

# FASTPITCH

## Softball

### MAGAZINE



#### LEARN MOVEMENT PITCHES

Abby Hanrahan

#### COLLEGIATE VIEW: DIV III

Mitch Alexander

#### BONUS:

#### VIDEO OF THE MONTH:

COACH MICHAEL BASTIAN  
CONDUCTS INFIELD TRAINING

produced by  
**Fastpitch**.tv

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# SOFTBALL ACADEMY

with Mitch Alexander

## *Collegiate View: Playing in Division III*

This month we continue our look at what it's like to be recruited and play in different divisions. I interviewed Lauren Buturla from St. Joseph's College – Long Island. Lauren graduated from Hauppauge High School in 2014. During her high school career, she was a two-time All-County selection, as well as League Four Co-Pitcher of the year. She was voted by her teammates as Player of the Year and team MVP. At the end of her senior year in high school she was given the "Athletes Character Award." At St. Joseph's College – Long Island, she was on the Skyline Academic Honor Roll as well as Skyline Conference Weekly Honor Roll. As a freshman she started in 11 out of 17 appearances in the circle.

**Q: What specific recruiting activities did you perform and when?**

**A:** I really didn't perform any recruiting activities. I went to an open house and spoke to the coach at the time. My sister played for this team when she was in college so the coach knew her.

**Q: How much help did your travel coach provide in helping you get recruited?**

**A:** I stopped playing travel ball after my junior year of high school so I didn't go to many showcases. My high school coach was very involved and we practiced all year round. I would say my high school



coach was the coach who helped me the most and has helped make me the player I am today.

**Q: Please describe the timeline of how your recruiting took place.**

**A:** I talked to the coach in the fall of my senior year and then started school my freshman year.

**Q: What made you choose your current school? What specific things attracted you?**

**A:** I always knew I wanted to stay home and be a teacher. I knew St. Joe's was the school for me. I didn't look for a school for softball. After college I knew I wasn't going to be a professional athlete so I went with a school based on their academic program. Softball was a bonus for me. The specific things that attracted me to my school were the small class sizes - I didn't want to be a number in a huge lecture hall, and that St. Joseph's - Long Island is known for being a really good teaching school.

**Q: What made you decide to go with a division III school?**

**A:** I think school is very important. I wanted to be a student-athlete: I am a student first and then an athlete. In Division III, I don't miss classes for practice and school comes first. For me personally, this is very important.

**Q: What kind of scholarships, if any, did you receive from your current school?**

**A:** I receive an academic scholarship. SJC doesn't offer athletic scholarships.



**Q: Do you feel that the package was roughly equivalent to what you might have received playing in another division?**

**A:** I applied to another school and they offered more academic money than I receive at St. Joes, but I had to go with what was a better fit for me.

**Q: How did your Freshman softball experience start and when?**

**A:** I did not play the fall season my freshman year. In my senior year of high school, I got hit in the face. It wasn't easy coming back from surgery. I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do in college and if I really wanted to play softball. After taking some time off for a much needed break to really think things through, I realized how much I missed softball and that I wanted to go back to the game. I started playing in the spring of my freshman year. I pitched one of the two games in double headers. I think going away for spring training was extremely important. My freshman year we had a great time together when we went away and that is where I was really able to get to know my teammates. Going away with the team allowed me the opportunity to make friends for a lifetime.

**Q: Do athletes at your school get any perks?**

**A:** We get priority registration so we register for classes earlier. Also for the freshman year, non-athletes have to park at a parking lot off-campus and take a shuttle back and forth. Athletes don't have to do that. They can park on-campus.

**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 are definitely times were I get really stressed out with all the work I have to complete and the little time I have to complete it in, but at the end of the day everything is a balance so you need to en-





joy everything that is going on. I think you need to plan out your time wisely in order to be able to enjoy college life.

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

**A:** My advice would be to go where you feel most comfortable. I think you need to consider all of the factors a school has to offer other than just the softball program. The softball program is a factor, but you have to make sure academically the school is a perfect fit too. You need to make sure the school has the major you want to study and that it's a good program. Softball is a huge part of my life but at the same time it is important to have other aspects as well.

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

**A:** No I think everything happens for a reason and I am exactly where I am supposed to be. I enjoy St. Joe's and all it has to offer; I am very happy here.

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

**A:** When I played travel I pitched and played first base. For my high school team, I pitched, now I am a pitcher for my college team. In college, I do not play any other positions or hit, I just pitch.

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

**A:** The transition was easier for me because in high school I played for a competitive program so I think that prepared me for college ball 100% more than travel. In high school, I would have morning practice before school and then a four-hour practice after school. I feel



like I was pretty prepared for what to expect going in as a freshman because of my high school program.

**Q: What did you find the most difficult to adapt to?**

**A:** The hardest part would have to be finding time to complete my school work. I also have a job, while enrolled in college, so I don't have as much free time. Also college is a lot of work! There are lots of exams and papers to do. The days can be pretty long between having to do my observation hours in elementary schools (I am going to school to be a teacher – to be certified to teach birth through 6th grade in special and regular education), working, going to class, and then going to practice. There are a lot of sacrifices you have to make when being a college athlete and time is definitely one of them.

**Q: How many players are on your team?**

**A:** Right now there are 19 people on my team and we are supposedly getting some new girls that are transferring in next semester. I think this is a little big but a lot of college teams have big rosters like this.

**Q: What is your Fall season like?**

**A:** This fall we had practice 4 days a week for 4 weeks and then we played a double header of 9 innings each game. We played against 2 different teams in the double header. According to NCAA rules, we are only allowed one day of play in the Fall.

**Q: What about your winter schedule? How were the holiday breaks handled? Did you have free time?**

**A:** For the winter schedule we are expected to work out on our own because with NCAA rules we are not allowed to practice. Personally, I continue to go to pitching lessons and then pitch on my own as





well as work out. When the semester is over and we have our holiday break, I do have free time, which is nice to have right before the season starts.

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

**A:** Every day is different but for the spring semester I usually wake up and go to my classroom placement where I have to observe before I can student teach, then I usually go to class, and then practice. Practices are usually 2 and a half hours long. I work at the admissions department at my school so in between everything I try to fit in hours to work too!

**Q: How many games did you play in the Spring?**

**A:** We play double headers on Saturdays and Sundays and then usually a non-conference double header during the week. The weekends are really busy so I try to complete as much homework as I can during the week after I get home from practice. We go away for spring training before our games start. In the past we have gone to Myrtle Beach and this year it looks like we are going to go to Florida. In the spring we played 35 games total

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

**A:** After my freshman year we were not given anything specific to do as our coach retired. After my sophomore year we were given an optional work out plan.

Thank you for sharing this information with our readers, Lauren! If you've been reading this series, Division III has many similarities and





many differences compared with other NCAA divisions. For Lauren, recruiting was not stressful at all at the Division III level. Lauren also knew which school she wanted to go to and that was her highest priority. High school students working on college selection activities should really consider this and assign importance to the academic as well as the athletic parts of their school experience.

*Mitch Alexander is the creator of [www.varsityfastpitch.com](http://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](mailto:Fastpitch2001@varsityfastpitch.com).*

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