To Do List for Rising Sophomores (Class of 2017) & Beyond

What To Do To Construct A Realistic & Appropriate College List

- Before the recruiting process starts in earnest figure-out what your goals are for lacrosse and college. Do you: want to get a scholarship, want to use lacrosse as a means to help gain admittance to a top academic school, want to just play for fun because you enjoy the game, want to go some place you could play your first year, want to play at the highest level possible even if you don’t play right away, etc? If you have figured-out your goals for lacrosse and college it will make it much easier for you to make up a list of colleges and much easier for you and your parents and coaches to assist you.

- Decide your level of commitment to the sport (Div I, II or III or club). This will be much easier to do once you have decided on your goals for college and lacrosse.

- Get your coaches (high school and/or club) input on what level they think you could play at the collegiate level.

- After you get this input, decide which colleges best meet your criteria and goals (academic, athletic and other)

- Consult with parents on the financing available for college. Even with a scholarship college is very expensive.

- If you need help with your list utilize one of the college search sites (College Board, US News & World Report and Princeton Review are all good) that can help any student sort through multiple criteria (size, location, major, cost, academic standards, etc.) including the availability of women’s lacrosse. Based on your input they will provide a list of schools that have what you are looking for.

- Also check-out a women’s lacrosse specific search site at wLaxrecruiting.com. It will be very helpful in making-up your list because it helps you sort by division (I, II, III) size, type of school (public or private) and geographic location.

- This site and the IWLCA site ( iwlca.org) with its coaches directory and recruiting website will both make contacting coaches and schools much easier.

- The LaxPower website is a good place to assess the relative strength of college lacrosse programs at all levels – Division I, II, III and college clubs.

- Your initial list should be like that of any high school student who is exploring her college options. You should include some schools both academically and/or as far as playing lacrosse that are sure things (safeties) some that are borderline (50-50 schools) and some that are reaches (dream or long shot schools).

What To Do As Far As the Recruiting Process

- Make-up a list of schools that have what you are looking for: academically, socially, as far as location and, of course, the appropriateness of the lacrosse program for you and your abilities.

- Put together a letter of interest and lacrosse resume to all schools that interest you. Get this out well before the summer and/or fall recruiting tournaments start.

- Most important, be sure to include with it a schedule of upcoming summer and fall lacrosse tournaments you will be playing.

- Fill-out on-line recruiting questionnaires for schools that are realistic choices and hold high interest for you. Also of course be sure to return questionnaires (DI &II schools can send after September 1st of your junior year) to schools of interest that have contacted you. If you are sure you have no interest in a school, thank them for their interest in you, but let them know you are not interested in their school.

- Down the road if you are invited to a “junior day” (or something similar), be sure to respond promptly. If you can’t attend, be sure to let them know why. If you have no interest in the school let then know, but thank them for their interest in you.

- Starting this next school year try to make unofficial visits to the schools that hold the most interest for you. On these visits make every effort to contact and set-up a meeting with someone from the lacrosse coaching staff.

- Be proactive. During the school year (both sophomore & junior years) stay in touch with those schools that hold the most interest for you. If they are one of your top choices, be sure to make them aware of that. In addition, make sure to let them know about any significant new athletic (all conference, etc. in another sport) or academic accomplishments (improved test scores, etc.)

- In the spring of your 10th & 11th grade year send an updated letter of interest, a resume and a schedule of all your summer lacrosse activities (tournaments you are playing in and camps you’ll attend) to all schools that still hold a strong interest for you.

- If you send it soon enough (February), you can also include a copy of your high school lacrosse team’s spring schedule. However you need to realize that it is very difficult for college coaches to see high school games.

- In the spring (both 10th & 11th grade) consider signing-up for camp(s) sponsored by schools that hold the most interest for you.

- If that is not possible, consider camp(s) the coaches of those schools will be working and go to one of them.

- If you have the resources, make a video for any college coach that might request one.

- After your high school season and before the summer tournament season starts work on narrowing your college list.

This process should be based on information gathered from: unofficial visits, whether or not they have corresponded with you regularly, your current academic record, where you realistically could play and for juniors your experience on any junior day visits.

Where To Go To Get Exposure/Be Seen

- Besides the summer recruiting tournaments, college camps in the summer are the best way to get a lot of exposure. If possible, go to camps sponsored by schools that have strong interest for you.

- In the fall and winter take full advantage of the many opportunities for exposure. Remember the three weekends before Thanksgiving are the now the only time college coaches can see you play in a fall tournament. Make sure your club team is signed-up for tournaments on these weekends. For many college programs this will be their first chance to see you play and/or have you as their main recruiting focus. So participation in these tournaments is a must if you want to be recruited.

- In the fall & winter some of the short sided tournaments (3-on-3, 4-on-4, etc.) are another great way to get exposure and improve your game, especially if you are interested in the school hosting the tournament.

- There are now also a number of camps around Christmas break time. Most of them are basically recruiting camps hosted by a college, but staffed by coaches from a number of schools. Check to see if coaches from schools where you have strong interest will be in attendance. If so, this is another good chance to be seen.

- There are also a number of clinics hosted by various colleges during the fall & winter. They often provide a good chance to demonstrate your interest in the school and at the same time show the host coaching staff what you can do.

- One other option some college coaches take advantage of is watching you play another sport. If they want to further evaluate your athleticism, this is often a good way for them to do it. Watching field hockey, soccer and volleyball can be useful, while watching basketball is even more helpful. You might suggest this if you excel in another sport and coaches have not been able to see you play much lacrosse.

What To Do Academically and at Your High School Guidance Office
• If at all possible make sure you take a challenging schedule of courses during your high school years, especially your junior year. If you are considering playing lacrosse at a college that has highly selective admission standards, you should be taking Honors, GT and/or some AP courses.

• Consult with your guidance counselor or college advisor about:
  1) Your plans to play lacrosse in college and your goals for college in relation to lacrosse
  2) If you plan to play at Division I or II level, your eligibility status as far as Course, GPA, SAT or ACT requirements. Make sure you will be eligible to be recruited.
  3) The appropriateness of the schools on your current college list academically, socially and personally

• Keep your grades up to maximize your options for school choice. The better your grades the more choices you will have

• Be sure to sign-up to take the PSAT in the fall of your sophomore and junior years. If your scores are not what you want or need for the college(s) of your choice, during the winter consider taking an SAT Prep course, getting an SAT tutor or do serious prep on your own.

• Sometime during first semester of your junior year go to the NCAA Eligibility Center web site at: ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter for complete instructions on how to register to be certified for eligibility (academically & your amateur status) by the NCAA to play lacrosse at Division I or II colleges and universities. As part of the process your guidance office will need to provide transcripts.

• Be sure to register to take the SAT’s (or ACT’s) sometime in your junior year. Unless your scores are very high the first time, you should take the test at least twice before the end of the school year. Be sure your best test scores are sent to the Eligibility Center directly from the College board (using code #9999) as well as to the colleges that hold the most interest for you. Test scores are no longer accepted off high school transcripts by the Eligibility Center.

• Take an SAT (or ACT) in January or March and again in April, May or June. The spring test dates of both the SAT and the ACT often conflict with your high school or club lacrosse schedule (a Saturday play-day, tournament or a state playoff game) or other school events such as the school prom. Be sure to check your high school and club lacrosse schedule and plan accordingly so you can take the test twice before the summer.

• If your SAT scores are not what you want, consider taking an ACT during the spring of your junior year.

• Check to see if any of the schools (usually only highly competitive colleges) you are seriously considering require SAT II’s. It is helpful to have some scores on these tests before the summer recruiting season ends.

• Have copies of your current transcript, SAT/ACT test scores and current report card ready to send to any college coach that requests it.

What To Do To Improve Your Lax Game (On the Field and in the Gym)

• Take August off. Put your stick down for awhile. Read some books, go to the beach, and/or get ready for your fall sport. It is important to come back in the fall with enthusiasm for the game.

• It is very important to continually work to improve your fitness & strength level. If your school offers a good weight training and/or strength & conditioning class as a scheduled course and you have room in your school schedule, you should definitely try to take the course. If that is not an option, consider working-out at a local health club or gym to improve your strength.

• If you are not playing a fall sport it is very important for you to continue working-out so you are in top shape for the fall recruiting tournaments. The same thing applies to the spring. If your lacrosse season ends early, it is important to keep working-out so you are in the best condition possible for the summer tournament season.

• Consistently work to improve your stick skills, especially your non-dominant hand. Wall ball &/or bounce back devices, shooting on the goal, paired passing and pick-up games are all helpful.

• If available in your area, try to play in a summer or fall outdoor league or in the colder months in an indoor/box league. Since these leagues are usually not recruiting venues, they are a great place to work on perfecting your stick skills (especially your non-dominant hand) and trying new things with little or no pressure.

• As stated earlier it is vitally important to play in recruiting tournaments and at camps. What is also becoming increasingly important, is playing in short-sided tournaments (3-on-3, 4-on-4, etc.) and at clinics. These venues are of course not only beneficial because of the exposure you will get. They are also a great way to improve your game.