

It's a hot June morning and the turf field in Cowell Stadium holds the heat in shimmering waves making low-90s feel more like 100 degrees. Gathered at the 50-yard line are 60 high school girls who watch intently as UNH women's lacrosse head coach Sarah Albrecht illustrates how to dodge a defender.

At the UNH women's lacrosse summer camp, high schoolers take a break from their stick work to get in some conditioning. UNH sports camps are a summer highlight for hundreds of girls and boys who flock to Durham to learn from the best.

Soon, the girls break into small groups to practice the moves. Led by current Wildcat players Alison Stager '14, Molly Gaffey '14, and Rachael Nock '15, some of the girls catch on quickly, others not so much. Feeling their pain, the college players offer up plenty of helpful advice – for they themselves were once UNH lacrosse campers who came to Durham to showcase their talents to a possible future coach.

Each summer, hundreds of boys and girls come to the UNH campus to participate in youth sports camps. From late June through early August, 22 camps are offered in basketball, distance running, field hockey, football, gymnastics, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, track and field, and volleyball. For many youngsters, camp is a summer highlight – a chance to work closely with top Division I athletes while socializing with friends.

If you're around campus in the summer, you've seen them trooping along Main Street en route to training sessions, eating their meals at Holloway Commons, sleeping in residence halls such as Stoke, Lord, or Jessie Doe, cooling off in the outdoor pool, and watching movies on Thompson Hall lawn while munching on pizza.

For high schoolers with dreams of playing college sports, however, summer camp is not all fun in the sun.

"You're here to impress," says Stager, an environmental science major and defenseman from Reading, Mass. Stager came to UNH summer camp as a high school sophomore. Drawn by the "strong national reputation of the women's lacrosse team" she had her mind made up by the time she left. "I could have played at a number of schools," Stager says. "But I loved the team atmosphere here and, of course, the campus is beautiful."

Gaffey, a senior midfielder who graduated from North Hampton's Winnacunnet High School, uses coaching techniques she learned as a former camper. "I was having a hard time mastering a move and was becoming frustrated. I guess it showed because one of the UNH counselors came over to me and broke down the move so I could learn it," Gaffey recalls. "Since then, I've always thought that what we do is part psychology and part technical instruction."

In coming years, Albrecht hopes to double the size of the camp from this year's 60. "I think 100-150 would be a good number," she says. "It would be good for New Hampshire lacrosse and good for game all around."

Albrecht herself is a major draw for the lacrosse camp – a genuine superstar who recently earned a position as midfielder on Team U.S.A. and helped her U.S.A.

teammates in take the gold in the Federation of International Lacrosse World Cup only weeks after the camp.

And Albrecht is not the only one. From ice hockey to swimming, from gymnastics to track and field, campers come from Michigan, Maryland, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Colorado just to get serious face time with the Wildcats of New Hampshire.

NCAA bylaws prohibit interviews with campers, so we'll have to take Gaffey's word on the positive experience enjoyed by campers. "We get plenty of repeat campers," she says. "My favorite feedback was a mom who emailed me that her eight-year-old daughter was picking up the sport after attending our camp. Maybe she'll go from being a camper to a counselor, just like us."

Originally published by:

UNH Today

- WRITTEN BY:
[Staff writer](#) | Communications and Public Affairs

SUCCESS



University of New Hampshire

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The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).

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