

Athletic Recruiting FAQs

Lakeside realizes that many students consider incorporating athletics into their college experiences. This can happen in two ways: first, students can try to “walk-on” to varsity teams once they arrive on-campus or play at the intramural or club level for a more casual experience (see p. 2 for more details about each of these options). They don’t pursue being recruited while at Lakeside, and instead choose to decide once they arrive on-campus whether they want to play—and without any long-term commitment to remaining on the team. On the other hand, some Lakesiders will want their sport to be an intense part of their college experience and will consider looking at programs where they would be strong players and possibly recruited at the varsity level. Because the recruiting process begins early in some sports — especially lacrosse, soccer, baseball, and volleyball — the college counseling office has created this list of FAQs to guide students before they are assigned a college counselor midway through their junior year.

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Understanding Athletic Recruiting: A Comprehensive Guide for the High School Student-Athlete, by Jeffrey Durso-Finley and Lewis Stival (2014)

What are the options for playing sports in college?

- If a student chooses to play an intercollegiate, or “varsity,” sport they are making a significant time commitment. Within the National Collegiate Athletic Association, there are three divisions.
 - At a Division 1 (D-1) school, a student should expect a rigorous athletic experience that could include up to a 40-hour weekly commitment when games, travel, and practices are considered. Students who love their sport and wish to make it a central part of their college experience might consider attending a D-1 school. While being a D-1 athlete doesn’t mean that academics come second to sports, it often means that time for other extracurricular activities will be extremely limited. In many cases, students arrive early at college for pre-season, stay on-campus during school breaks for practices and games, and are expected to weight train and exercise on their own. Needless to say, it is not for the faint of heart. *(Note about the Ivy League: while it is a D-1 conference, it functions more like a Division III league in terms of time commitment. Read below for more on Division III.)*
 - Division 2 (D-2) schools function very much like D-1 schools, though this division is smaller. Usually, Lakesiders find themselves considering D-1 or D-3 schools.
 - Division 3 (D-3) is the largest of the three divisions. While many colleges have highly competitive sports teams and talented athletes, the time commitment and expectations are less intense. It can be hard to be a two-sport athlete at D-1 schools, but possible at many D-3 schools. A fundamental misperception among students considering D-3 is that they won’t be amongst talented athletes. In many cases, talented athletes purposefully choose D-3 schools to strike a better balance between academics, sports, and other interests. In fact, in the most competitive D-3 conference, the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), which includes schools such as Amherst, Bowdoin, Colby, Tufts, and Williams, many of the athletes are stronger than those playing for colleges that are middle or bottom tier D-1.
- Club teams can vary in scope. In some cases, a club team simply means that the program is not funded by athletics, and instead, receives monetary support from student activities. In these situations, the team might function a lot like a varsity program. Competitive club teams often travel and play against other universities. In other cases, the team might be a college-sponsored “club” where students play for the pure enjoyment with little commitment. These types of teams are ideal for students who want their sport to be part of college or who are unsure whether they want it to be, but wish for flexibility to try new activities and walk on-and-off the team at their convenience.
- Intramural Teams are usually the most unstructured of the three types of teams. In some cases, they might be a school club (and at some schools, there is no difference between intramurals and club sports) that receives funding from student activities, though usually, intramural teams compete against self-divided teams within their institution. Intramural teams are great for students who want their sport to be a very casual part of their college experience.

How does a student become a Top Recruit? *There are many steps along the way, and at each step, the coach narrows his or her list of recruits. This is known as the "athletic recruiting funnel," which is illustrated below.*

The pool of *suspects* are all the potential athletes in which the college coach might be interested. In many cases, the coach will reach out to these athletes with a mass email or letter. At this initial stage, some coaches are reaching out to thousands of suspects. Receiving an email does not mean at all that the student will end up a top recruit; this is only the first step in the process.

The athlete becomes a *prospect*, or *prospective recruit*, when he or she responds to a mass email from the coach, initiates contact with a coach through email or at a camp, or fills out an online inquiry form on the school's athletic website. There are often hundreds of prospects that coaches are considering.

The coach will learn more about the student through video or research on their own. If the coach remains interested, communication will shift from mass to personalized communications, such as personalized emails, texts, or phone calls, depending on the coach and NCAA regulations for that sport.

The coach continues to be interested. They request a copy of the student's transcript, school profile, senior schedule, and ACT/SAT scores and brings them to admissions for a pre-read. *If this step does not happen, the coach is no longer interested.*

Coach informs the student that admissions gave the "green light" that the student is admissible. Those students who do not pass the pre-read are no longer in contention. If this is the case, sometimes coaches will simply stop communicating or become very aloof.

Coach continues to narrow prospect pool based on talent and team needs. Remaining athletes are invited to campus for an official visit in senior year.

Coach makes verbal offers to top recruits.

Understand recruiting language

There is a difference between coaches being friendly and providing information about their schools, and being highly interested in the student. As the student proceeds down the funnel, if the coach is interested, the student will hear language such as, "you would be an impact player," or "you would see starting time even in freshman year," or even, quite simply, "you would be one of my top recruits." This is very different from, "I'd love for you to walk on to the team," or "I'm glad you continue to be interested; I'll put in a good word with admissions." Mere kindness from the coach does not mean the student is being recruited.

Ask Direct Questions

After the pre-read, there are direct questions that can help assess the coach's level of interest. "How many students will you be able to support? Can you give me a sense of where I fall on your recruiting list?" "If I attend your school, do you think I would see significant playing time, or might I spend a lot of time on the bench?" (A top recruit would see substantial playing time.)

A few words on the Pre-read and the Ivy League

Policy in the Ivy League prohibits admissions from doing pre-reads prior to July 1 of senior year. Thus, while in sports with accelerated timelines (i.e. soccer, lacrosse, volleyball, baseball), coaches make verbal offers sooner based on their own review of your academic credentials. That means their offer is contingent upon your passing a pre-read with admissions in the summer before 12th grade.

Affirm the coach is committed and that the chance of admission is strong

There are a few questions the student should pose to the coach when they make an offer to ensure the coach is committed and that the student will likely be admitted. The coach should offer a resounding "yes" if asked, "At this point, should I go back to the other coaches with whom I am communicating and let them know I am committed to your school?" The student should also ask, "In the past, what percent of the students whom you have supported were ultimately admitted?" The answer should be "almost all" or "100 percent" or "it is highly rare that one of my recruits is not admitted."

How does a student become noticed by a coach?

There are a variety of ways to get on the radar of college coaches. Before engaging in any of the methods below, a student should first have a candid conversation with their Lakeside coach about their interest in playing college sports. If there are specific schools in which the student is interested, they should discuss these with their coach or Mr. Hartley, director of athletics, for feedback on whether they would be “recruitable”—in other words, ***is the student’s talent so extraordinary that they could make it to the very bottom of the recruiting funnel at those schools?*** Another way a student can gauge their potential of being recruited is to check the team websites, which often list times and stats of their athletes. If the student’s times or stats are below those of the current team, they will likely not be recruited by that school. There is no reason to reach out to coaches if it is obvious that the student’s athletic abilities will not catch their eye.

- Email the coach (see examples of such emails later in this document). In D-3 especially, this is the most common way in which students become noticed. Students can attach an athletic resume or video link, if available.
- Complete the recruiting questionnaire on the athletics website. Most colleges have a general questionnaire that students can complete that is then forwarded on to the coach. (When doing this, the student should leave the GPA section blank; Lakeside School does not release GPAs to colleges and universities.)
- Attend a summer camp, showcase, or tournament where colleges are present. In the marketing materials for these programs, they should list the colleges and/or coaches that will be present. After the student identifies colleges that interest them, they should email those coaches in advance with the student’s name and number (many programs and showcases will give students a number to make identification easy for coaches), letting the coach know you’re interested and that you hope they will have a chance to see you play. During or after the program, the coach will follow-up with you if they are interested. Often, in addition to any coaches you might have contacted, students find that there are coaches that reach out to them after having seen them play at the showcase or tournament.

In some sports, such as lacrosse, soccer, and baseball, the recruiting process is very “accelerated” at the top D-1 programs, which means students might be contacted by coaches as early as sophomore year. Because these are the top D-1 programs, students who have the talent to play at these schools will usually be contacted unsolicited by these coaches. These athletes are the highest ranked in their sports regionally and even nationally. Usually, at the top D-1 programs, if the student is *not* contacted by the coach, this likely means that he or she ultimately will not be a top recruit. *Note, however, that only the top D-1 programs have an accelerated cycle.* Even in lacrosse, the most accelerated of the sports, most D-3 schools and even many D-1 and D-2 schools have spaces into the senior year. If a student is being contacted by coaches prior to January of 11th grade, the student should email Mr. Hartley and Mr. Worthman, director of college counseling, for advice on how to proceed.

Finally, there are two important caveats. First, students often ask their Lakeside coaches to contact college coaches on their behalves. This can be an appropriate and wise step, in some cases, after the student has had extensive conversations with the college coach and if the college coach is interested in learning more about the student. Never should students ask a Lakeside coach to make the *first* contact with the college coach; doing so suggests the student lacks initiative and the maturity to engage in the recruiting process. Second, while parents and guardians are often welcome to speak to coaches, most of the contact—especially the initial contacts—should be made by the student. It is not uncommon for coaches to stop learning more about a student-athlete because they don’t want to inherit overly-involved parents or guardians. This is the student’s process; deciphering which colleges are good fits for him or her is part of building a relationship with the college coach.

Some recruiting forms ask for GPAs. How should the student answer?

Lakeside does not compute an official GPA or publish a GPA on transcripts. (An *unofficial* GPA is computed and shared with the student in November of 11th grade.) On forms or if asked by a coach, the student should write “my school does not compute GPA,” or, if space is limited, “N/A.” If the form requires an answer, the student should give a brief description of their grade trend. For example, “Mix of As and Bs,” “Mostly Bs and B+,” “Straight As and A-.”

In rare circumstances, the student will be required to enter a GPA. Prior to November of 11th grade, the student should manually calculate a GPA following the steps below:

1. Contact the registrar for the student’s transcript.
2. Assign each grade its numerical equivalent. | A = 4.0 | A- = 3.67 | B+ = 3.33 | B = 3.0 | B- = 2.67 | C+ = 2.33 | C = 2.0 | C- = 1.67 | D+ = 1.33 | D = 1.0 | D- = 0.67 | F = 0
3. Multiply each numerical grade by the number of credits awarded.
4. Total the results, and then divide by the total number of credits the student has earned. This is the student’s *unweighted* GPA.

To be noticed by coaches, should the student attend summer camps or showcases?

The answer to this question depends on the student’s talent and ability, whether they have areas they need to strengthen, at what level the student wishes to play, which sport the student plays, whether resources are available to pay for these events, and what other activities the student is interested in doing over the summer. Many students recruited at the D-1 level, especially at the most competitive D-1 schools, play their sports year-round, including during the summer. However, this isn’t always the case, and it doesn’t need to be the entire summer. In many instances, Lakesiders have spent part of their summers on GSL trips or enjoying other activities and then played their sport for the latter half of their vacation. For some students, summer programs are one way of honing their skills and talents before the recruiting cycle in their sport begins. At the D-3 level, the expectation that the student is playing year-round is not quite as high, though many D-3 players will participate in summer camps and showcases as well.

Because of the cost and time commitment involved in summer camps and showcases, participating in these is not possible for all students. There are many alternatives to honing skills and being noticed. If a student is considering playing varsity sports in college, they should speak with their coach, Mr. Hartley, Mr. McClenny, or their college counselor (if they are already assigned one) about whether attending summer camps or showcases is wise, or about what other steps to take. In many cases, if a student wants to attend a camp or showcase, the coach or the athletics office will be able to offer suggestions of programs to consider.

If the student verbally commits, do they have to attend that college and play if admitted?

Yes. First and most importantly, the student's integrity is at stake. If they promise a coach that they will attend and play on the team in exchange for the coach's support in the admissions process, it would be disingenuous not to play on the team or to attend another college. Lakeside regards committing to a coach a *binding* commitment, even though it is a verbal agreement. This is simply because the School expects each student to honor their word.

After a student commits to a coach, Lakeside expects the student to notify the other college coaches with whom the student has been communicating. Remember that coaches are trying to build teams. If they give the student a spot and then the student doesn't play, the coach will then have an unfilled position. In addition, the other athletes on the college team rely on the coach to bring in new and talented players every year. Lastly, there were likely many other students who were hoping to play who were not offered spaces. Failure to honor a commitment is not only disrespectful to the coach, but also to the other players on the team and to the other hopeful athletes who wanted a spot.

Because committing to a coach is a big decision, Lakeside encourages the student to talk with their coach, family, a member of the athletics office, and/or a member of the college counseling team before finalizing a decision.

If a coach recruits a student, does that mean they will get an athletic scholarship?

Being one of a coach's top recruits *sometimes* means that the student will receive an athletic scholarship. Only D-1 and D-2 schools are allowed to award athletic scholarships, but this does not mean that they all do. For example, the D-1 Ivy League Conference neither awards athletic scholarships nor offers athletes preferential financial aid packages, a practice in which colleges inflate their financial aid offers to attract students. Thus, students recruited by Ivy League Coaches might receive an edge in the admission process, but the coach's support does not impact what the college expects the family to pay.

Even when students do receive athletic scholarships, they often find that the money they are awarded is a small percentage of the total cost. Football and basketball, in which students occasionally see half or even full-tuition scholarships, are the exceptions, though very few schools – usually only the top D-1 programs – offer such generous awards. Because the NCAA regulates how many full-tuition scholarships can be awarded *by sport*—and at the coach's discretion—these scholarships can be divided into smaller sums of money to accommodate multiple athletes; as a result, very few students will ultimately receive athletic funding. Thus, as families choose to send their students to summer camps and enroll them in club sports, all of which are usually costly, their motivation should be to provide their student additional opportunities outside Lakeside to play the sport they love. In most cases, families will spend more money on camps, showcases, and club teams than the student will ever earn back through an athletic scholarship.

What role does a club coach play in the recruiting process?

Keep in mind that a student does not need to play a club sport to be recruited. Every year, Lakeside athletes are recruited who never played on a club team. Students do often find their club coach to be a useful resource; however, it is important that the student not rely on the club coach as their *only* resource. Lakeside's coaches and athletics administrators, as well as the college counseling office, are indispensable partners in supporting students in the recruiting process.

First, while club coaches are often very knowledgeable about college sports teams, they are usually much less knowledgeable about the academic programs at schools. Since Lakesiders wanting to play sports in college almost always want a school where they can receive a quality education *and* have a rewarding athletic experience, the Lakeside athletics office and the college counseling office focus on helping students find schools that meet both these criteria. In addition, if something unexpected happens once the student is in college, it is important that the student chooses to attend a school where they will be happy even without sports. For instance, Lakesiders have suffered injuries in college that permanently eliminated them from their sport or have found themselves on varsity teams with new coaches whom they did not like—coaches can leave their schools or even be fired!—and thus decided to leave the team.

Finally, if admissions offices have questions about students' applications, they will call Lakeside's college counseling office, which communicates regularly with Mr. Hartley and Mr. McClenny. Thus, if the student is speaking exclusively with his or her club coach, it is unlikely that the college counseling office would be able to speak to the admissions office about the student's athletic interests and goals.

Examples of Introductory Emails to Coaches

Students often tell the college counseling office that one of the most unnerving tasks is writing to introduce themselves to coaches. Yet, there is no need to stress. It's actually quite simple. The student should keep the email brief and simple and include some factual information about their accomplishments in their sport. Depending on the sport, this can range from noting the club teams on which they play, and offering their USTA ranking or best 2K erg time, and any regional or national recognitions. If the student is unsure what to include, they should ask their Lakeside coach, Mr. Hartley, or Mr. McClenny.

Below are examples of successful and *unsuccessful* introductory emails to coaches that an Ivy League Lacrosse Coach shared with Mr. Hartley. To protect the confidentiality of the emails' authors, the names of the students and the institution have been removed, and their high school names replaced with Lakeside.

| Example of what a student <i>should</i> send | Another example of what a student <i>should</i> send |
|---|--|
| <p>Coach:</p> <p>I am reaching out to you to introduce myself and indicate my interest in possibly attending XXXX University and being a member of your lacrosse team. As I gear up for the spring season of my sophomore year, I am also beginning my college recruiting process. I am currently a sophomore at Lakeside School in Seattle and play club lacrosse with All-Stars. I have a desire to combine my academic abilities with lacrosse and would love to play at the next level. I am interested in studying engineering and your university would allow me to pursue that major. I will update you on my progress this spring and notify you of what camps/tournaments I will be attending next summer.</p> <p>To view my full profile and video(s), simply click on the link below: [insert link or attachment to athletic resume]</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration, Responsible Student responsiblestudent@lakesideschool.org 206-222-3333</p> | <p>Dear Coach,</p> <p>My name is Great Kid and I am a junior at Lakeside School. I am a 6'1, 195 lbs. attackman. I have been playing travel lacrosse since first grade and am interested in becoming a student-athlete at your school.</p> <p>I am from Seattle and played youth lacrosse for the Seattle Titans where I was first or second in goals and assists every year against very tough competition around the region. I now play on the Washington Charger Bolts, which has established itself as one of the top 2016 teams in the country. At Lakeside, I started on attack on the Varsity team the last two years. We finished with a 16-2 record, and I averaged four points per game. I also played quarterback on the Varsity football team in the fall as a freshman and am playing basketball in the winter. In addition to athletics, my academics have been strong. While my high school does not release a GPA, my grades are all As and Bs.</p> <p>I am very interested in your school because its academic and athletic traditions are something of which I would love to be a part. Below is the link to my highlight video from the 2014 Best of the Best Tournament along with my contact information. I would really appreciate learning more about your school, the lacrosse program, any prospective student-athlete camps that you will be attending in the future, and any opportunities to visit campus. I look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>Sincerely, Great Kid greatkid@lakesideschool.org 206-999-8888</p> <p>To view my full profile and video(s), simply click on the link below: [Insert video link or attachment to athletic resume]</p> |
| | |

| Emails a student should <i>not</i> send. As the lacrosse coach told Mr. Hartley, <i>"they exude more confidence than any teenager should have!"</i> | The other bad email |
|--|--|
| <p>Dear Coach,</p> <p>I am a sophomore goalie at Lakeside School in Seattle. I also play for All-Stars and 3D OC Select 2016. I am 6'3" and left-handed. I would be very interested in attending your school and would love to play lacrosse for you. I am considered one of the top goalies in my region and have won many accolades and championships. Please feel free to let me know of any recruiting opportunities as I am planning on making a commitment soon.</p> <p>Here is a link to a recent video: [link to video or attachment to athletic resume]</p> <p>Thanks and have a great season!</p> <p>I-Think-Very-Highly-of-Myself ithinkveryhighlyofmyself@lakesideschool.org 206-666-6666</p> | <p>Hello Coach,</p> <p>My name is Arrogant guy. I am starting my junior year at Lakeside School in Seattle, for whom I am the varsity goalie. I also play for the region's best club team, All-Stars.</p> <p>I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself so that I might be able to get on your radar for future consideration. I have started my preliminary college search and your school is high on my list of choices.</p> <p>I am a confident goalie that takes pride in his craft. I communicate well and believe I have a very high IQ compared to my peers. My clearing game is very good and I have solid fundamentals. There is no doubt in my mind that I can play at a very high level and add a lot to your team.</p> <p>My full profile and video are attached to this email.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Arrogant Kid arrogantkid@lakesideschool.org 206-666-6661</p> |

Athletic Resume Template

FIRSTNAME LASTNAME

Your.email@lakesideschool.org

Lakeside School, home address, city, state, zip, mobile phone

Athletics

NCAA ID: 000000000

SPORT

- POSITION, ALTERNATE POSITION, EVENT SPECIALITY
- BEST RESULTS, RECORDS
- BEST TIMES, STATISTICS
- INDIVIDUAL HONORS
- HEIGHT, WEIGHT
- CAMPS, SHOWCASES, TRAVEL TOURNAMENTS THAT YOU HAVE ATTENDED (ALONG WITH DATES)
- CAMPS, SHOWCASES, TRAVEL TOURNAMENTS THAT YOU *WILL* ATTEND (ALONG WITH DATES)

Academics

[Sophomore, Junior or Senior] at Lakeside School. Information about Lakeside is available on the school profile at:

<http://www.lakesideschool.org/ftpimages/252/download/collegeprofile2014.pdf>

Intended Academic Majors:

Description of your grades (do not disclose GPA): "A/B student," or "B student" or "Straight A student" or "A/A-"student"

Junior Schedule and/or Anticipated Senior Schedule:

ENGLISH
MATH
SOCIAL SCIENCE
SCIENCE
LANGUAGE

Testing (and anticipated dates):

SAT: EBRW: XXX, M: XXX

Combined Scores: XXXX (1600 scale)

ACT Scores:

SAT Subject Exams

Test 1: XXX

Test 2: XXX

PSAT: EBRW: XXX, M: XXX, Total: XXXX *(Include only if ACT or SAT has not been taken)*

AP Exam Results

Coach and Counselor Contact Information

Current Coach: Firstname Lastname email@lakesideschool.org, (206) 440-xxxx

College Counselor: Firstname Lastname email@lakesideschool.org, (206) 440-xxxx*

*Prior to being assigned a counselor midway through 11th grade, list Director of College Counseling Ari Worthman