

I love sports! Playing all types of sports is fun for me: since I was in kindergarten, I have played soccer, lacrosse, and softball. I'm on the ski club and run cross country at school, and I have even taken some surfing and fencing lessons. Out of all of these sports, lacrosse is my favorite, though. I want to play lacrosse in college some day—so learning from great college coaches and players is something that I really wanted to do. This past December, I got my wish. I was able to go to the University of Virginia's Fast Break Lacrosse Camp and learn from a bunch of great coaches. My coaches were from the University of Virginia, the University of Maryland and one was a college athlete at Navy. I had this great opportunity, because I won the Mary Jennings Sport Camp Scholarship. That is a scholarship that the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport gave me to go to a sports camp of my choice. Because of the scholarship, I was able to play lacrosse with girls who are already playing middle school lacrosse. That gave me good experience—before I start my first year of middle school lacrosse this spring. Plus, I was able to watch the really good high school players at the camp and get a better idea of what high school rules are.

At the camp, we worked on a lot of stick skills and “wall ball”. The stick skills are one of the basics of playing good lacrosse. I am a midfielder, so it was good to work on defense and attack skills, also. We had a lot of scrimmages, and we even played on the outdoor turf field to give us real life experience playing in the cold! I'm from Ohio, so I know about cold lacrosse weather. I was happy to play with so many girls from the East Coast and to meet kids from different areas and to see many different styles of play (since girls came from all over the country to this camp). We played some ice breakers, which gave us a chance to meet our new teammates. Playing “Sister, Sister” (a game where you really have to “lean” on your teammates) was a good way to feel comfortable with new people.

Getting to eat a meal at the student athlete cafeteria in the new Cavalier basketball stadium was fun. I liked having a choice of healthy, athlete-friendly food: pasta, salad, veggies (but I was glad that they still had cookies)! Another thing that we did was spend a lot of time warming up, which my older sister always tells me is really important. (She is a gymnast, and she says that warming up properly prevents lots of injuries.)

Some of the girls at the camp used wooden lacrosse sticks, because if you can learn with a wooden stick (and practice stick skills with one), you can play really well with a regular stick. I am going to ask for a wooden stick for my birthday. Then I can practice with it, and use it with my rebounder at home, and play with my other sister, who plays varsity lacrosse at our high school.

The camp was a lot of fun. I liked being at the University of Virginia and seeing what a college is all about. Our Navy student coach even showed us how to march. I learned a lot of things about lacrosse and about college, and it was fun to be around people who love lacrosse as much as I do. I was so happy to have the

opportunity that the Mary Jennings Scholarship gave me. It was an experience that I will never forget.