



RaiseYourGAME™

SO....
YOU WANT TO
PLAY LACROSSE
IN **COLLEGE?**



Last Updated: March 2014



Letter from US Lacrosse

On behalf of US Lacrosse, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce you to our college recruiting handbook, "So...You want to play lacrosse in college?." In recent years, college recruiters have accelerated the timeline and created recruiting formulas that are unique to them. The direction of the college lacrosse recruiting process has led to confusion by some, frustration to others and leaves everyone guessing. The intent of this handbook is to present hard facts, dispel the myths, and to promote the essentials.

As a parent of two children who have been through the process and a high school coach for thirty years, I have seen the process play out in scenarios that are too many to number. From my experience there are a few points that I would like to highlight. First, everyone's journey through the process is unique, so do not rely on others who say they know how the process works. Second, one can only control the tools that are in their own hands. Recruits and their families must educate themselves about the process and the schools of interest, prepare physically for competition, and to achieve to your potential academically. A recruit and their family have no control over the decisions that a college coach will make. High school coaches or club coaches who advocate for their players cannot persuade a college coach to select their player. Lastly, the only guarantee is that there are no guarantees. In the selection of a college, the education you will receive is paramount.

The handbook contains a baseline of facts that all colleges must adhere to and every recruit should know. The handbook addresses practices that are believed to be true but are outside the guidelines of college recruiting. Finally, the handbook emphasizes two constants that every coach looks for in his recruits. Simply stated, coaches are looking for young men of exemplary character and a strong academic profile.

I believe you will find this information invaluable as a starting point and a reference source throughout your process. Please feel free to offer any comments, as we will continue to update the text to keep current with the times.

Sincerely,



Chuck Ruebling
Men's Game Coaches Subcommittee Chair



US Lacrosse Statement on Recruiting

The US Lacrosse Board of Directors today approved the following statement on the complex nature of the collegiate recruiting process for high school student-athletes. The statement was developed by the national volunteer and staff leadership of US Lacrosse, in consultation with members of the coaching community, and it reads as follows:

US Lacrosse shares the concern of many lacrosse players, parents and coaches that the college recruiting process is not structured or timed in the best interests of high school student-athletes. The current landscape of recruiting events and club programs — some of which operate throughout the calendar year — has encouraged an increasing number of young student-athletes to forego a well-rounded high school experience based on unrealistic expectations and misperceptions about playing college lacrosse.

Parents are being led to believe that college coaches focus on recruiting only those children who play year-round lacrosse and who attend multiple, expensive recruiting events throughout the year. While some recruiting programs and events offer positive experiences for student-athletes, others — particularly those that conflict with the school calendar or occur outside of the traditional lacrosse season — threaten the well-being of student-athletes with incidents of injury and burnout. This intense recruiting culture also has eroded the work-life balance of coaches and parents.

US Lacrosse will continue to work with high school programs, clubs, tournament directors, the Intercollegiate Men's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IMLCA) and the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) to provide the information, resources and leadership necessary to enable high school student-athletes and their parents to make the best decisions about their lacrosse experience.

US Lacrosse also encourages men's and women's collegiate lacrosse coaches to exert their considerable influence to lead reform of the NCAA recruiting calendar, limit the age at which student-athletes begin the recruiting process, and agree not to attend or participate in recruiting events that infringe on the academic calendar of student-athletes.



CHAPTER 1:

Grades And Character

Taking that next step after high school is a lot of work, but it can be extremely rewarding and fulfilling. Before the college search begins, there are important questions that you need to be prepared to answer....

How important is the sport to you?

- What kind of time commitment do you want to play lacrosse? (DI, DII, DIII, MCLA, etc.)
- How will the sport impact your goals for college?

What are your grades like?

- How hard do you work in school?
- What did you get on your SAT/ACT's?
- What kind of classes are you taking?

There are also a few questions the student athlete should ask himself....

- What are my goals for my college lacrosse experience?
- What are my goals for my college education?
- What are my goals for life after college?

Be prepared to be asked by coaches....

- What are your grades like?
- What other schools are you interested in?
- When do you want to make a decision on which college you will attend?
- What are you looking for in a college?
- Can you play any other positions?
- What questions do you have for me?

When visiting schools, ask yourself these questions....

- What does your gut tell you while walking around campus?
- Is this right setting (rural, urban, suburban) for me?
- Is the school too big, too small, just right?
- Does the school offer academic programs that I am interested in?

Use the Player/College Checklist, found on pages 7-9, to generate more questions and compare different schools.



CHAPTER 2:

Inside The Numbers - 2014

Number of collegiate lacrosse programs in existence:

Men's Game	DI	DII	DIII	MCLA	NCLL	NJCAA
	67	56	216	210	126	32

By the #'s - Men's Game

- High school men's lacrosse players: 170, 632
- NCAA – mandated maximum number of scholarships per program (over four years):
12.6 at DI, 10.6 at DII
- Average scholarships per program per year: 3.15
- Average players per recruiting class: 12
- Average estimated scholarships: 26 percent
- Fully funded programs: 35
- Total scholarships available: 441
- Players receiving some scholarship over four years: 1,470
- Odds of any high school male landing any Division I scholarship: 0.86 percent

Sources: NCAA, US Lacrosse data from 2012-13 and estimated projections based on US Lacrosse research.





CHAPTER 2:

Just some of the Facts

- For Division I schools, more than 160,000 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. College coaches will typically look at about 100-150 new players annually. Many players and parents operate under the misconception that athletic scholarships are readily available. 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. In Division III, scholarships are based 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. In Division II, there are 10.8 scholarships for men. 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). The numbers above may be reduced, as not all colleges are fully funded to the maximum number of scholarships allowed, so this is good information to ask about in the recruiting process.
- Walk-ons: The opportunity for walk-ons has diminished. Coaches will honor recruits before they will accept walk-ons. Many schools, due to Title IX and squad restrictions, are unable to accept walk-ons as well. You need to discuss all the options with each prospective school.
- The majority of college lacrosse players are playing Division III lacrosse. There are some differences when you compare Division III vs Division I and II. Unlike Division I and II, Division III does not offer athletic scholarships. Division III student athletes have the opportunity for merit scholarships and need-based financial aide. There is a large misconception with Division III programs in that if there are no athletic scholarships – that it must not be competitive. This is NOT true. Division III lacrosse is very competitive and some of the best lacrosse programs in the country are Division III.
- Playing lacrosse at a Division III school also offers you a great opportunity for a broad college experience. What does that mean? As a Division III student-athlete, you will have opportunities to not only experience a serious athletic career, but also involve yourself in many other facets of the college/university – student organizations, Greek Life, multiple majors, intramural sports, etc.





CHAPTER 2:

Just some of the Facts

(continued)

The Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association (MCLA.us) member institutions offer a wide range of educational opportunities all across the Country. Unlike NCAA Division I, II, and some III schools, the MCLA recruiting process is year round. Some things to keep in mind while you consider your options are:

- Your grades will ultimately determine the choices you have. The higher that GPA the more options you'll afford yourself
- Be proactive! MCLA Coaching staffs are smaller and the more leg work you do the better your chances of connecting directly with the head coach.
- Be sure to love the school and consider playing lacrosse as a "bonus" since that's really what it is.
- Once you're set on 4-5 options that offer your chosen academic path, and then take a look at where the team ranks nationally. The www.mcla.us website as all sorts of polls and team information. The higher the ranking usually correlates to a larger time commitment (yes, similar to NCAA DI ball).
- Coaches actually do enjoy a higher quality complete game film. Highlight reels are fine but seldom do they present the proper image.
- YOU MAKE THE CALL! Don't be afraid to pick up the phone or write a direct email to coaches. They don't have a lot of time so the easier you can make it on them the better.
- Visit the school in and out of the lacrosse season. Most MCLA Teams are up and running by mid-January so you have a perfect opportunity to visit prior to your HS Season start.
- Just about all MCLA Teams run a fall season which is another great opportunity to visit the school and learn more about the team
- The bottom line is that there are some great educational opportunities at MCLA member institutions. There is a place for every interested player in the MCLA!



CHAPTER 3:

Player/College Checklist

Below is a list of categories and questions that can help the players and parents review and determine what program is best for the future of their son when comparing colleges as they narrow down their selection....

CATEGORY	School 1	School 2
Academic		
Is the school a fully accredited, highly-rated institution?		
Does the school have a good reputation academically?		
Does the school offer my preferred major?		
Would I be able to get my degree in four years?		
Are my grades and test scores good enough to gain admission?		
Does the school fit with my academic ability?		
Does the athletic department provide an academic support program for student athletes?		
Is the coach made aware of the student-athletes' academic standing on a regular basis?		
Does the athletic department pay for any tutoring I may need?		
Does the athletic department have a study hall program for student athletes?		
Does the school have their own academic requirements to play, outside of the NCAA guidelines?		
Can I be a successful student AND athlete in my preferred major? (e.g. Engineering, Medicine, etc.)		
Does the school give student-athletes' first choice for classes?		
Does the coaching staff assist the student-athletes with forming class schedules?		
Lacrosse		
Has the school offered me an official visit?		
Has the school offered me a scholarship?		
Will the school take away my scholarship if I get hurt and cannot play?		
Will the school take away my scholarship if I don't play well?		
How much will it cost me to go to school on top of the scholarship?		
Do I want to play for the current coaching staff?		



CHAPTER 3:

Player/College Checklist (continued)

CATEGORY	School 1	School 2
Lacrosse		
Does the current roster leave room for my position?		
Will I get an opportunity to play?		
Does my style of play fit with the schools style of play?		
Am I good enough to play there?		
Does the school have a good reputation in lacrosse?		
Does the team play a tough schedule?		
Is this a winning program?		
How does the team travel by, bus or plane?		
Do players need to fundraise for preseason trips?		
Does the school have a structured strength and conditioning program?		
Does the school have the facilities that will help me get better?		
Does this program insist I apply Early Decision?		
Does this coach cut recruited players?		
Does this coach cut upperclassmen from the team?		
Does this school provide laundry service for practice and/or game gear?		
Does this program allow walk-ons?		
Social		
Would I get along with players currently on the team?		
Are sporting events like football and basketball games a big part of campus life?		
Does everyone stay on campus during the weekends?		
If lacrosse wasn't in the picture, would I want to go to this school?		
Are students bustling about lively and engaged as opposed to walking with heads down and no interaction?		
Are there clubs formed that interest me?		
Do you see students wearing their school's apparel with pride?		
Does the lacrosse team live together?		



CHAPTER 3:

Player/College Checklist (continued)

CATEGORY	School 1	School 2
Social		
Are there recreational facilities and programs offered by the school?		
From looking at a current yearbook, does it look like a great place to be?		
Are lacrosse players permitted to take part in travel abroad programs?		
Do my parents feel this is the best school for me?		
Do I feel the size of the school is the best fit for me?		
Geographic		
Is the school situated in a climate I like?		
Am I comfortable with the distance from home this school is located?		
Is this school located in a demographic area desirable to me? (city, suburb, country)		
Is this campus safe? Does this school have a low crime rate?		
Is the crime rate of the municipality good?		
Is there a good relationship between the town people and the school?		
Can I afford to travel home during vacation?		
Will my family and friends have an opportunity to watch me play?		
Career		
Does the athletic department offer assistance in helping me find a job after graduation?		
Does the school have a strong alumni base?		





CHAPTER 4:

Financial Aid vs. Scholarships

Financial Aid

Paying for college can be an overwhelming process for parents and student athletes alike. You should weigh all the options that are available to you. Look for scholarship opportunities in your local area, but also ask college recruiters about the opportunities for financial aid and athletic scholarships. Before you start weighing your options, sit down with your parents, coach or guidance counselor to go over all preliminary steps associated with paying for college.

The first step is to complete the Free Application for Student Aid, commonly referred to as, the FAFSA. Completing the **FAFSA** will allow you to see which federal grants and assistance programs you are eligible. This will also allow you to see what you will be able to borrow through federal loans programs like Stafford, Perkins and PLUS loans and what private lenders may be able to offer.

Consult your parents, guidance counselor, coach and financial advisor to what might be the best option for you.

Scholarships

When beginning your college search, you should also investigate what scholarships are available to you from local and national organizations. While this can be a painstaking initiative, it will ultimately lower the amount of student debt that you can accumulate through college. There are scholarships for everything, so don't be reluctant to start the search regardless of grades. If you completed countless hours of community service or are focused on becoming an actor, doctor or marine biologist, there is probably a scholarship out there for you.

There are large misconceptions about scholarships when it comes to college lacrosse. The full-scholarship is rare in the sport, but partial scholarships or need-based aid are more commonplace. There are exceptions to NCAA scholarship limits as schools like Army, Navy, Air Force, Merchant Marine Academy and Coast Guard Academy are exempt from limits as every student and student-athlete receives a full scholarship. Ivy League institutions offer no athletic scholarships, but only academic and need-based aid. When you start to investigate schools, ask coaches what options are available to lacrosse players. Every school is different, so be sure to know all the rules and regulations when it comes to recruiting.





CHAPTER 5:

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines & Rules

(Subject to Change)

NCAA Eligibility Process and Lacrosse Recruiting Timeline

- Athletes interested in playing collegiate lacrosse must initiate registration with the NCAA Eligibility Center by completing a NCAA student release form during junior year.
- Men's lacrosse tournaments and camps are offered and promoted to prospect student athletes annually, and players as young as rising high school freshman are being encouraged to participate in the recruiting process.

Contact Period:

College coaches are allowed to have in-person contact with student-athletes and/or their legal guardians. Coaches can watch student-athletes compete anywhere, and the coach can write and make telephone calls.

Dead Period:

The college coach cannot make in-person contact with student-athlete or their legal guardians. This prevents the coach from making any evaluations of student-athletes whatsoever. However, the coach can make telephone calls to student-athletes or their legal guardians.

Evaluation Period:

It is permissible for the college coach to evaluate student-athletes at their high school or any other place where they are competing. During this period the coach cannot have off campus in-person contact with a student-athlete or their legal guardians. The coach can still make telephone calls to the student-athlete or their legal guardians, and student-athletes are allowed to make campus visits during this period.

Quiet Period:

During this time a college coach cannot watch student-athletes compete at any location. A college coach can make in-person contact with a student-athlete or their legal guardians if it occurs on the coach's campus. Coaches are allowed to make telephone calls to student-athletes and their legal guardians, and student-athletes can make visits to college campuses during this time.



CHAPTER 5:

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines & Rules*(continued)***NCAA Initial-Eligibility Center**

- Initiate registration with the Eligibility Center by completing a NCAA student release form during your junior year. See your guidance counselor for forms and evaluation of your eligibility status.
- All prospective Division I or Division II student-athletes must complete an amateurism questionnaire through the Eligibility Center. If the student-athlete is a two- or four-year transfer from a non-NCAA Division I or Division II school, the amateurism questionnaire is still required before he is eligible to compete.

Correspondence

- Letters/printed materials/emails are permitted from coaches (or others at the college) beginning September 1 of your junior year.
- Email and fax are considered correspondence.
- Text messages are prohibited until a National Letter of Intent is signed. Starting August 1, 2013, college coaches can call, text and communicate privately by any methods available without restrictions.

Please keep in mind that the start date for phone calls and texts has not been decided. While the proposed date of August 1 has been adopted, it is currently in the override period and may not become official.

Phone Calls

- Unlimited after September 1 beginning junior year.
- Prospect or parent(s) may phone a coach as often as they wish.
- Enrolled collegiate student-athletes may not make recruiting calls.
- You may telephone enrolled collegiate student-athletes at your own expense.
- Email is not considered a phone call, therefore, is not limited.

Please keep in mind that the start for phone calls has not been decided. While the proposed date of September 1 has been adopted, it is currently in the override period and may not become official.





CHAPTER 5:

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines & Rules

(continued)

Contacts

- Contact: Any face-to-face encounter during which dialogue occurs.
- A college coach may contact a prospect or parent(s) off-campus beginning July 1 after your Junior year.
- Limit of three contacts per institution.
- A coach may not contact a prospect during competition.
- A coach may contact parents during competition.

Evaluations

- Evaluations: Any off-campus activity designed to assess athletics and/or academics.
- Division I schools are limited to seven evaluations per recruit. There is no limit to the number of evaluations an institution may conduct in Division II or III.

Tryouts

- Division II institutions may conduct one tryout per prospect, per sport on its campus, not to exceed two hours in length.
- Only seniors who have completed their sport season or are in a term other than the “traditional” sport season may participate.
- Prior to participation in a tryout, a prospective student-athlete is required to undergo a medical examination or evaluation administered or supervised by a physician (e.g. family physician, team physician). This examination must be completed within six months of the tryout.
- High school potential student-athletes may use a physical that was within six months of participation in practice, competition or out-of-season conditioning activities during their senior year of high school as long as it was accepted by their high school for their participation in athletics during that senior year.
- Prospect’s strength, speed, agility and sport skills may be tested; Ice hockey and lacrosse tryouts may not include competition.
- During the academic year, competition is permissible against the member institution’s team in a tryout.
- An institution may provide clothing and equipment to a prospect if it is returned at the conclusion of the tryout.



CHAPTER 5:

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines & Rules (continued)

Unofficial Visits

- Unofficial visit: A visit made to the institution at the prospect's own expense.
- May make unofficial visits an unlimited number of times.
- May be made before your senior year in high school.
- Unofficial visits cannot be made during a dead period. Coaches may not speak to or entertain prospects in person on or off campus during a dead period.

Official Visits

- A visit made to the institution's campus at the expense of that institution.
- Maximum of five official visits may be made, but only one per institution.
- 48-hour limit.
- You must provide the college with an academic transcript and an ACT or SAT test score prior to the visit.
- Entertainment money may not be used to buy souvenirs for yourself.
- Prospect may receive transportation.
- Prospect and parents may receive meals, lodging and admission to campus events.
- A prospect visiting an institution may participate in physical workouts provided the activities are not organized or observed by members of the coaching staff.
- Prospective student athletes must be registered with the [**NCAA Eligibility Center**](#); and be placed on the institutional request list (IRL).

Additional Resources

[2013-14 NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete](#)

[2013-14 NCAA Division I Recruiting Calendar](#)

[2013-14 Division II Recruiting Calendar](#)

[2013-14 NCAA Division I Manual](#)

[2013-14 Division II Manual](#)

[2013-14 Division III Manual](#)

[2014 College Coaches Directory](#)



CHAPTER 6:

Other Links, Resources, Articles

EDUCATED CONSUMERS MAKE THE BEST PARENTS

by Steve Stenersen, president and CEO of US Lacrosse

One of the consequences of the tremendous growth of lacrosse has been an influx of entrepreneurs, from within and outside of the sport, who are attempting to profit from the sport's expanding participation base. Their offerings -- camps, tournaments and private clubs -- are focused on the growing pool of wide-eyed lacrosse consumers (parents) motivated primarily by the well-intentioned goal of providing their children with the best opportunity to reach their lacrosse potential.

The driver of this economic model is, of course, the highly competitive quest for an athletic scholarship -- or even just an admission advantage to a college otherwise unattainable.

This concept is relatively new to lacrosse, and it has rapidly and significantly changed the sport's culture.

Nowhere is this seismic cultural change more evident than in the college recruiting process, where growing numbers of private clubs and for-profit recruiting tournaments have created a confusing maze of opportunities, some of which provide questionable value in exchange for significant financial investment.

Even more concerning is that many tournaments and private club programs have developed symbiotic relationships that sometimes include questionable ethical practices. Club teams need tournaments to provide value for their paying customers -- young players and their parents -- and tournaments need participating teams to make money. Of course, the expense of playing on a club team and the additional cost of tournament play are passed on to the parents. And what many don't know is that some coaches -- who are assumed to have a player's best interest as their primary focus -- accept financial incentives to bring teams to particular tournaments or recommend players to a specific club team or camp.

So what's a parent to do? The answer is fairly simple -- exercise appropriate due diligence when investigating lacrosse opportunities for your child. The cumulative cost of for-profit clubs and recruiting tournaments can easily exceed \$10,000 per child over just a few years. Most families considering that type of investment for, say, a home remodeling project, would spend considerable time researching and interviewing construction firms and comparing multiple bids before making a decision. Sadly, the decision to make a significant investment in a child's athletic activities now requires the same due diligence.

Parents should talk to the director of any privately-run program they are considering and ask respectful but pointed questions about cost, philosophy, coaching credentials and experience, and deliverables. Ask what tangible benefits your child will receive from playing in particular tournaments or for a particular club team, and how those benefits differ from other opportunities. Attend a practice or game of a club program you are considering. If you see or hear something that doesn't quite fit with your values...that should tell you something about whether it's right for your child. Peer pressure should never be a motivator for a decision.

Parents also need to learn how to cut through the hype. Some of these opportunities promote greater exposure and better coaching but offer no real proof of either. And, any program that perpetuates the thought that youth and high school players need to play lacrosse year-round in order to maximize their skill development should be avoided at all cost. No reputable source would recommend sport specialization or year-round play at those levels. College coaches consistently advocate that aspiring lacrosse players play multiple sports.

It can be challenging to determine the appropriate level of engagement in your child's lacrosse experience, and there are certainly many examples -- some of which you have likely witnessed -- of inappropriate parent behavior and engagement. But the decision to commit thousands of dollars, and entrust a child's welfare, to a private lacrosse enterprise requires lacrosse parents to be good consumers.



It's Not About

YOU

Five things parents need to know about our sport, its nuances and their role in the youth lacrosse experience

By Matt Forman



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Dr. Richard Ginsburg took a deep breath and chuckled.

"Being a parent is humbling," said Ginsburg, the co-director of the Paces Institute for Sport Psychology at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, faculty member at Harvard University, US Lacrosse Sports Science and Safety Committee member and co-author of "Whose Game Is It, Anyway?"

"As a parent, I'm getting more and more data on myself. I'm amazed at how many mistakes I'm making, and how often I can get swept up in the very things that I'm warning parents about. I've studied this, and I've written books about it. And I still find myself vulnerable to these things," Ginsburg said. "It's hard work. No one is perfect here. Ninety-nine percent of parents are well-intentioned, and we're not crazy, bad people. But there's so much pressure in the culture, and we can get pulled in a lot of directions. It's hard to keep it together. We're going to make mistakes as parents, and that's OK, as long as we learn from our mistakes and try to re-center ourselves by reviewing our values."

We'll make this the first observation: Check your ego at the door. It's hard — for everyone.

The second observation: There are no hard-and-fast rules. Every child is different. Every parent is different. Every situation is different.

When *Lacrosse Magazine* embarked on an adventure to compile advice to help parents navigate the youth lacrosse experience by getting the opinions of more than a dozen influential figures across the game, we didn't know where it would take us. So what did we find? No one has all the answers.

"I tell parents and kids: 'Listen, I have no idea what I'm talking about right now. And I know you have no idea what I'm talking about right now,'" said Duke men's lacrosse coach John Danowski, who has been on all sides of the parent-child-coach triangle. "If we can all agree that we have no idea, then at least we have a base to start from. At least we can say, 'All right, we're all kind of clueless. Let's start from there.'"

We're here to help. Acknowledging that parenting is challenging and there are no definitive guidelines, *Lacrosse Magazine* settled on five underlying principles that can help parents steer through the youth lacrosse experience. What follows on these pages are five things every lacrosse parent should know.

1

There's no pot of gold at the end of the recruiting rainbow.

Ruthie Lavelle, mother of five and president of the Maryland Youth Lacrosse Association, a volunteer-based recreational league of about 40,000 boys and girls ages 5 to 14, said parents have lost perspective in their decision-making because of recruiting, the process for which has been hastened remarkably in recent years. "What are parents chasing? They're chasing disappointment," Lavelle said. "They think there's a pot of gold, but they're chasing dissatisfaction. They're crazed about it."

Parents vigorously pursue and make great sacrifices — in time, finances and energy — in a competitive quest, hoping to capture an athletic scholarship. The return on investment is not what you think.

"The current culture is suggesting, 'If you just get the right coach, and play in the right program, and play enough hours, you can be great. And you have to pay for it,'" Ginsburg said. "But the reality is — if you do the math — there are going to be many disappointed people."

In 2012, there were 61 men's Division I programs, and 92 women's programs. For men, the NCAA maximum number of allowable scholarships is 12.6 over four years. For women, it's 12. Estimates suggest roughly half of these programs are fully funded; some schools have fewer than the allotted total, while Ivy League and service academies do not offer athletic scholarships.

These scholarships most often are divided among players. Denver Outlaws coach Jim Stagnitta, the former Rutgers men's coach and current owner of MVP Lax Camps, joked: "I can think of a handful of guys who got full rides, and most of them are named Powell."

Said Virginia men's coach Dom Starsia: "If you take our Tewaaron Award winners — Matt Ward, Chris Rotelli and Steele Stanwick — and added them all together, it might equal a little more than one full scholarship."

Said Georgetown women's coach Ricky Fried: "There's a misconception of the full ride. They're just not out there."

Any high school athlete has a 6-percent chance of playing college varsity sports in any division and 3.7-percent chance in Division I, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article.

"What happens when an athlete has put all his eggs in one basket? It creates a risk of imbalance," Ginsburg said.



INSIDE THE NUMBERS

- **High school men's lacrosse players:** 162,416
- **Division I programs:** 61
- **NCAA-mandated maximum number of scholarships per program (over four years):** 12.6
- **Average scholarships per program per year:** 3.15
- **Average players per recruiting class:** 12
- **Average estimated scholarship:** 26 percent
- **Fully-funded programs:** 31
- **Total scholarships available:** 400
- **Players receiving some scholarship over four years:** 1,450
- **Odds of any high school male landing any Division I scholarship:** 0.89 percent
- **High school women's lacrosse players:** 112,865
- **Division I programs:** 92
- **NCAA-mandated maximum number of scholarships per program (over four years):** 12
- **Average scholarships per program per year:** 3
- **Average players per recruiting class:** 9
- **Average estimated scholarship:** 33 percent
- **Fully funded programs:** 50
- **Total scholarships available:** 780
- **Players receiving some scholarship over four years:** 2,363
- **Odds of any high school female landing any Division I scholarship:** 2.1 percent

Sources: NCAA, US Lacrosse data from 2011-12 and estimated projections based on *Lacrosse Magazine* research

The rules of the game — and why they exist.

2

Lacrosse has been called the fastest sport on two feet, and the fastest-growing sport in the country. The result? With an increasing number of new people being introduced to the fast-paced game for the first time, there's uncertainty about the rules that govern the game, and why they're in place. Sometimes, this can be frustrating and lead to unsportsmanlike behavior — most notably vocal displeasure — from parents on the sidelines.

Chase Howse, US Lacrosse Youth Rules Committee chair, spent 35 years playing lacrosse and the last 30 officiating the game. His message to parents: "Take whatever time and steps you feel necessary to learn the rules before your son or daughter steps on the field. Is he or she learning from his coaches during practice? Or is it from watching a bunch of fouls being called during a game — often accompanied by howls of displeasure from coaches and fans?"

US Lacrosse, in conjunction with its Sports Science and Safety Committee, in 2012 released the *Youth Rules and Best Practices Guidebooks*. As part of the organization's effort to develop consistent national rules based on the physical, cognitive and psychological development stages of children, US Lacrosse developed these gender-specific guidebooks to help explain the rules and the rationale behind them. The three golden principles: safe, fun and fair.

A reminder from Cathy Russo, US Lacrosse Girls Youth Rules Interpretation chair: "Our No. 1 priority is always to keep the players safe."

3

The hazards of sport specialization.

Dom Starsia has developed a reputation. He gets cold calls from coaches and players across the country suggesting their linebacker or point guard might make a great lacrosse player. Starsia, who played football and lacrosse at Brown, is an advocate of multi-sport participation, in an era where media hype is driving parents in the direction of sport specialization.

"As the game spreads and there's more press coverage and more popularity and more opportunities to profit, you're seeing a greater emphasis on the belief that, 'The earlier the better, the more the better,' of anything, of any sport, of any academic endeavor," Ginsburg said. "But there's not really any definitive evidence that indicates specializing is going to lead to better performance."

Which is why Starsia has gone after players like Chris LaPierre, a former Shawnee (N.J.) High football star who had played lacrosse in the summers for fun, and now is one of the nation's most dynamic players. The Cavaliers' short-stick defensive midfielder was named a second-team All-American in 2012.

"There is nothing you can be doing in lacrosse on your own in the fall that would be better for you than going to football or soccer practice every day," Starsia said. "You can go bang a ball against a wall all you want, but how do you become a better team player? By playing other team sports."

Becoming coachable, paying attention to detail, understanding the

The guidebooks — along with the website uslacrosse.org — provide a tremendous foundation from which to learn about the game.

Beyond reading the rulebook, US Lacrosse officials and education manager Lucia Perfetti

Clark said, "The best way to learn the game is to get out there and do it; some of the best officials are parents." Russo and Clark suggested attending an officials/umpires training course or rules interpretation session, which are often offered through US Lacrosse chapters or affiliated youth organizations.

These sessions can help clarify the most misunderstood rules of each gender's game — which, it should be noted, are significantly different.

On the boys' side, the least understood rules revolve around contact, and there's varying amounts of legal contact allowed at every level of the game. At higher levels, the loose ball push versus push with possession leads to confusion. On the girls' side, shooting space violations and three-second held ball calls are most bewildering.

"In both games, even if a call goes against your team or kid, be happy when officials make calls for safety," Perfetti Clark said.

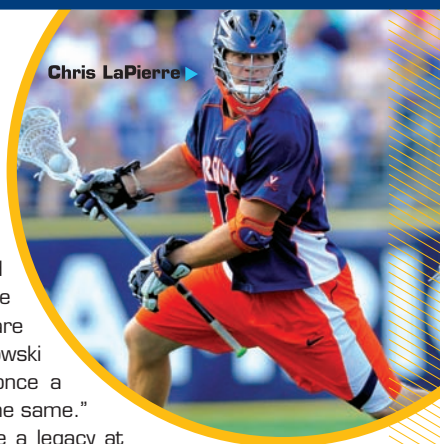
"And remember, we're all part of the same team," Howse said. "We're all in this together. We're all responsible for creating a positive environment, and we share a big responsibility for imparting a solid sense of the culture of our game to the kids that learn to play — and love."

importance of preparation, working toward a goal, understanding your role and evaluating your performance from playing other sports are "such a huge advantage," Danowski said. "Playing club lacrosse once a week, I don't know if that it's the same."

"You have one time to leave a legacy at your school. You have one time to take advantage of putting on a football helmet or playing soccer," Danowski continued. "When you look back at your school yearbook 40 years from now, would someone say, 'Yeah, that guy was a lacrosse head?' Playing other sports helps develop a wealth of confidence that doesn't come from playing in a meaningless club game in November."

Ginsburg said sport specialization can lead to burnout, overuse injury and fragmentation of friendships. Conversely, participating in multiple sports also helps children develop muscularly, in what four-time U.S. women's national team player Danielle Gallagher, the founder and president of the Long Island Liberty lacrosse club, called "a cross-training theory."

Fried added sport specialization leads to a general lack of "being a kid... Creativity starts to fade away."



Chris LaPierre



How to be a good consumer of your child's lacrosse experience.

4

Determining the appropriate level for engagement in your child's experience is tricky, and it's often age-dependent. But at any level, it's important for parents to be good consumers. The best way to do so: Ask respectful but pointed questions — of your child, of programs and teams you're considering, and of objective third parties. Related, do your homework and research as much as possible. Don't sit back and wait to learn these things after the fact; actively seek out information.

"This is going to sound really stupid simple," Johns Hopkins women's lacrosse coach Janine Tucker said. "It truly is about communicating with your child."

How well do you know your son or daughter? What is your child capable of athletically? When are they happiest? What's most important to your child? What does your child actually want to do?

"Communication is critical, but it's also paying attention to the signs, listening to coaches and parents who have interaction with our kids, getting a sense from them about how our kids enjoy the sport," Ginsburg said. "Do they enjoy it? Are they excited and energetic? Are we seeing them complaining about going to practice?"

What is the age-appropriate level for my child? How competitive are the various levels of play — recreation programs, travel teams, tournaments and club programs? What are the time commitments for each? Several coaches suggested playing at a level where you can learn but contribute.

What is a coach's philosophy? Is the coach certified? Have they had a background check? What are their experiences and background?

How stable is this program? What is a program's philosophy? How many players are on each team? Are there multiple teams within each program? Do kids get equal playing time? The set-up of a program will entirely determine a child's experience for a season.

"Stability of the organization and coaching are two of the most important factors," Lavelle said. "If it's a well-managed league or program, that should first or foremost be a priority."

Are the officials trained and certified? Do they go to training every year? Will the games, tournaments and events have at least two officials at every game? Are safety precautions in place?

How many games/practices in one day, or one weekend, will a team or event require? Are there trainers on site? Will the teams stay in air-conditioned dorms?

And lastly: How much does all this cost? What is financially feasible for your family? The cumulative cost of playing for a club team and participating in recruiting tournaments can quickly exceed \$10,000, especially with programs starting at such young ages. To what end is this money being spent?

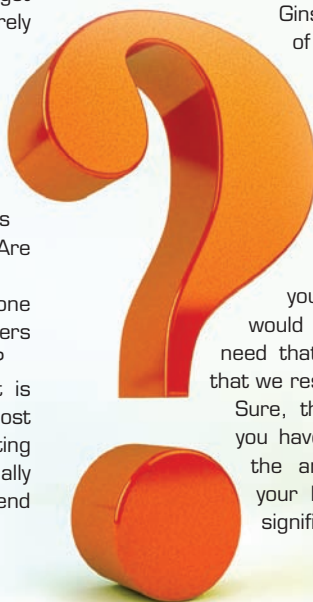
How to be a good consumer of your child's lacrosse experience (continued).

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Ginsburg suggests evaluating these types of questions on a seasonal basis. He also says having a non-invested third-party can help provide feedback or perspective.

"It's really important that parents have objective adult allies who can help give a sense of perspective," Ginsburg said. "To have an adult — someone with nothing invested in giving you feedback — say this kind of experience would be valuable for your kid is helpful. We need that kind of additional, objective feedback that we respect."

Sure, that's a lot of questions to ask. But if you haven't considered them — or don't know the answer to them — you haven't done your homework. Approach it like any other significant investment you make.



5

How your behavior affects that experience.

Parents are equally as important to a child's positive lacrosse experience as the coach of the team, or the league they play in. Attend games, but be supportive and not overbearing. Positive reinforcement encourages learning and fun. Research has shown that a ratio of five positive statements — compliments and positive recognition — for each negative statement — criticisms and corrections — is ideal for helping young athletes do their best.

But too much external praise can hinder the maturation process. "One-third of my speaking engagements are to businesses. Managers say young workers don't know what to do unless someone else tells them," said Madeline Levine, a psychologist and the co-founder of Challenge Success, a project born at the Stanford School of Education. "They need to be told every day that they're doing well instead of once a year."

Negative parental behavior also can have an adverse effect on the recruitment of a child.

High school lacrosse players far outnumber opportunities available. Stagnitta, a former Division I coach at Rutgers and Division III coach at Washington &

Lee, said college coaches "look for reasons not to recruit guys."

The negative behavior parents engage in that's most alarming to coaches on the recruiting circuit: unsportsmanlike sideline conduct.

"Coaches are always aware of parents' behavior on the sidelines," Stagnitta said.

"It's one of the first questions they ask. You're sitting there and you see parents doing that, and you know it's a four-year hitch. There's enough guys out there, the character of the parents and the personality and how they conduct themselves and how they interact with the coaches and how they act on the sidelines, in a lot of ways, is going to carry as much weight as the player. All things being equal, you're going to go with the kid who has the most character as a family."

Said Fried: "On the sidelines, how are parents talking to their daughter, or the other players? We want parents who are supporting their kid and their team. What about the way they're interacting with officials? Are they talking to other people, or are they off to the side by themselves? After the game, are the parents going over stats or what their kid did individually? Those behaviors are the most recognizable."

It's about balance. It's about positive but not constant reinforcement. And it's not about you. It's about your child. **LM**

