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1st Of Its Kind: Homegrown Lacrosse Fall College Recruitment Workshop A Success

Homegrown Lacrosse and the University of St. Thomas Men's Lacrosse Program team up to host a one-of-a-kind event to help local lacrosse players anticipate and navigate the college recruitment process.

For any high school lacrosse player, the ultimate dream is the chance to be a part of a strong collegiate program. The reality is that knowing who to talk to, getting seen by the right people and selecting the right college can be a complicated and confusing process.

With the ambition to play collegiate lacrosse fresh in their minds, Minnesota middle and high school lacrosse players flocked to the Homegrown Lacrosse Collegiate Recruitment Workshop, a first-of-its-kind event that focused on helping young lacrosse players prepare for the college recruitment process.

Homegrown Lacrosse, a non-profit organization based in Saint Paul, works to empower the kids within the Minnesota Lacrosse community both on and off the field. The event was no exception to that mission.

“The transition from high-school lacrosse to the collegiate level is a tough one, and there are many different things that need to be looked at. Not many people here in Minnesota have a clear understanding of what getting to and staying at the college level includes. Conversely, many of you are unaware of all of the incredible opportunities that are out there. That’s why we are here today; to help you navigate that process,” said Colin Achenbach, co-founder of Homegrown Lacrosse and former professional lacrosse player.

The event took place Sunday, November 21, and was held at St. Thomas University, home of the Division II National Champion Lacrosse team. Over five hours, an incredible panel of key note speakers and panelists touched on many key aspects of college recruitment, from perspectives of players and coaches to how to train and eat correctly.

With that in mind, here is Homegrown Lacrosse’s “How-To Guide For Navigating the College Recruitment Process”

How To Get Recruited: What recruiters and coaches look for.

Keynote speaker Frank Vitolo, current assistant coach of the back-to-back NCAA Division II National Champion C.W. Post Pioneers and Hudson Valley New York Hall of Fame inductee, offered insight on the coach/recruiter’s perspective. The key tips he addressed were:

-Excel At School: “Be worried about a coach that doesn’t ask for grades and a test score. Division I lacrosse teams have 12.6 scholarships to give out per year. Division II teams have 10.8. There are 60 guys on a team. The odds of getting a scholarship are already tough. There are so many more opportunities to get an academic scholarship. Instead of sending your child to play Sunday, send them to the library. Instead of giving them money for camp, put that towards a tutor. The knowledge your child receives from this will help them out tremendously.”

-Position Specific

“Offensive players need to show that they can break down the defense, then know what to do with the ball. Midfielders, if you’ve got speed, show it! Defenders need to demonstrate that they’re aggressive, can anticipate a play, and can move quickly to the ball.”

-Be Ready to Play Always, You Never Know Who Is Watching

“As a scout, we are touring to so many different schools, so we only have 10-20 minutes to watch any given player. That means that you, as a player, have to treat every game and every play like you’re being watched, because the first impression you give a scout determines if he’s going to come back to your future games.”

-Stand Out

“Don’t be afraid to make yourself distinguishable from the rest of the players on the field. Sometimes it’s hard for scouts to always see who you are in the heat of the game, so wear something that makes you stand out. My youngest daughter plays, and I always tell her to wear a white ribbon in her hair. It makes it easier for me to spot her, which makes it easier for a scout to spot her too.”

-Take Interviews Seriously

“Remember that recruitment is a two-way street; players need a college and coaches need good players. The interview process is the same principal; Coaches are looking to see that this person is a stand-up character, and players are looking to see if the coach is someone that has their best interests in mind. In an interview, a coach wants to see that this person is someone that carries themselves well, and acts in a mature way.”

-Strong Values

“Coaches want to have the right kind of people with the right kind of values. If someone comes in and they’re being disrespectful to their parents or disrespectful to me, a coach doesn’t need them on the team. Coaches want people that are hard-working, down to earth, and know what is right and wrong.”

-DVD’s Don’t Need Flash

“A lot of players think that they need a highlight-reel film with Metallica in the background and lots of flashy stuff. Coaches just want to see half of your best game, and then some of your best highlights. Nothing special, just show us that you can play.”

-Enjoy the Game and Be Flexible

“There is a school for everyone that enjoys playing lacrosse. If you enjoy playing and practicing lacrosse, look for the Division I-III schools. If you only enjoy games, look at the club levels. Also, if you’re flexible and willing enough to switch positions, that speaks volumes to a coach about your commitment to the sport.”

How To Navigate the Recruitment Process: From the perspective of parents.

Scott Hugdahl, Keith Knutson, and John Uppgren, parents of collegiate lacrosse players, shared their views on the process of picking out a college, and how players have to make all the connections.

-Understand Your Priorities

“Lacrosse should be a way to get to a college you would have never gotten to otherwise. With that in mind, first look at school based on criteria like academic programs offered, academic standards, cost, location, size, etc. Know what you want from your ideal college, and make a list of schools that fit those criteria.”

-Determine What Lacrosse Program Fits You

“There are a LOT of different levels of lacrosse (D-I, D-II, D-III, MCLA I, MCLA II, Club), so be realistic about what level you can play at. Also look at how much playing time you could potentially get, the guys in front of you on the roster, and how competitive the team is. Then cross some schools off that list that don’t fit with your style.”

-Market Yourself

“Most players don’t do this, but develop a resume that has your academics, ACT/SAT scores, lacrosse stats, awards/all star games, community service information, and any part-time jobs you have had. Then, write to coaches, including your resume with you and

your coaches' contact information. Remember to follow up with the coach within four weeks of the letter.”

-The Player MUST Contact

“Parents can help sort out e-mails, find the coaches to contact, and even coach the player on how to deal with recruiters. But parents **should not** contact the coach on behalf of the player; that is something the player needs to do themselves. The player is the one driving the boat, and the parent is just putting gas in it.”

-Narrow the Schools

“Start crossing more schools of the list as you re-focus your priorities and determine which coaches are interested. Still include some stretch schools and safety schools. During the fall of senior year, you should have your list of schools reduced to 10-15 schools.”

-Arrange Visits

“There is no substitute for walking a campus, meeting future potential teammates, and experiencing the location of a college. The feel of being at a college is important, and can easily sway the selection process if a school feels like a right fit.”

-Apply To Your Top Schools

“The list should now be down to 5-10 schools that you absolutely see yourself succeeding at in both lacrosse and academics. Always have one or two safety and stretch schools. Applying costs money, so make sure you have done your homework to know exactly which colleges are ‘the ones’.”

-Communicate With Coaches

“Continue to proactively maintain communication with coaches. Make them aware of your off-season activity, including other sports you are playing or off-season games. Follow up with each coach you are in contact with and just make them aware of your situation.”

-Make The Decision

“Finally, make your decision and stick with it. Your mind will raise a lot of “what-if” questions. Try to ignore them and be excited about your choice and get prepared for your new college career!”

How To Prepare Physiologically: Keeping your body fit and fueled.

Chris Molitor, owner of Molitor Athletic Performance and current Strength and Conditioning Coach for the Minnesota Swarm, gave crucial insight in what it takes to not only train for lacrosse, but what a player needs to eat in order to reach their peak performance.

-Train Like An Athlete

“Athletes train to build specific muscle groups that will improve how they play; bodybuilders train to build muscle mass in their entire body. Don’t go into the weight room thinking you have to pump Arnold Schwarzenegger weight. Know the difference, have a plan, and lift safely.”

-Train Sport Specific

“Each sport requires different types of training. Lacrosse players need to be explosive and flexible, and have joint mobility, first-step quickness, and cardiovascular endurance. This means they need to partake in multi-joint exercises (squats, bench presses, dead lifts, etc.), which will increase muscle recruitment and will promote fluid, coordinated movements that are associated with athletic feats.”

-Recover Correctly

“This aspect is often overlooked, but proves to be one of the most important things that can help make the most out of a training session. Activities such as self-massage and static stretch post-workout can increase blood flow which will speed recovery time. Then, cold water immersion after a workout can decrease recovery time by 12 hours. If an athlete takes these steps, they will yield better results in their training.”

-Eat Correctly

“An athlete must fuel the body throughout the day, beyond the usual three large meals per day. Eating a small meal or snack every two to three hours will help maintain and build muscle, reduce body fat, and curb appetite. There are five different things to consider when dealing with nutrition: Daily consumption, day of the game/workout, during the game/workout, post game/workout, and game day do’s and don’ts.”

Daily

Always have breakfast. It helps jump-start the metabolism and improves physical and mental performance. Drink at least eight glasses of water per day. Eat a small meal or snack that is high in complex carbohydrates and protein every two to three hours.

Day of Workout/Game

Eat 1.5 hours before the game or workout. This ensures proper digestion and provides carbohydrates for the muscles to break down during the game/workout.

During Workout/Game

Drink 8-10 ounces of water or energy drinks. Sports drinks contain electrolytes, which will increase stamina throughout the game/workout. Also, eat an energy or cereal bar every 45 minutes improve energy levels.

Post Workout/Game

Drink 16-24 oz water per 1lb of body weight lost, eat 1 gram of carbs per kilogram of body weight lost, and take in 1 gram of carbs per kilogram of body weight lost. This promotes muscle glycogen replenishment, leading to a faster recovery.

Game Day Foods

Foods you want to eat on game day are high in carbs and fiber (cereal, whole grain breads, pasta, fruit smoothies, rice and vegetables, bananas with peanut butter, and low fat cottage cheese). Foods to stay away from contain red meat (cheeseburgers and steaks), high sugar drinks and foods (cookies, soda, candy), and foods high in saturated fat (French fries, breaded chicken, etc.).

ABOUT HOMEGROWN LACROSSE:

Founded in 2003, Homegrown Lacrosse is dedicated to encouraging positive change in the lives of youth lacrosse players and supporting the growth of the sport in Minnesota. Through community-based programming, Homegrown Lacrosse uses lacrosse to provide opportunities for individuals to get involved and cultivate the skills and relationships necessary to succeed on and off the field. Led and staffed

by experienced collegiate lacrosse players, Homegrown Lacrosse holds clinics, leagues and K-12 educational programming throughout the year. For more information visit [HYPERLINK](#)

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