

HALEY POLK | MICHIGAN LACROSSE Ø>ÝM

My name is Hayley Polk and I'm a senior defender on the lacrosse team at the University of Michigan I think the best piece of advice that was ever given to me was probably by my dad My dad has always encouraged me to be myself and to give whatever I do my best effort and to have this resilient and aggressive mentality with whatever I put my mind to And I think I try to carry that into lacrosse into school and into my daily life And I think that's been the best piece of advice that I've been able to utilize in school um in my college career Some of the most important things that I've been able to hone in on um in my college career are just trying to stay focused like using the tools that I learned growing up being focused in lacrosse and only having my focus in things that were a priority to me and that would benefit me in the future So I think like being really focused on lacrosse and getting better in school grades are so important And I think just trying to like hone in your craft and all of those things and be the best that you can in those things and balancing them and just being a good person has been I think the best thing for me in college so far what you don't realize before you come to college is how technical and mental the game is And it's really important to use that and better that before you get to school And I think that's something that maybe I wish I knew before getting here But the people and the resources that are here have been so beneficial for me to learn and grow in that area But yeah I just think like doing the little things and being the best you can is the best piece some challenges like in high school like everyone is everyone in college was the best in high school And I think being one of the top prospects in high school was great and it taught me a lot because I was able to gain confidence But also there were pressures that I didn't really think of before and it was really cool to see like the coaches on the sidelines that were there to watch you play And I think what I've learned is to just be try to be the best player that I can be and focus on technical things the one V ones what I'm actually doing every day in practice and in game and the rest will follow And honestly like the athletes don't really matter As long as I'm being the best version of myself on the field I actually got recruited the year right before COVID hit and it was awesome It was so cool to see September 1st All of your hard work pay off And I got reached out to by a bunch of different schools and I picked like my top six that I wanted to visit and I loved them I there were a few schools where I I fell in love with it I fell in love with the academics the coaches the sport the program as a whole And

then I Michigan was actually my last visit and I didn't even want to go And I still thank my dad to this day for it because my dad was like hey like you have to go like it's your last visit Um And I I think I was just tired at that point I was just like it's such a long process but it was like so beneficial and like such an amazing experience And my dad was like you have to go And I'm like ok you're right And I went and I'm so glad that I did because I've had the most incredible experience in college here And it's literally my home I never want to leave Ann Arbor and it was just an amazing experience I got to meet so many incredible people in the lacrosse world I got to see the facilities at each place I got to learn about what different programs offer what they wanted out of a recruit and what I wanted out of a school And I think the biggest thing is like I learned so much about myself in the recruiting process in so many different areas and it just ended up so perfectly for me the things that stand out in recruitment are for me just like being my own type of player um be yourself like whatever you're good at be really good at those things and coaches will see that like if you're a really good one V one defender be really good at that If you're loud like be really loud off ball and support your teammates and just like being the best that you can and what that is for you and coaches will see that and you'll end up where you're supposed to end up And that's the best part about it all When I think back to my my experience in club lacrosse I just like try to be aggressive and loud and as best as I could be like help my teammates And I think they're just like things that are specific to your sport but just like being the best you of your game that you can be Michigan is everything to me And I I picked Michigan and I say this all the time because of like the amazing academics incredible lacrosse program and the school spirit is like unmatched You'll never get this anywhere else Representing the block M is like an incredible and like such a humbling experience And my coaches told us that before when I was a freshman before I even put the uniform on she was like you're gonna put the block M on and just feel a sense of pride And I knew that and I was so excited for it and when I got on campus and I felt the energy I knew what I was getting into with the coaches And II I honestly struggle with the words to say why Michigan Because like why like why would I never why would I not do this Like it's just a no brainer So I think advice for people um who are struggling is just be yourself like the coaches and the program that you're looking at want the same thing that you do like you want a good school to go to and to have the right fit and they want the right fit and response like it's a two way street and I think if you're struggling just being the best you like

talking about like being honest and upfront about what you want out of a school and everything is going to work out how it's supposed to I stressed so much about like picking the right place and everything Like everything will work out how it's meant to go So be confident and just be you Yeah I just try to lean in on the resources that are provided especially here at Michigan Like we have tutors and academic advisors that want to help you And I think just using your free time outside of lacrosse to be focused on academics because your school really does matter your grades matter Um So just prioritizing that in your free time and just like balancing your schedule out schedule it on your Google calendar ahead of time Like what you wanna do when and just like being as focused as you are in your sport in the classroom as well I think I wish I would have taken a step back and told myself not to stress so much about the little things I think everyone just likes to stress about like what the future holds But I look back now and I'm so proud of like what I've been able to do in college but I do everything now for who I was when I was playing lacrosse in elementary school And I wanted to be just like the girls on TV and in college So I think I would just take a minute to slow down and soak it all in and realize that everything is going to turn out how you wanted it too and the future is going to be just so awesome