

# Steps to the Squad, and to the Quad

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SO you think your child has talent? Might even have the fire to play college lacrosse?

Dave Prossner, a former defenseman for the University of Pennsylvania, a youth coach, certified referee and the author of "High School Athlete Recruiting Guide," a booklet for lacrosse parents, offers tips on how to leverage that ability.

**Be realistic** As early as middle school, children with ability begin to shine. But have them play other sports both to develop skills and "to keep it fun," says Mr. Prossner, who coached two sons to Division I play and two to Division III. One good indicator is being picked for end-of-season or all-star teams. (Parents, beware: politics may play a part in that selection process.) In high school, ask the coach for an honest assessment.

**Attend camps** Freshman and sophomore years, seek out skills camps run or frequented by coaches from your favored college campuses. Exposure is invaluable, Mr. Prossner says, and the competition will raise your athlete's level of play. After junior year, focus on summer recruiting camps scouted by college coaches.

**Make contact** Sophomore year, compile a list of 20 colleges and send each coach a one-page sports résumé with a personal letter expressing interest in the athletic program. As seasons and academics change, update and resend it. Junior year, edit the list to eight schools and initiate unofficial visits to coaches and admissions officers. A brief video of best plays on the field should be sent only to coaches who express an interest (say, by writing back).

**Encourage academics** Coaches always ask about grades. Aim for the university that's going to meet your educational needs. Lacrosse may help get you into college, but your brain is going to get you through life.