

Dear Robbie,

So I understand you found the great game of lacrosse. You may want to double-knot your shoelaces because this is going to be the ride of your life.

My name is Darren McGurn, and I grew up in Chester, New Jersey. I was lucky enough to be introduced to the game of lacrosse at the age of 5 (1979). I am the youngest of four boys and my oldest brother, Mike, made the great leap from baseball to lacrosse his sophomore year in high school. With Mike's fascination of the physicality, speed, and grace of lacrosse, all three of his younger brothers craved the chance to play. At this time, our town didn't have a youth lacrosse program. My father, Ron McGurn, decided to start the Chester Lacrosse program with the help of the Police Athletic Association. This program is still running today and has produced thousands of lacrosse addicts like you and I.

For me, lacrosse has always been about my family and friends. All four of my brothers played college lacrosse, Mike McGurn (Brown University), Bryan McGurn (University of Hartford), Kevin McGurn (Ohio Wesleyan University). I played at Ohio Wesleyan and was a four-time All-America selection. I won the Turnbull Award in 1998 as well as being named the Iroquois National Player of the Year. I was also fortunate enough to be inducted into the New Jersey Lacrosse Hall of Fame (2003) and Ohio Wesleyan Hall of Fame (2009). My brothers played such a key role in my success and what truly made lacrosse fun. We spent countless hours in our backyard shooting on our goal and making up games to challenge each other for bragging rights at the dinner table. Today, I know that each day we played, I was refining my game; at the time, we were just having fun. There is no replacement for putting time and effort in to the game.

Receiving the Turnbull Award was an amazing cap to my college career. I owe so much of my success to my teammates, coaches, and family who pushed me to achieve such great heights. So many of my teammates are lifelong friends. My coaches are not only great coaches but also great friends. Lelan Rogers and John Zulberti (Turnbull Award Recipient '88 and '89) played a key role in my success. My brothers Mike and Bryan both coached me in high school. Mike was my head coach at Mendham High School and Bryan was an assistant coach my senior year. Mike Fuller coached me at Bridgton Academy in 1994. Coach Fuller was a great mentor, a great coach, and a great friend. Coach Fuller guided me through my recruiting process and introduced me to coaching summer lacrosse camps in Wilton, Connecticut. My college success would never have happened without Coach Fuller's mentoring. I was fortunate to have learned from some of the best coaches, but the lesson here is to listen to your coaches and learn from your teammates. Every practice and every game is an opportunity to improve.

If I can give you any words of wisdom, Robbie, it would be to treasure the game of lacrosse and the people you will meet along the way. Lacrosse will introduce you to amazing people who will impact you for a lifetime. The lessons learned will go well beyond the lacrosse field. These lessons will shape who you become. Now, as a part-time high school lacrosse coach in Atlanta, I see the importance of the little things in the game. I'm proud to see these guys graduate and go on to play in college and beyond.

Best of luck Robbie and enjoy the ride.

Cheers,

Darren McGurn