

## Recruiting Guide – I: Introduction & Guiding Principles

By Bill Allen, LaxPower.com

**LaxPower** has been covering college lacrosse recruiting for over 10 years, and each year pundits, parents, and players bemoan the fact that recruiting is becoming more intense and occurring earlier and earlier. One club in New York state actually reported that a player had just made a verbal commitment to a major Division I program ... but you might have to wait for the official announcement, as the player is in the 8th grade.

In the 2000-2001 season, LaxPower listed 514 women's lacrosse recruits. Ten years later, there were 3,183 players listed, a six-fold increase. The only thing that has increased faster is the number of recruiting websites, services, and consultants. It is not that they lack value, but before you invest in four years of highlight films, LaxPower has researched the best recruiting guidance, free tools, and sites that we have found on the web to give both parents and players perspective and a reasonable starting point for what can be an enjoyable rather than frustrating and stress-filled process.

One other thing we have noticed over the years is that, in many instances, the number of incoming freshmen in the recruit class is cut in half or more by the time they become seniors. This attrition is caused by a number of factors: lack of playing time; coaching changes; athletic, social or academic incompatibility; lack of commitment by either the school or the player; or any of a hundred other reasons. Just know it happens, and hopefully better preparation may mitigate it.

Before we get started, there are a few **guiding principles** that are applicable to any recruiting situation:

### **Be Realistic!**

- Players – and their parents! – need to be realistic about their ability to make the team and play competitively at the school(s) of interest. This is the usually hardest part, as we all tend to overestimate our abilities ... and parents are often worse in this regard. Perhaps using guidance from others, such as a high school or club coach, eliminate schools where your chances of playing are slim or none.
- Parents, it's wonderful when a coach shows interest in your child. But remember, the coach has probably shown the same interest in other recruits who play that position. Your son or daughter may be the coach's "top recruit," but that will last only until another player gets in first. Don't let the recruiting process go to your head ... or your child's!
- Unless you are a truly exceptional lacrosse player, you are not #1 on every coach's recruit wish list. In fact, you may well not even be on their radar. If that's the case, you will have to find out for yourself who might be interested in you, which will require some "marketing." It's not really that hard, and the information below can help you do that fairly easily.
- Both players and parents also need a realistic assessment of the player's ability to handle the academic workload. Their ability to be comfortable academically will be impacted by the time and travel demands made by playing college athletics, especially at the Division I level.

### **Do Your Homework!**

The information and links below should help. There is a school and a lacrosse program for anyone who wants one. It just takes a little effort on your part to find the right match.

### **Communicate**

It's important to develop relationships with as many coaches as you can. College coaches belong to a small fraternity, and many are good friends. On occasion, they even share information about top athletes and assist each other with recruiting (assuming they are not rivals in the same conference). Few college coaches can recruit every outstanding athlete they see. If a desirable athlete's grades don't meet the school's requirements or if the athlete plays a specific position and the team is already stocked there, the coach may recommend the athlete to other coaches he or she knows.

### **Be Honest**

It is important to be honest with both yourself and the coaches. If you are not completely comfortable with a school or a situation, that may be the best indicator that the school is not the right choice for you, so don't get pressured into making a premature decision. By the same token, "no" is the second best response that a coach can get from a recruit. Although they may be disappointed, they now know where you stand and can move on to their next best prospect.

### **The Bottom Line**

The only true test of the decision is if the player can say, "if the coach leaves or if I cannot play lacrosse any longer, is this still the school I want to attend?" You could become injured and unable to play, get cut from the team, or even lose interest because of other priorities in college. Should that happen, would this still be the school you want to be at? If your answer is not a fairly emphatic "yes," perhaps you should be looking elsewhere.

## Recruiting Guide — II: Scholarship Availability

By Bill Allen, [LaxPower.com](http://LaxPower.com)

It is very competitive to play lacrosse at the top college level and players (and their parents) often underestimate this fact. For Division I schools, over 200,000 high school players compete for about 500 spots each year. A balanced men's college team will need between 10 and 15 new players every year, a figure that is even smaller for women's lacrosse. Consequently, coaches will need to look at 100-150 new players annually.

Many players and parents operate under the misconception that athletic scholarships are abundant. Less than half of the players Division I or Division II receive any athletic scholarship money at all, and most of those are not "full rides." How the money is split depends on the coach and the positional needs of the program each year. There is no set formula. In Division III, scholarships are based only on academic merit and financial need, and no athletic scholarships are available.

The NCAA allows each Division I lacrosse program 12.6 scholarships for men and 12.0 for women. In Division II, there are 10.8 scholarships for men and 9.9 for women. At the moment, there are 59 Division I and 47 Division II programs that offer lacrosse scholarships for men. That's a total of 1,251 scholarships (assuming all were offered). There are 89 Division I and 71 Division II programs that offer scholarships for women, a total of 1,771. The numbers above may be reduced, as not all colleges are fully funded to their maximum number of scholarships allowed, so this is good information to ask about in their recruiting process.

As noted above, full athletic scholarship is rare in lacrosse, especially for unproven recruits, and most scholarships are partial. The amount can increase or decrease each year and may also vary depending on a player's performance. In NCAA Divisions I and II, athletic scholarships are NOT guaranteed for four years. Although it is rare for a scholarship not to be renewed, that can happen (for example, if a player breaks school rules). It is also possible that a coach may decide to give a scholarship to another player/recruit.

The [NAIA](http://NAIA.com) does not yet include lacrosse as an official sport, but the number of NAIA schools playing lacrosse continues to increase, and scholarships are available but under different rules and limitations than the NCAA.

The National Junior College Athletic Association ([NJCAA](http://NJCAA.com)) grants 20 full scholarships per college for both women and men. A full athletic scholarship includes tuition, room and board. Some junior colleges offer partial scholarships. There are 26 schools that offer lacrosse scholarships for men and over 20 for women. Each school can offer only 20 in total. Unlike the NCAA, they are not permitted to offer a larger number of scholarships at a lower percentage.

## Recruiting Guide — II: College Research

By Bill Allen, [LaxPower.com](http://LaxPower.com)

As a starting point, there are currently 756 men's and 682 women's college lacrosse programs across the NCAA (Divisions I, II, and III), NJCAA, and collegiate club ("virtual varsity") programs such as the MCLA and WCLA. Links to nearly all of these programs can be found here at LaxPower in the [links](#) section.

From there, it is a matter of sifting through admission standards, majors, size, location, social life and, of course, cost. Couple this with all the lacrosse decisions like division, scholarships, competitiveness, coach style, players and their personalities, and whether I can play there or not. Don't forget the ever popular, "How far is it from the beach?" Whatever the criteria, most experts agree that a starting list of 15-25 target colleges meeting your criteria is reasonable and manageable at this early stage. Don't wait to see who comes to you.

Once you have a list of potential schools, sites like the [Princeton Review](#) provide excellent information on test preparation and tools to explore colleges on a variety of measures.

Specialized sites can also be extremely helpful. Ed Shea, formerly of the Heros Lacrosse Club, has a great web site for women's lacrosse recruits, where, in addition to advice, you can search for college information by the programs in each state.

At [W.LaxRecruiting.com](http://W.LaxRecruiting.com), the access to the database is through a Google Maps interface. Lacrosse schools can be searched by state and division, and every school in the database contains direct hyperlinks to things like the women's lacrosse web page, the coach's bio, and online prospect questionnaires and contact information for the coach. So far, we've found nothing comparable on the men's side.

## Recruiting Guide – IV- General Recruiting Process Overview

By Bill Allen, [LaxPower.com](http://LaxPower.com)

Perhaps the best single summary we have found for men or women is **The College Athletic Recruiting Process** (available as a [PDF file](#)) put together and presented by Janine Tucker, the head women's lacrosse coach at Johns Hopkins University. This should be required reading for every prospect and their parents. Coach Tucker is updating this guide; we'll post it here when it's ready. In simple bullet-point form, her guide covers:

1. Roles in the Recruiting process
  - Student/Athlete
  - Parent
  - High School/Club Coach
  - High School Guidance Counselor
  - College Coach
  - NCAA and IHS Clearinghouse
2. An Action Plan for College Bound Lacrosse Players
3. Basic information to include in a sport resume and/or cover letter
4. Key Do's & Don'ts
5. Key Questions
  - For the coaches
  - For the players
6. What you need to know about the recruiting process
7. Official Visits
8. Suggested Time Line
  - Freshman & Sophomore years
  - Junior year
  - Junior-Senior summer
  - Senior year
9. Recruiting Reality Check

More required reading can be found at [LacrosseRecruits.com](http://LacrosseRecruits.com), US Lacrosse's recruiting website, especially their [A High School Athlete's Recruiting Guide for College Lacrosse](#). This guide has 29 informative sections covering:

- Master the Recruiting Process
- 12 Pitfalls to Avoid
- How to Improve Your Profile
- Essential Action Steps to Take
- LacrosseRecruits.com Articles

A more detailed timeline can be found on Active.com's [College Recruiting Timeline for Lacrosse](#)

For lacrosse parents, [LacrosseParent.com](http://LacrosseParent.com) is a valuable resource. It contains very good tips and information but also a number of useful resources, including lists of videotaping and editing services, sample cover letters and sports resumes, plus club and tournament databases.

## Recruiting Guide – V: NCAA and Other Resources

By Bill Allen, LaxPower.com

[College-Bound Student-Athletes Initial Eligibility Resource Center](#). This useful section of the NCAA web site includes:

- 2010-11 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete (recommended)
- NCAA Eligibility Center
- Academic Certification
- Amateurism Certification
- Recruiting Information
- Health and Safety Programs
- Who to Call / Where to Go
  - Eligibility Center - 877/262-1492 (8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET Monday-Friday)
  - Academic & Membership Affairs - 317/917-6008 (noon to 4:00 p.m. ET Monday-Friday)(for parents, student-athletes, and the public)
- Hot Topics
- Brochures and Presentations (recommended)
  - Roadmap to Initial Eligibility Presentation for student-athletes
  - Roadmap to Initial Eligibility Handouts for student-athletes
  - Initial Eligibility Brochure for student-athletes and parents
- Forms

[National Letter of Intent](#). This site, now housed at [NCAA.org](#), provides information on the National Letter of Intent, including detailed explanations, videos, dates for the early and regular (spring/summer) signing periods, a document library, and FAQs (frequently asked questions).

**Lacrosse Magazine**. US Lacrosse's publication produced a six-part series of recruiting articles from 2008-2009.

- [Part 1: Shannon Smith: Thoughts from a College Freshman](#)
- [Part 2: Passport to Campus](#)
- [Part 3: Top Vest ed in Verba?](#)
- [Part 4: Piece of the Pie](#)
- [Part 5: Best Foot Forward](#)
- [Part 6: Camp Stories](#)

**Active.com** has a blog with real-life stories from actual athletes about their experiences. Read their thoughts about the recruiting process at [From the Trenches](#).

Kuddacom's [Coaches Wisdom Video Library](#) (for purchase) features college coaches providing video clinics on a number of recruiting subjects:

- Benefits of Going D-III
- D1 or D3: What are the Main Differences?
- Girls' Lacrosse: What D3 Coaches Look for in a Player
- The College Recruiting Process
- The Recruiting Process for D-II I Bound Players
- What College Coaches Look for During Summer Recruiting Tournaments
- What College Coaches Look for in an Athlete
- Recruiting Dos and Don'ts

See the [US Lacrosse](#) web site for general information, national and chapter events, tournaments, and the like.

Finally, the LaxPower [Recruits database](#) can be useful to find where friends are going and who may be going to schools of interest. For example, if you are a goalie and another All-State goalie signs with your #1 school choice, you may need to ask a question or go to Plan B.