



TITANIUM LACROSSE



RECRUITING HANDBOOK

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Lacrosse recruiting is unique and often times misunderstood. The explosive growth of lacrosse at the youth and high school levels is combated by stagnant growth of college lacrosse programs, especially at the Division 1 level. Competition for D1 spots is getting tougher and tougher as the talent pool grows, providing college coaches with more options for great players than ever before. Contrary to what one may think, this has not halted the recruiting cycle from starting earlier in a player's development, with top college programs recruiting "blue-chip" players as early as the end of their freshman year.

Since most colleges with lacrosse teams are located on the east coast, historically most of the players on their rosters have also come from the east coast. A trend is developing where college coaches are looking to non-traditional areas like California, Colorado, Florida, Ohio, and Texas for "diamond in the rough" players. Mainly for players and parents in one of these non-traditional geographic areas, the information below is an attempt to provide you with a foundation upon which you may build your college recruiting strategy.

As any college coach will tell you, the first step in the recruiting process takes place before an athlete sets foot on the field. GRADES should be the #1 priority of any lacrosse player. Some of the finest universities in the United States also have the best college lacrosse programs. If a player doesn't have the grades, it doesn't matter how talented he is at lacrosse.

General Recruiting Information

"What are the realistic odds of playing lacrosse in college?"

In 2010 there were 90,700 boys playing high school lacrosse, growing at a rate of 2.4% per year. Approximately 22,675 seniors played lacrosse.

856 of those seniors signed to play Division 1 lacrosse, or 3.8%
- 60 total D1 teams with approximately 14 players per class

507 of those seniors are playing Division 2 lacrosse, or 2.2%
- 37 total D2 teams with approximately 14 players per class

1,533 of those seniors are playing Division 3 lacrosse, or 6.8%
- 166 total D3 teams with approximately 9 players per class (D3 schools tend to have many walk-ons)

In total, 12.8% of high school seniors will go on to play college lacrosse at the D1, D2, or D3 level.

"When can/can't college coaches evaluate and communicate with high school players?"

It is very important for players and families to understand when college coaches are permitted to evaluate and communicate with prospects as well as what type of communication is permitted. The last thing a player/family wants to do is travel across the country to a perceived recruiting event when college coaches aren't even permitted to be there!

For information on the recruiting communication timelines, visit the links below:

Division 1: http://web1.ncaa.org/web_files/AMA/recruiting_calendars/2010/Overviewchart.pdf

Division 2: http://web1.ncaa.org/web_files/AMA/recruiting_calendars/2010/DII/Text/Recruiting%20Guide.pdf

Division 3: http://web1.ncaa.org/web_files/AMA/recruiting_calendars/2010/Overviewchart.pdf

NCAA Division I Men's Lacrosse Recruiting Calendar
August 1, 2010 through August 2, 2011
(See NCAA Division I Bylaw 13.17.5 for men's lacrosse calendar formula)

August 1-2, 2010:	Contact Period
August 3-9, 2010:	Quiet Period
August 10-31, 2010:	Dead Period
September 1 through October 31, 2010:	Contact Period (No Evaluations)
November 1-23, 2010, [except for below]:	Contact Period
November 8-11, 2010:	Dead Period
November 24-28, 2010:	Dead Period
November 29 through December 23, 2010:	Quiet Period
December 24, 2010 through January 2, 2011:	Dead Period
January 3-17, 2011:	Contact Period (No Evaluations)
January 18 through February 28, 2011:	Quiet Period
March 1 through May 26, 2011, [except for below]:	Contact Period
April 11-14, 2011:	Dead Period
May 27 to May 31, 2011, (noon):	Dead Period
May 31 (12:01 p.m.) through August 1, 2011:	Contact Period

Definitions:

Contact Period – college coaches are permitted to conduct in-person, off-campus evaluations and contacts.

Quiet Period - in-person recruiting activity is limited to contact on campus, as part of an official or unofficial recruiting visit.

Evaluation Period – college coaches and other authorized staffers are allowed to assess the athletic and academic ability of prospective student-athletes, but cannot conduct off-campus visits.

Dead Period – nearly all recruiting activity is temporarily shut down. College coaches cannot make in-person recruiting contacts, conduct in-person evaluations (on or off-campus), schedule official campus visits, allow unofficial campus visits, and/or offer complimentary tickets to games. The only permissible communications during a dead period are phone calls (limited by NCAA regulations to one call per week) and correspondence.

"What role do camps and tournaments have in the recruiting process compared to the regular season?"

College coaches rarely recruit during the regular season outside of the east coast. For players in Ohio and surrounding states, the main in-season recruiting opportunities are the MSLCA Tournament (normally teams that make the A or B bracket unless a college coach intends to watch a specific player) and State Championship games. Very rarely do college coaches make trips to evaluate a player during their regular season, as college coaches are normally in the middle of their own respective seasons.

Off season tryouts, camps, and tournaments are by-far the best opportunities for college coaches to evaluate players. The goal of any player interested in playing lacrosse in college is to be evaluated by as many coaches as possible (and to play his best while being evaluated). Participating in tryouts, camps and tournaments does not guarantee that he will be recruited to play college lacrosse, but it is the best way to get exposure that lead into those opportunities. By the time a player makes his college decision, it is better for him to have a list of coaches who have said "no" rather than a list of coaches who have said "I have never seen you play." Exposure is key.

"When does recruiting start and stop at each level of college lacrosse?"

Top D1 lacrosse programs (which can be identified by viewing the USILA and/or Nike/Inside Lacrosse rankings) start recruiting "blue-chip" players as early as the end of their freshman year in high school. Normally these programs are finished with their respective "classes" before those players have stepped onto the field for their junior seasons. Although this is the norm, often times these schools will add one or two players during the summer between a player's junior and senior year of high school.

The remainder of the D1 lacrosse schools and D2 and D3 schools tend to do the bulk of their recruiting from player's junior season until as late as the end of his senior season, depending on the situation.

"How should we communicate with schools once we hear from them. What do these letters mean?"

Communication between PLAYERS and coaching staffs is critical. Coaches are interested in players who are interested in their respective programs. Players should communicate what is going on with them (grades, awards, etc) and which tournaments they plan to attend (be sure to clearly explain which dates you will attend the tournament, which team you will be playing for, and what number you will be wearing).

There is a time and place for parental involvement in the communication with coaches. In the early stages of communicating with college programs, parents should monitor communication and encourage their son to remain diligent and accountable for reaching out to coaches. As the recruiting cycle progresses and opportunities/offers arise, parents may take a more active role in the process, especially on topics like coach/program philosophy, admissions, scholarships, etc. Parents should not feel shy about asking questions. A good college coach will be more than willing to answer any question (and likely has answered that same question 50 times before).

Throughout the recruiting process players may receive a number of communications from college coaches. These communications can often times be confusing- whether they come in the form of letters, emails, and/or phone calls.

A few simple rules of thumb:

1. If it looks like a form/generic letter, it probably is (often times these letters will not have specific info about the player)
2. If it's a hand-written letter, that is a VERY good thing
3. If a school says "there is no rush" they most likely have other players they want more than you, but those players may commit somewhere else so they may end up wanting you.
4. If a school says, "We love your game and would like for you to be a part of this class" the school only mean that if it is ready to offer you at the very least a roster spot.
5. Verbal commitments are not binding on the player, although I HIGHLY discourage breaking the commitment. Verbal commitments are rarely ever (I've never heard of one) broken by the coach unless something bad happens (player gets in trouble, etc).

Last rule of thumb, which is more a "reality check" than anything else: the difference between being "**truly, actively recruited**" and being "**looked at**" is whether the college coach/program would offer at least a roster spot if that player called and said "I want to commit to your program." Just because a player receives a questionnaire or generic letter in the mail, it doesn't mean that player is being actively recruited.

Camp / Tournament Selection

"Which off-season camps and tournaments should my son go to?"

There are literally hundreds of lacrosse camps and tournaments over the summer and fall. Figuring out which camps/tournaments are best suited for your son should be a process. The choice may become clearer by answering the following questions:

1. What are my goals for attending camps/tournaments?
2. What is my budget for lacrosse over the off-season?
3. Am I interested in attending events to develop as a player or is my focus on getting exposure to college coaches?
 - a. If development, what events are best suited to help me get better?
 - b. If recruiting, what is a realistic perspective on my abilities and the schools I should attempt to attract? At which events will those schools recruit?

There are a number of great teaching/development clinics and camps in Ohio that a player can attend to learn the same skills that he would learn from traveling a great distance and incurring unnecessary expenses. Titanium Lacrosse (TL) offers affordable clinics for all ages and abilities throughout the fall and summer led by top high school and college coaches as well as current/former college All-Americans and professional players. There are also many other great camps and clinics throughout Ohio.

From a recruiting standpoint, if a player is very interested in a particular school, he may want to consider attending that school's lacrosse camp (most schools host their own camps). This is an excellent way to get exposure to the coaching staff and tour the campus. However, school specific camps are also about making money to support those school's programs, so be clear that an invite from a school to attend its camp may not be based on an interest in recruiting you.

An excellent opportunity for players to get exposure to a large number of college coaches, ranging from the top D1 coaches to more-local D3 coaches, is the Under Armour Midwest Underclassmen tryouts. The tryout, which is arguably

the best recruiting event in the Midwest, is held at Dublin Jerome High School on the first Sunday and Monday in June. Each year many of the best players from throughout the country (28 different states last year) attend the tryout. This is a no-brainer recruiting event for players in Ohio and throughout the Midwest given its proximity and low-cost.

Another proven path is to attend recruiting team camps on the east coast. There are many team camp options and some are better than others. The important thing to research is which camps will be attended by coaches of college teams that fit the player's abilities and academics. Titanium Lacrosse has high school all-star teams that participate in appropriate recruiting tournaments based on each team's ability. TL's four teams consist of players who are still developing their basic skills to players who have committed to many of the top D1 college programs in the country.

A final option is individual recruiting camps. Jake Reed's Nike Blue Chip, which is invitation only, is the best camp in this space. Other individual camps exist and may be beneficial depending on the circumstances.

"Which camps/tournaments do the college coaches attend?"

Most college coaches spend their entire summers attending various recruiting events around the country. It is impossible to list all of these events; however, most college coaches will tell a player which camps they plan to attend if asked. Therefore, players are encouraged to do so.

When selecting an all-star team to play for, it is important that the player/family feel confident that the directors/coaches of that team understand the recruiting process and take the team to appropriate recruiting events. Often times "playing" events can be confused with "recruiting" events, which can lead to confusion and frustration. Many top clubs will outline a "summer schedule" for players to ensure that their time and money is well spent.

Club / All-Star Team Selection

"What are some things to consider when selecting a club team and are there any questions I should ask?"

The absolute #1 thing you need to consider when selecting a club team is: **WHO IS COACHING YOUR SON?** There are no rules or guidelines for who can form a club team so it is critical to ask questions. Background checks, CPR training, and other training required by school systems are NOT required in any way for all-star teams/clubs. Do your homework, ask questions, and be diligent- no one else is looking out for your son.

Some additional questions you may ask are:

- What is your philosophy on playing time (do they play to win or does everyone get equal playing time)?
- Are there practices (and if so, are they mandatory, how many are there, etc.)?
- What is the tournament schedule (and is transportation provided)?
- What costs are associated with being on the team? Do you have payment plans?
- Are we required to purchase additional equipment (gloves, helmets, etc.)?
 - EVERY SINGLE COLLEGE COACH I HAVE SPOKEN WITH HAS STRONGLY SAID THEY PREFER PLAYERS NOT TO LOOK ALIKE AT RECRUITING EVENTS (i.e. no team helmets). Therefore, team helmets are not only a waste of money, but they are also COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE to recruiting!!!

This should get you started- but there are many other questions you may come up with. Don't be shy- ...ask!

"What role do club/all-star coaches have in the recruiting process?"

More often than not, club coaches have a much greater impact on a player's recruiting process than his high school coach, unless his high school coach is very well connected. The bottom line is that coaching high school lacrosse is not a career. Pay is low and turnover is high. Most high school coaches are just trying to keep their team in order and don't have the time, energy, willingness, know-how, and/or desire to worry about recruiting. More often than not players at lesser-known schools go unnoticed and uneducated on the recruiting process.

One of the core purposes of Titanium Lacrosse is to do everything in our power to fix that problem. Our staff understands what it takes to play at the next level, has a finger on the pulse of the off-season recruiting schedule, and has the connections with college coaches to honestly answer questions. We don't promise to get you recruited, but we will do everything in our power to provide you with exposure to college coaches and teach you how to handle your recruiting process. For more information, including great articles and tools on lacrosse recruiting, visit www.TitaniumLacrosse.com.