your academic, social and financial preferences. Your time on the field is a great supplement to your education. However, it is your degree that ultimately prepares you for long-term success.

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.

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

## Recruiting Landscape: 2014 and Beyond

The recruiting landscape has accelerated over the past five to ten years with the growth of verbal commitments by high school underclassman. NCAA recruiting rules allow Division I college coaches to officially contact players on July 1 following their junior year. However, by this time most recruiting classes at Division I programs are nearly full.

This trend is expected to continue because college coaches have been unable to reach a consensus in reversing it and the NCAA prefers not to address changes to one sport at a time. In fact, the NCAA has actually been deregulating recruiting across sports as of late.<sup>1</sup>

With verbal commitments by high school underclassmen being the new norm, players and parents need to proactively research, evaluate and engage their target colleges. The summer before high school is the right time to start preparing for the recruiting process. By preparing, we mean a high level discussion with your family of any college preferences and a general awareness of NCAA academic requirements.

Fear has unfortunately been a driving factor behind the growth of early recruitment as players, parents and even coaches worry about being left behind in today's accelerated recruiting landscape. However, it is important to remember that college is a 40-year, not a 4-year decision and our resources are designed to help players and parents make an educated choice.

We recommend your recruiting plan include the following:

- Invest in your game and in the classroom
  - Attending instructional camps and working with a coach, mentor or private instructor is critical in developing strong fundamentals that college coaches are looking for
    - Travel and club teams provide exposure to college coaches, but the speed, athletic ability and ball skills you need to stand out are developed “after hours” with a speed ladder and wall ball
    - Use your academics to separate yourself from the competition and open your recruitment to a larger number of schools

- Ensure your grades and test scores meet the eligibility and admission standards of the schools you are interested in and more importantly, possibly already committed to
- Create a realistic list of target schools that match your college preferences and athletic abilities
  - Lacrosse should be one of many factors considered in your college decision, along with school size and location, student body and campus, majors offered, cost, etc.
  - Research the lacrosse experience, coaching staff and team culture through videos, interviews and articles about the school and program
  - Include schools where you could see yourself being happy without lacrosse in case of injury, etc. and ensure your list has enough schools on it as coaching changes can cause the recruiting trail to go cold
- Be proactive in initiating contact with college coaches at the programs you are interested in and look for camps 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 statistics and keep your recruit calendar up to date so interested coaches can see you in person
  - Attending camps and clinics allows you to see the campus, meet and hopefully impress the coaching staff, talk with current players, and learn more about the program

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, the coaches do not just come to you so use your recruiting profile as an efficient way to go to them.

## Reality Check: Lacrosse by the Numbers

Researching and finding the right school for you is key because lacrosse scholarships and professional opportunities are limited financially and the 4-year cost of tuition and expenses is approaching \$250,000 at many lacrosse schools. Ultimately, it is your education that is going to set you up for long-term success and lacrosse can give you the best opportunity to gain admission to a top school.

The reality is Division I programs spread 12.6 full scholarships across an average men's roster size of 46 players and 12 full scholarships across an average women's roster of 27 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 10 full scholarships, respectively. Division III and Ivy League schools do not offer athletic scholarships. Further, the majority of Division I and II teams are not fully funded, which means most programs are unable to offer the maximum number of scholarships allowed by the NCAA.

Using 2011-2012 NCAA statistics, there were 2,791 male athletes across 61 Division I men's teams compared to 2,495 female athletes across 91 Division I women's teams. With only 12.6 and 12 full scholarships available per team, that means 3.6 male athletes and 2.3 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 help an athlete. The commitment and discipline required to play collegiate 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, 8 teams), National Lacrosse League (indoor, founded 1987, 9 teams) and LXM Pro (travel All-Star teams, founded 2009, 2 teams). The National Lacrosse League is primarily Canadian, where box lacrosse is the country's official summer sport. 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 typically 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 at any level and why former players look back so fondly on their collegiate careers.

Despite being a non-revenue sport, lacrosse is the only NCAA sport to share the early recruiting timeline with high-grossing football and basketball. Given the vastly different scholarship and professional opportunities available, this may appear somewhat surprising. However, the main reason for this intense competition stems from lacrosse being a powerful tool in gaining admission to the best schools in the country.

## Early Recruiting: The New Norm

College coaches often express frustration about today's accelerated recruiting landscape and its impact on high school athletes. However, until a consensus can be reached in reversing this trend, we can only conclude it will continue unabated. This trend has both winners and losers. Surprisingly, Division III programs, which do not offer athletic scholarships nor accept verbal commitments, benefit from early recruiting as late bloomers who stand out as juniors and seniors often find most Division I rosters are already full. Division I programs that were less aggressive in early recruiting and therefore had roster spots open for late bloomers have benefitted as well. Loyola of Maryland's 2012 championship run is an example of this.

Unfortunately, another byproduct of early recruiting is an increase in transfers. Often times from Division I to Division III programs. The clear losers of this trend are the players, who may have verbally committed as underclassmen only to later on find their school was not the right match for them. With most collegiate programs carrying large rosters, it is important that players and parents have a school-first approach as playing time is never guaranteed.

To assist families in their research and hopefully help players avoid a transfer scenario, we provide our college directory and matching service as a free, public resource at [Connectlax.com/colleges](http://Connectlax.com/colleges). College profiles include both school and team information so players and parents can find schools that match them on and off the field.

Early recruiting has largely undermined the importance of official visits, which are now primarily used to host players who have already committed instead of prospects looking to learn more. Official visits are trips to campus by seniors that are funded by the school.

Getting on campus is critical. Whether it's for a camp 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. Be proactive in letting coaches know you'll be on campus and in organizing your own unofficial visits to see the campus, learn about the school and hopefully meet with the coaches.

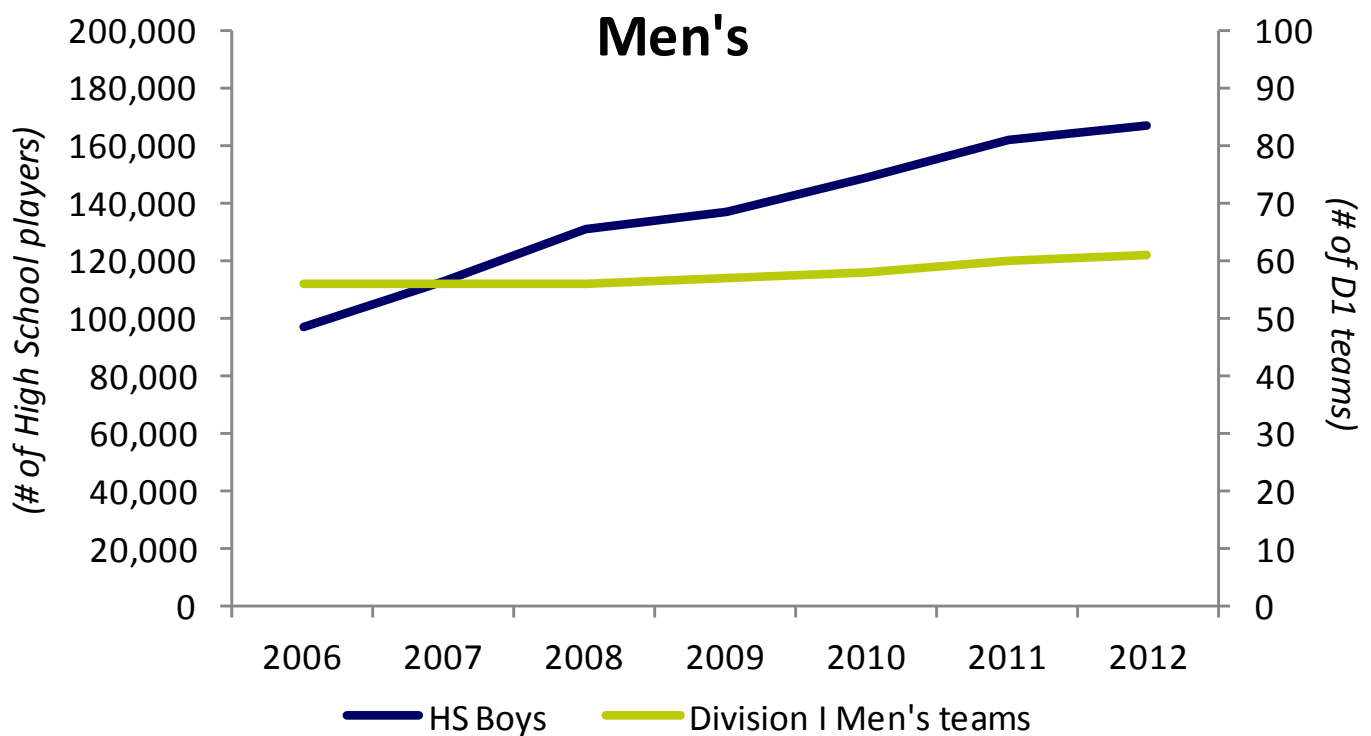


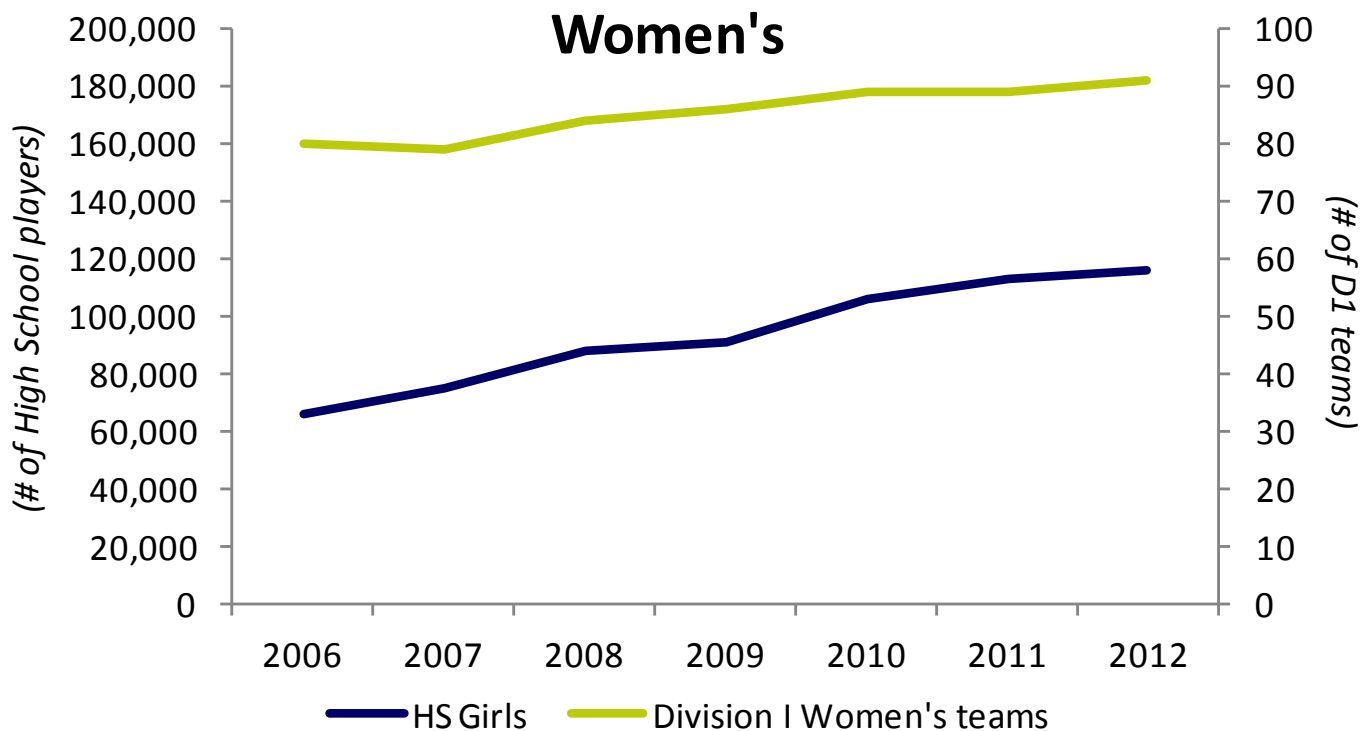
## Fear Factor: Rise in Verbal Commitments

The rise in verbal commitments, especially in men's recruiting, is being driven by the significant supply and demand imbalance in Division I recruiting. In short, the number of new teams and thus roster spots is being far outpaced by the explosive growth in youth participation across the country. With 67 Division I men's teams, including 4 independent programs, there are very few roster spots to go around for an ever-increasing number of hungry and talented players. There are 91 Division I women's teams, which has seen more growth in roster spots but remains very competitive.

More than 1,400 new high school lacrosse teams have been added since 2006. Today, there are more than 170,000 male and 120,000 female high school lacrosse players, a significant increase over the 100,000 male and 70,000 female players there were in 2006.<sup>2</sup>

The following charts compare the number of high school lacrosse players to Division I lacrosse teams from 2006 to 2012.





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 much faster than the number of chairs in the game. Players fear there may not be a chair or in this case, a roster spot for them if they wait, and therefore look to verbally commit early in the recruiting process to ensure a place on the team. Keep in mind a verbal commitment is 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.

De-committing can have a devastating impact for college coaches, especially when it's a position with small numbers such as a goalie. Be aware some coaches may continue their recruitment of a player that has verbally committed elsewhere. In the end, lacrosse is about relationships and your relationship with the college coach is about trust, trust that you will honor your commitment and trust in the coach that you will gain admission to the school and have your roster spot waiting.

Relationships with your high school and club coaches are very important in the recruiting process as college coaches will most likely reach out to them. 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>3</sup> Specifically, 30 new college programs were added in 2012 and 60 in 2013. Eight new women's and two new men's Division I teams were added in 2013 with nine and five more announced.

The addition of men's and women's lacrosse to the Big Ten Conference for the 2014-2015 season may open the door to other Big Ten schools without Division I programs. 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>4</sup>

The ongoing NCAA conference realignment has affected Division I men's lacrosse as well, with teams in the Atlantic Sun Conference elevating to Division I for the 2013-2014 season and the ECAC Lacrosse League under threat to fold with only one school left that has not committed to joining another conference by July 2014. The conference of your target schools is not of critical importance but nonetheless should be considered if the health of the conference poses a risk to the lacrosse program.

It is important to remember that if you are passionate about playing collegiate lacrosse, there are enough Division I, II, III and non-NCAA roster spots across the country for just about every player looking to play at the next level.

## 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 18,000 member high schools across the US. As of 2012, 22 states had formally sanctioned or recognized lacrosse, up from 13 states in 2000.<sup>5</sup>

Below is the number of high schools sponsoring each sport and their respective growth rates from 2007 to 2012.<sup>6</sup>

<b>Boys' Sports</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>% growth</b>
Lacrosse	1,588	2,338	47%
Bowling	2,089	2,467	18%
Swimming	6,358	7,001	10%
Volleyball	2,006	2,180	9%
Water Polo	725	783	8%

<b>Girls' Sports</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>% growth</b>
Lacrosse	1,480	2,118	43%
Bowling	2,012	2,451	22%
Field Hockey	1,493	1,788	20%
Ice Hockey	504	600	19%
Water Polo	716	785	10%

## Scholarship Myths: Important Considerations

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

- There are many scholarships available, including “full rides”
  - 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 typically share 3 full scholarships
  - Division II men’s and women’s programs have 10.8 and 10 full scholarships, respectively

- Many Division I and II programs are not fully funded and therefore offer less than the maximum amount of scholarships allowed
- College coaches focus on making sure all players receive a partial scholarship, making the “full ride” a rarity in college lacrosse
- 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 at the same level year-to-year
  - College coaches can consult with financial aid officers to identify non-athletic based aid you may qualify for but this should not be relied upon
- Coaches only consider athletic skills and grades in offering a scholarship
  - Coaches perform an extensive background check into an athletes’ character before offering a scholarship because it is a financial risk for the school that reflects upon the coach
  - Coaches may call your high school and club team coaches, guidance counselors, teachers and possibly even your friends
  - 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 accelerated and 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 450 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
- What level of collegiate lacrosse am I good enough to play?
  - Division I teams account for 19% of men's and 22% of women's college programs with Division II (and NAIA), Division III and Junior Colleges making up the rest (% excludes MCLA / WCLA / NCLL)
  - There are roughly 170,000 male high school players and 120,000 female high school players; only 1.6% of these males and 2.1% of females 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 makes Division I and collegiate 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 will likely 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 travel or club team coaches often play a much larger role and take pride in their recruitment track record; ask your coaches for advice and to provide an evaluation of your game and related drills to practice
  - Keep your coaches informed about your recruiting progress and college preferences but take full responsibility in finding your collegiate home
  - Ask your coaches for information about camps, clinics, leagues and tournaments you should participate in and for letters of recommendation if the events are invite-only
- 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 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 need to consider joining travel or 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
- Lacrosse camps are typically best for player development, not increasing your recruiting exposure; try to attend them at your target schools to learn more about the campus and coaching staff
- Assistant coaches will often evaluate your highlight video and review your academic qualifications before putting you on the recruiting radar of the head coach; after getting on their radar, the next step is to let coaches know where you will be playing via your profile calendar so they can see you in person
- How many colleges should I put on my target list?
  - A list of 40 lacrosse programs that you qualify for academically is recommended and breaking your list down into 3 tiers is best; do not be shy about contacting coaches whose programs you believe you can contribute to
  - 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 for Players and Parents to Ask 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?
  - This is critically important as players commit earlier and earlier and have less of an academic track record for coaches to evaluate

- 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 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 will signing or verbally committing early or not affect your status
  - 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 during camps as well as official and unofficial visits. 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.



## Club Teams: Recruiting Exposure

Travel and club teams play an important role in the recruiting process. Simply put, it is easier for college coaches with limited time and budgets to travel to recruiting tournaments and see many top players at once than travel to individual high school games that overlap with the college season. Further, coaches want to see how recruits compete against strong competition.

With 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 for you 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 elevating your game over the summer. 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.

To maximize the recruiting exposure of every player, we introduced our team recruiting service to link your mobile recruiting profile to your team roster. Allowing college coaches to review your team's roster from the sidelines and evaluate your profile while watching you play.

The growth in year-round tournaments and showcases provides players with ample opportunity to seek the recruiting exposure they desire, but these obligations should be weighed against player development and academic performance. Keep in mind your speed and athletic ability coupled with strong grades are key differentiators in your recruitment.

Regarding year-round tournaments, US Lacrosse has called on college coaches not to attend or participate in recruiting events that infringe on the academic calendar.<sup>7</sup> Attendance has continued and it is worth noting that college coaches now run their own 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>8</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. Further, college admissions in general prefer multi-sport student-athletes.

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 travel 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

## 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 and get the dialogue started

## 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 the early recruiting schedule and NCAA rules preventing coaches from contacting you as an underclassman make 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, which most coaches favor over receiving DVD's in the mail
  - 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 do 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 Checklist And Visit Notes

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 56,000 students and Arizona State University (club) has over 70,000 students; that is a lot of people, especially if you grew up in a small town
  - In comparison, Wells College (Division III) has less than 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
- 

## 2. Cost

- Total expenses including tuition at Dartmouth are over \$60,000 a year while tuition is free at US military academies
  - 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
- 

## 3. Selectivity

- From a 6% 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
-



#### 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
  - 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 a strong alumni base can be a positive influence
- 

#### 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
- 

#### 6. Social

- Check out the Twitter feed and any YouTube videos about the program to see if their social profile matches your personality and interests
  - Review any endorsements about the team written by current and former players, if available
- 

#### 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 once you are on campus
- 

#### 8. Student Body

- Check out the breakdown of in-state verse out-of-state; maybe you want to meet new and different 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
-

## Tips for Building an Excellent Highlight Video

- Hire a Videographer
  - You want to allow coaches across the country to easily evaluate your skills in real time; home videos and amateur filming make this difficult and with so many recruits vying for attention, coaches will simply move on to the next highlight video
  - If a parent or friend is filming, get an inexpensive tripod and wear bright socks or put tape on your shoes so you can be easily identified and tracked by the camera
- Follow These Editing Guidelines
  - Do not over edit your video with special effects, music, etc...
  - Remember your audience. It's not your friends but college coaches and odds are your taste in music probably doesn't match Coach Tierney anyway; no music is fine
  - Have a three minute short form highlight video and a 15 minute long form video with unedited game film so coaches can see you move without the ball, riding clears, and your defensive positioning; as well as your body language between plays
  - Include footage of you shooting, dodging and demonstrating the entirety of your skill set
  - Include a few seconds before and after each play so the coach can see it develop and evaluate the full motion of the play
  - Ensure your footage is in a software format that can be read by both Mac and Windows computers
- Include Footage from Club Tournaments and Camps
  - 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
  - Film high school games against difficult opponents and identify who you are playing against
  - 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

ConnectLAX recruits receive exclusive, discounted pricing on highlight video filming and editing with Prodigy Launch. Visit [ConnectLAX.com/highlightvideo](http://ConnectLAX.com/highlightvideo) to learn more.

## Additional Resources to Review

- College Matching Service
  - Create a free list of target colleges that match you on and off the field ([connectlax.com/colleges](http://connectlax.com/colleges))
- NCAA Resources
  - Guide for the College Bound Athlete (free download): [Ncaapublications.com/p-4236-2013-14-ncaa-guide-for-the-college-bound-student-athlete-sold-as-a-packages-of-25-due-summer-2013.aspx](http://Ncaapublications.com/p-4236-2013-14-ncaa-guide-for-the-college-bound-student-athlete-sold-as-a-packages-of-25-due-summer-2013.aspx)
  - NCAA Clearinghouse: [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org)
- National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)
  - The NJCAA grants 20 full scholarships per college for men’s and women’s teams: [njcaa.org](http://njcaa.org)
- Financial Aid and Scholarship Resources
  - Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov)
  - Fastweb (Scholarship Resources): [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)
  - FinAid (Saving, Loans, Scholarships): [finaid.org](http://finaid.org)
- Virtual Campus Tours
  - YOUiversity: [youiversitytv.com](http://youiversitytv.com)
  - CampusTours: [campustours.com](http://campustours.com)
  - YouVisit: [youvisit.com](http://youvisit.com)
- Relative Academic Performance Resources
  - Academic Index Calculator: [collegeconfidential.com](http://collegeconfidential.com)
  - Ivy League Academic Index: [home.comcast.net/~charles517/ivyai.html](http://home.comcast.net/~charles517/ivyai.html)
- Testing and Admission Resources
  - The College Board: [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)
  - The ACT: [act.org](http://act.org)
  - The Common Application: [commonapp.org](http://commonapp.org)

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

**Now You Understand  
The Recruiting  
Landscape, Go To  
CONNECTLAX**

**And Get Our Full,  
Step-By-Step Guide**

**Learn What Steps You Need To Take  
Each Year Of High School To Put Yourself In  
The Best Position To Get Recruited**

Access The Guide Through A Varsity Or MVP  
Recruit Profile At [ConnectLAX.com/Recruiting](https://ConnectLAX.com/Recruiting)