

EMPRESS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 2 | MARCH 2024



YOUR FIRST STOP FOR COMPLETE ORTHOPAEDIC CARE
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KICKING OFF THE '24 SEASON



Alumni Spotlight:
Courtney Maclay
Stony Brook (#4 Ranked)

TRUST THE PROCESS

Recruiting advice to
Parents from Parents.

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Why Club Sports!

Why is it so important to
play club sports and is it
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COACHES CORNER

"Dad" Scott Robertson
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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: COURTNEY MACLAY

Read about a day in the
life of a DI lacrosse player.

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TRUST THE PROCESS: Parents to Parents

The recruiting process comes with so much excitement, but it can also come with stress and many unknowns for families going through it for the first time. Below I will talk about our experience as a family, in efforts to help you and your family make the best decisions along the way in your journey.

As a family, we started looking at colleges and attending prospect camps the fall of our daughter's sophomore year in high school. Our schedule consisted of constant travel as we tried to navigate which colleges she wanted to prioritize. At the beginning we sat down as a family and discussed the basic parameters of what was realistic for our daughter as a player and for our family both financially and emotionally. We let our daughter lead the process, trusting her to research programs and schools that fit our circumstances. Our job was to support her in making good decisions, reminding her to keep her options open and to stay engaged in the process.

In the early stage of recruiting, we primarily focused on schools that she identified as being "of interest" both athletically and academically. We then helped her create a list/spreadsheet and would travel to those colleges for prospects days, we attended nearly 12-18 camps over the first 2 years. When it came to tournaments, she would email a variety of college coaches attending the event, casting a wide net. When it came time for coaches to reach out to her, in September of her Junior year (or earlier for D2 and D3), we encouraged her to take all phone calls and responded to all coaches' emails even if they were "not on her initial list". Yet, she still pursued the schools she originally identified.

As an example, Eastern Michigan University reached out to her. This was not a school she prioritized because of its size and academic profile, but she had a great call with the coaching staff and wanted to visit the school and kept an open mind. The visit did not go great, and she learned a lot about just how different the schools are based on the staff, geography, level of play and much more.

On the other hand, a school she had been interested in from the start was Lafayette College, but they didn't contact her on September 1st. Despite this, we still went to their fall prospect camp and reached out to them many times on our own and with the help of our Empress staff.

In the meantime, we would do, private lessons with Empress alumni and coaches attend Impact Lax and extra training session to keep working on areas that she needed to improve to showcase better at her top priority schools.

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College Lacrosse Odds 2020:	Male	Female
Number of US High School Lacrosse Players 2019-20	121,011	106,162
Number of College Lacrosse Players (see table below)	16,841	13,908
% of US HS Lacrosse Players competing at any College Level	13.5%	12.7%
% of US HS Lacrosse Players Competing at NCAA I Schools	2.9%	3.5%
Odds of a US HS Lacrosse Player making any College Roster	7:1	8:1
Odds of a US HS Lacrosse Player making an NCAA I Roster	35:1	28:1





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TRUST THE PROCESS- Continued...

Another challenge we faced as a family was the decision between Division 1, 2 or 3. Our daughter was looking for a small academic driven school, ideally in the northeast. That was hard to find in a D1 school, but there were many D3 schools that fit what she wanted and had a relatively high level of lacrosse. All our older children were student athletes, and we saw them have success at all divisions, so we were careful not to put a focus on only one division. We attended multiple D3 schools for official visits. A difference we found when we visited the D3 school's vs the D1 schools was the level to which the athletes identified with their sport. At the D3 schools, the players had opportunities to be multi-sport athletes, study abroad, and participate in many extra curriculums. Additionally, there was not a limitation on majors at D3. We also found merit packages to be very competitive and while D3 does not offer athletic scholarships, the Merit scholarships can outweigh what many D1 schools can offer in a scholarship. We questioned whether her passion for lacrosse was greater than her desire to experience the other side of college. However, at D1 schools the programs do require more of your time, but they do a great job of making the players feel very special and at many athletes share the benefits of many priorities that other students aren't granted such as class scheduling, free gear, equipment, meals, access to tutors, facilities, recovery staff and much more...

When all was said and done, our daughter ended up committing to Lafayette College, a private D1 school in Pennsylvania. At Lafayette, she found a perfect equilibrium where she sacrificed some high-level lacrosse with ability to be involved in non-lacrosse activities to get the healthy balance that she was striving for. **"At the end of the day, we took our time as a family to discuss what our values were and where Lilli would ultimately thrive."**

There will come a time in the process, whether it be a visit to a school, a conversation with a coach (or players) where your athlete will get a feel that this is the "right" place for them. This is their first big life decision and the more exposure and experience they have in the process, the more confident they will feel about their decision.

Some of the resources that I found helpful are below:

- Encourage your daughter to actively engage on her IWLCA account.
- Understand the NCAA recruiting calendar - quiet, contact, dead periods.
- "Like" colleges on your Instagram account so you can see prospect days/camps
- Follow **RecruitHer** on Instagram,
- "Like" WLAX RECRUITING NUMBERS and RECRUITING DISCUSSION on Facebook.
- Add Educating Parents of HS athletes on the College Recruiting Process on Facebook.
- Attend a local prospect camp: so, your athlete knows what to expect BEFORE they attend a prospect at "their dream school".
- Purchase the book *Looking for a Full Ride*, Renee Lopez - great information for your athlete to read and discuss with you.

Remember this is a LONG process and seek advice from your coaches and your fellow EMPRESS families for guidance and support.



Thank you to Brad Rauch, Kristina Bonin-Rauch and Lilli Rauch for sharing their story and their experience in the recruiting process.



WHY CLUB LACROSSE?

Over the past decade girl's lacrosse has been the fastest growing sport in the US. Growing over 68% between 2008 and 2020. The NCAA, Division 1 level has expanded from 71 teams in 2012 to 121 teams in 2023, with another 13 expected by 2025. This means that there are more opportunities for players to continue playing lacrosse post high school. In 2019 the national average of high school players, who could go on to play at any level in college was 13.5%. By 2025 that number will be 17%.

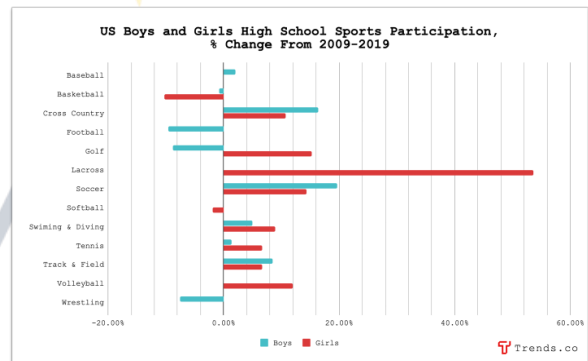
This leads us to our main focus for this article. Why Club Sports, Why Club Lacrosse?. In a 2022 article published by NCSA, a recruiting service stated that if a student-athlete wants to play college lacrosse that 91% of current NCAA Division 1 and 2 athletes played club lacrosse. While 71% of Division III players played club lacrosse.

While club teams have many benefits, one major benefit is that they can be particularly beneficial for athletes looking to play lacrosse at the collegiate level. Club lacrosse programs help student-athletes develop their skillset and showcase their talents in front of college coaches at tournaments across the country and increasing visibility and access to college coaches. While club teams have many benefits, one major benefit is that they can be particularly beneficial for

Athletes looking to play lacrosse at the collegiate level. Club lacrosse programs help student-athletes develop their skillset and showcase their talents in front of college coaches at tournaments across the country and increasing visibility and access to college coaches. With so many NCAA Division 1 college lacrosse programs in the country, playing in club tournaments are especially important to student-athletes competing outside of this region. Staying regional will limit the schools and opportunities for the athletes. Student-athletes who play lacrosse for an elite high school program in regional "hotbeds" that routinely sees college coaches at games may be an exception to this, but only fill up 5.1% of recruited athletes.

Another benefit is that most club coaches are also a good resource during the recruiting process because many of them have strong relationships with college coaches and have learned from experience on how to best help guide families to making the right decision for their athlete.

As a club team in since 2015, Empress has helped over 200 athletes play at the next level. In 2017 Section 6 placed 3 players in Division 1 schools, in our 2020 class we had 7 and in our 2025 class we have 15 players placed at Division 1 schools. These results are a testament to the dedication, hard work and trust by our families, players and coaches to change the mindset and expectations that our area has had in the past. Over the past 8 years every single player that has gone D1 has played club lacrosse and most of them started early and continued through high school.



COACHES CORNER: TABLE TALK

Scott Roberston (A.K.A Dad Scott)

Coach Empress 2026 BLUE



As a parent of 2 laxers and a coach this week's spotlight will focus on raising female athletes and how to get them to talk about their sport. What I have found to be a very productive way to bring lacrosse "home" is what I like to call "table talk". Over the years, we have heard many families not discussing sports and leaving the "coaching" on the field. While for some that may work, I have found that continuity encouraging that these conversations, is so important when taking your experience and athlete to the "next level". Focus, clarity and decisiveness are key components in developing athletes and getting them to discuss their experiences, both good and bad, are ways for everyone to learn and grow. Get involved and understand the game, so they know you are taking an interested in their passion. Emphasize that being a good listener, hard worker, and prepared athlete will help lay the foundation for them to have a successful life. It will absolutely make them more coachable and confident in their communication with teammates and coaches. Most importantly, encourage them to always go out on the field to be a "difference maker", a "leader" and always have FUN! Positive reinforcement with your children can be huge components to raising well-rounded female athletes on and off the field, but accountability and recognizing their current limits and how to move past them is what separates players. Knowledge is power and when it relates to the expectations of a travel athlete, the more an athlete and their parents are aligned the better the outcomes and the visible return on your

Investment will be! So, the next time you are sitting around the dinner table or simply driving to the next lacrosse event, start a conversation with your athlete and ask questions with out expectation. Eventually they will talk!

Great opening questions are, "How do you think the team played today?" or "What was your favorite part of practice?".



In spring of 2023, Empress Lacrosse joined the NGLL (National Girls Lacrosse League). This is a very competitive league that is run across the country, intended for middle school and youth teams to test their skills, regionally and then nationally prior to the travel season. In 2023, Empress 2027, 2028 and 2029 entered in the event. Empress 2029 lost in the finals to a great team from Syracuse while Empress 2027 won the Upstate Region and went down to North Carolina to play in the NGLL National Championships over Memorial Day weekend. The team went 2-3 on the weekend and learned a lot of valuable

lessons about their game development, preparation and how they will need to play to keep up with the top teams and top players around the country.

In 2024, Empress will be hosting the first weekend in the Upstate Regional games on March 24th at Sahlens Sports Park in Elma, NY. We will have our 2028 and 2029 teams entered in the league and we are working towards both of our teams making it to the NGLL finals weekend in Baltimore, MD.

GOOD LUCK GIRLS!
PLAY HARD, PLAY FAST, PLAY TOGETHER



SCHEDULE

March 24th – Buffalo, NY

April 14th- Syracuse, NY

May 18-19th- Baltimore, MD



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

COURTNEY MACLAY

STONY BROOK '26

Empress '21

WHAT TIME DO YOU WAKE UP?

Usually around 8:00am

WHAT DO YOU EAT FOR BREAKFAST?

2 protein waffles, yogurt with protein powder, strawberries and granola.

WHAT TIME ARE YOUR PRACTICES?

Lift or Conditioning from 10:00 – 11:00am

Practices start at 11:30 – 2:30pm

- I typically spend at least 30 minutes in the training room before and after practice depending on class time

WHAT DO YOU DO TO HELP BALANCE YOUR TIME WITH CLASSES AND PRACTICES?

My planner is GOLD to me. It has everything I need to do in there.

WHAT DO YOU MISS THE MOST ABOUT BUFFALO?

Going to Bills games and good chicken wings.

WHAT IS YOUR COLLEGE COACHES BIGGEST PET PEEVES ABOUT PLAYERS?

Lack of effort when we are not full out sprinting during every drill.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST STRUGGLES RIGHT NOW AND HOW ARE YOU WORKING TO FIX THEM?

Finishing low when I find myself open in front of the goal. I shoot with my coach after practice to help fix it. (Since she responded, Courtney has 4 goals, in 3 games, 3 of them low)

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE LOCKER ROOM SONG?

Higher- Rihanna or anything by Ice Spice

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOURSELF AS A YOUNG PLAYER?

If you don't believe in yourself no one else will. Work hard and never stop dreaming, you are capable of so much more than you think.

For more information or a digital copy visit:

WWW.EMPRESSLACROSSE.COM

