

FASTPITCH

ISSUE 50

Softball

MAGAZINE



MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Aaron Weintraub

THE BEAUTY OF THE IMPERFECT

Jen Croneberger

BONUS:

VIDEO OF THE MONTH:

INTERVIEW WITH COACH KELLY INOUYE-PEREZ

produced by

Fastpitch.tv

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SOFTBALL ACADEMY

with Mitch Alexander

Collegiate View: Playing in Division II

This month, we continue our look at what it's like to be recruited and play in different divisions. I interviewed Jessica Vadala from Adelphi University, a Division II school. Jessica graduated in 2015 from New Hyde Park Memorial High School. She played 6 years of Varsity Softball, earning All County honors twice and the All Division Award.



She also earned High Honors all four years and was a member of the National Honor Society, Foreign Language Honor Society, and Business Society. She was President of the Financier's Club and Treasurer of the Future Business Leaders of America Club. In her freshman year with Adelphi, she appeared in eight games out of the bullpen.

Q: What specific recruiting activities did you perform and when? Which ones do you think were most helpful?

A: I would attend college showcase tournaments with my team. Prior to the tournament I would email coaches my schedule. I also attended camps and clinics at various universities. I believe that was the most helpful because you were going to the coaches instead of inviting them to come watch you. By going to the coaches' college camps you were able to allow them to put a face with your name. It will also help a player decide if they like the school much better in-

cluding the campus and coach.

Q: Did you find that showcase tournaments were an important part of your recruiting efforts? Did your future college coach discover you or come to see you play at a showcase?

A: My coach didn't not see me play at a showcase. They recruited me by seeing me play at their camps and clinics.

Q: How did you get recruited?

A: Every person's recruiting process is different. For me, I started to attend college camps and clinic prior to high school. In high school I still attended college camps and clinics and contacted coaches via email. I committed when I was a junior in high school. My senior year I did an official visit at my college.

Q: How many schools were interested in recruiting you?

A: I was getting recruited by two Division 1 schools and I did an unofficial visit there my junior year before I committed to a Division 2 school.

Q: What specific things attracted you to your current school?

A: Even though the softball program wasn't the only thing that attracted me to Adelphi, it was one of the main reasons. The softball program at Adelphi is a unique program with a strong reputation. The coaches were people I looked forward to playing for. I was able to see that Adelphi University would be a good fit for me. The University itself also has a business school because that is something I wanted to major in. The classroom sizes are small so that each student has a lot of interaction with their professor.

Q: Did you receive an athletic scholarship from your current



school?

A: Yes, I received an athletic scholarship.

Q: Do athletes at your school get any perks?

A: At my school athletes get priority scheduling. They also receive softball gear and equipment. Athletes also have access to training room facilities and a private weight room only for athletes.

Q: Do you have time during the school year to enjoy college life or are you too focused on your studies and softball?

A: There is time to balance school, softball and a social life. It is up to the individual to decide how they spend their time.

Q: Did you find the recruiting process stressful?

A: The recruiting process was stressful yet exciting. It is hard to get coaches to recognize you. By inviting coaches to your games, they probably will not attend unless they are familiar with you. I decided in my junior year to attend Adelphi so that was a big relief for me. I only had to apply to one school, whereas my friends who were not committed had the stress of applying to various schools.

Q: What advice do you have to our readers about selecting a school and the recruiting process?

A: Select a school that you feel is right for you. Make sure you can see yourself playing softball and attending school there. Even though coaches may change, make sure you want to play for them. Also, select a school that has a major that you are interested in studying.

Q: Do you wish that you did anything differently when it comes to the recruiting process or school selection?

A: No, I don't wish I did anything differently in my recruiting process. I



am happy where I am and with the decision I made.

Q: What positions did you play in high school? Travel? College?

A: In high school I pitched and played 3rd base. In travel ball I played almost every position except catcher. I pitched, played 3rd base, short stop, 1st base, and outfield. I am currently a pitcher/utility player playing 1st and 3rd in college.

Q: What was the transition like between travel ball and college ball?

A: The transition was smooth between travel ball and college ball. However, I did learn a lot my freshmen year. I was introduced to many new things and experiences that I never knew before. In my freshmen year, my team went to the Division II Women's College World Series and that was one of the best experiences. After my freshmen year, I definitely noticed that I got a lot stronger and already transitioned into a better player.

Q: How many players are on your team? Do you feel that the roster size is too small or too large?

A: My team has 15-16 players. Many teams definitely carry more players than us but I feel like this is a perfect number. The team chemistry is better with a smaller team. Each player has a specific role on the team and some players have more than one role. Every player is aware of their role which allows them to be their best.

Q: Now that you've been through almost a full year of college softball, please describe what your Fall season was like in your first year.

A: In the Fall we do not miss any classes for practices or games. We usually lift (2-3 times a week) before class and practice after class



(5-6 days a week). 2 days a week we have study hall which is usually after practice and the whole team attends. We play games on the weekends. We play about 3 or 4 double headers in the fall. We do travel for one weekend in the fall to play an away game where we would have to stay over. This introduces what traveling is like so we are prepared for the spring.

Q: What about your winter schedule?

A: In the winter we go home from school so we are on our own to stay in shape and to be ready for spring. Without having class over winter break we do have free time.

Q: What was your Spring/Summer schedule like for both classes and softball-related activities?

A: In the spring we have one day off from softball. Other days consist of going to class in the morning, getting out of class around noon and then going to practice or games. For away games we were allowed to miss class in order to travel.

Q: How many games did you play? How disruptive was this to your studies?

A: About half our season is away games. Most of those games we have to stay in a hotel for. We bring our school work with us and study on the road. If you manage your time well, you will not have a problem balancing school work and softball. My team takes pride in our studies because we believe it is important to excel in the classroom. We have earned the highest GPA in the nation for all divisions (D1, D2, and D3) of sports. Prior to the start of our season we take about a week long trip to California to prepare for our season, playing 10 games in California. We are in the NE-10 conference and have to travel to other schools, often hours away. We play 54-56



games in the regular season plus post season games.

Q: After your Freshman year was over, were you dismissed for summer vacation with any kind of required schedule, training, etc.?

A: We were not given a specific training schedule. The players take the responsibility to work out on their own. It is important that players stay strong and in shape over the summer. I played on a summer league and lifted about 4 times a week.

Thank you for sharing this information with our readers, Jessica! Division II schools have limited athletic scholarships to offer – just 7.2 full scholarships. However, they can also provide academic scholarships as well as grant money for various reasons. Even though there are fewer athletic scholarship dollars to spread amongst the players, Division II scholar athletes, may be awarded as much as Division I athletes (and in some cases, more than Division I athletes) when academic and grant money is figured in.

Mitch Alexander is the creator of www.varsityfastpitch.com, a new web site to help students play softball in college. His area of focus is on youth sports and college recruiting. His wife Marie was one of the first female student athletes in the country to play Little League softball after Title IX was passed and played in the first Little League World Series. Over the years, both have managed and coached Little League and select/travel teams at all levels and helped spark a love for softball in their student athletes. Mitch can be reached at Fastpitch2001@varsityfastpitch.com.

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