

LAUREN DERKOWSKI | MICHIGAN SOFTBALL Ø>YN

Hi I'm Lauren Dukowski I'm a senior at the University of Michigan and I'm on the softball team Some of the best pieces of advice that I've gotten from my coaches and mentors in the past is to outwork Everyone keep working towards your goal And if you have a goal there's a way to achieve it and striving every day to reach that point and to be successful is really important So understanding the importance of going to practice and not only going to practice but making it count and making the reps count and just being really present in the moment for me a lot of my focus in training is just to get stronger and build my strength as a pitcher A lot of our strength comes from our legs So just working on that every single day and especially endurance as well I also think nutrition plays a big part in it What you eat it helps fuel you throughout the day and especially throughout a competition So making sure that I'm fueling myself well enough to perform at the best of my ability Some of the challenges that I've had to face was finding a balance between softball and regular life outside of it Um and understanding that you're able to have that balance they'll be at your best finding that was really really important for me especially when I came to college where athletics is so much a big part of your life So coming here and being able to separate softball in school and social life has been something really key to me that I feel has helped me just be successful and be where I am today I was a really early commit Um I committed before the rule changed where the coaches could Now they can't talk to you until September of your junior year So I was before that and a lot of my recruiting was just a lot of communication I think that's my biggest piece of advice for any recruit is to build that bond with a school especially if you really want to go there I know for me Michigan was always my dream school So when I had the opportunity to reach out to the coaches talk to them email them come to camps That's exactly what I did and made that bond and made it known that this is where I felt like home and this is where I wanted to be I think a lot of college coaches watch not only your performance on the field but what you do when you think that no one's watching So after there's an error or something doesn't go your way How you react is a big part of what college coaches will watch and recruit you off of because they want not only good players but good teammates to be a part of the team I grew up watching Michigan softball on TV And I remember watching them when they were in the World Series and I turned to my mom and I I really loved watching them and I

turned to her and I said mom like I'm gonna play for Michigan and I want to wear that jersey So growing up it was always a goal of mine and getting the opportunity to come here and represent the university across my chest every day Wearing Michigan softball It's such an honor and it really is a dream come true I would say while you're making your college selection make sure you take into account not only your sport but also the academics for me academics was a really big part of my decision And I actually not only came on my visit for softball here but I took a regular normal visit as a student just to see what the academic programs were like and knowing what I was getting myself into Um I also think it's really important to kind of have an idea of what you want to do post college or what you want to do as a career and take that into account as well Find a school that really suits you and your wants and your interests And I would say follow that and pursue that route Some of the things that I've picked up since being at school uh for softball has been changing my mentality to not only be outcome focused but more of process focused So understanding maybe that wasn't the best pitch ever but here's a positive that I can take from it or here's something I can learn and understanding that softball is a big game of failure So the more that you're able to learn from it and grow from it the better that you can be when training and when trying to reach those goals that you have for yourself I balance my academics with my softball schedule by keeping a really good calendar and making sure that I'm on top of things and getting things started really early for me I go to office hours all the time and meet with my teachers to make sure that I'm doing well in the class and getting any help that I need I know at the University of Michigan we also have really good academic resources that can help you find a balance that can help with tutors and just keep you on the right track And I think that's something that's really really helped me out is staying ahead staying on schedule and making sure I know what's going on and what my weekly plan is if I can give myself a little bit of advice It would be to not put so much pressure on yourself and just take it day by day learn from the past learn from your mistakes and grow from it especially in softball where things don't always go your way And once you understand that you're really able to have a different perspective on the sport and your position just putting your best foot forward and giving 100% of what you have that day is a piece of advice that I would definitely give myself