

Advice on College Decision Making Timelines from Blue Chip's Ted Spencer

Fall tournaments are over; Spring season is months away. This is a great time to focus on the studies and be sure your grades are the best they can be. But, when it's time to take a break there are important things you can be doing to plan your future. While it may be true for a few that simply performing is enough to bring the college coaches out in droves and the offers pouring in on Day One, the but the reality for the rest of us is getting recruiting takes work, attention to detail, and persistence.

Here are the big ticket tips depending on what grade you're in:

If you're going into the 9th grade:

Check out and get registered for indoor /Winter lacrosse

Begin to define your goals - What division do you see yourself aiming toward?

Plan your curriculum to meet NCAA core requirements.

Grades - you must graduate with at least a 2.0 in your core subjects to be considered eligible and the better your grades the more positive coaches will be toward you.

If you're in 10th Grade:

Take the PLAN test as ACT Prep

Grades --- Grades --- Grades -- Keep them high.. Don't make it difficult for the college coach to clear you through Admissions. He may decide not to try.

Think about what you want out of college: size, location, academics, and make a list of the schools that seem to fit. You can find lists of schools in each division at the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).

You may also want to subscribe to [College Coaches Online](#). This is a searchable database so you can enter the criteria that apply to you and find schools that fit.

Another list of lacrosse programs organized by division can be found at <http://www.usila.org/members.html>. While this list is not perfectly current, it does have the advantage of linking to the school so that when you click to the lacrosse program you can find information about the lacrosse program, its roster, the coaches, and the prospective athlete program to complete to indicate your interest in their program. When you write to schools, make sure that you send copies to each of the assistants since most often one of the assistant coaches carries responsibility for recruiting.

Get fit and stay fit - Sounds obvious? Don't spend the season reaching peak condition. Develop a reasonable work out plan and stick with it. There are many good online training programs, and [here is one](#) to start with.

If you're in 11th Grade

Respond right away to any communication from coaches.

I cannot stress enough that the quality of **EVERYTHING** you do with coaches is part of how you are evaluated. This includes the questionnaires you received from colleges and any notes you write to them. In reviewing the material submitted for our Player Profiles the number of spelling mistakes (including misspelling the names of the colleges themselves) was of concern. If you aren't serious enough to get the spelling and typing right a coach will wonder how serious you are about your sport.

Many colleges will send you questionnaires. Fill them out and return them quickly and accurately.

Sign up for any winter indoor tournaments in your area and email coaches in the schools you're thinking about your tournament schedule.

Make visits to colleges and begin to narrow your list to maybe a dozen that seem to be a fit for you and that seem within your ability range. As with your choices of colleges, pick some "safe bets", some good choices, and some "reach" schools. Find the balance between selling yourself short and being a 5'2" guard in the NBA.

Grades - Grades - Grades - As you go through school it becomes more difficult to recover from low grade point average. Be as serious about your academic achievements as you are your athletic ones.

Register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) - This is important to ensure your eligibility.

Prepare for and take the SAT - You can still register for the Spring administrations. Be sure to PREPARE!

If you're in 12th Grade

You are allowed 5 official D1 visits. Make sure that these are your TOP choices.

Do your official visits to your schools and consider what each one offers, where your academic and athletic goals are most likely to be realized.

If you have not been recruited as yet, contact your backup schools, call coaches. Focus on Division II and Division III schools which offer the environment and academic studies you want. Be active!