

Recruiting Report: Blue Chip 225 Rising Junior Camp

Brendan Gibney July 9th, 2010



Plenty of talent was on display at the Blue Chip 225 camp this week (Photos by Geoff Campbell)

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Thursday marked the conclusion of the rising junior session of this year's Blue Chip 225 Recruiting Showcase at Bryant University in Smithtown, RI. I was on hand for the final two days, and although temperatures soared into the upper 90s, the 450 or so players in attendance put on an awesome display of lacrosse.

Top-level talent has been on display throughout the showcase's 14-year history, though, as evidenced by the long list of showcase alumni who participated in this spring's NCAA Division 1 tournament alone. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the showcase, however, is its retention of such top tier talent despite increased geographic representation: this year's showcase, for instance, featured players from 38 different states--including non-traditional hotbeds like Hawaii, Tennessee, and Oregon--as well as 3 provinces in Canada. Last year, a camper even made the trek all the way from England to Smithtown.

The showcase itself is also expanding: this year the first rising sophomore session of the camp was held at Golden Goal Park in Lake George, NY, and next summer Laura Brand, Women's Head Coach at Rutgers University, will run and staff the inaugural women's Blue Chip 225. Despite such rapid growth, founder and owner Ted Spencer, formerly the Head Coach at Fairfield University, remarked that this year's crop is as skilled as ever.

Even though players and coaches (and IL interns) alike resented the sweltering heat and huddled under the few bits of shade throughout the majority of the week, all were blessed with the opportunity to watch Team USA practice in the cooler mornings and evenings. Moreover, the attendees also benefited from the presence of current Team USA and Bryant Head Coach Mike Pressler and his staff, as well as the outstanding facilities at Bryant University.



The option of an inexpensive yet proven recruiting service provided by the showcase certainly didn't hurt either. The teams at the showcase were drafted by college coaches after an evaluation period on Monday, and it looked as though all teams were pretty even, at least within the Elite Division. The Elite Division consists of 170+ players selected by the coaching staff before the showcase based on specific criteria outlined on the showcase's website.

Here are several players that stood out in the Elite Division during the final two days:

TOP ATTACKMAN

Brendan and Daniel Errett (Trinity Pawling, CT) probably don't like being lumped together like this, but their play over the past two days certainly warrants it. They have tremendous stick skills, great vision, and very quick feet (Brendan turned one defenseman into a pretzel and made him trip over the net), and spent most of the camp playing from behind the cage. Each played extremely well for their respective teams (Daniel netted one OT winner), but they saved their

best performances for the all-star game, playing together impeccably around the goal. Brendan registered 3 goals and an assist in the game, including a beautiful behind-the-back goal from a few yards out on a great cross-crease feed from his brother. The twins wowed with their highlight-reel moves, but the less conspicuous parts of their game, such as their tenacity on rides and loose-balls and constant off-ball movement, were most impressive to me.

TOP MIDFIELDER

Kevin McNally (Suffern High, NY) did a little bit of everything for his team, and did it all extremely well. McNally not only repeatedly (and successfully) dodged on poles each game, but did so from all over the field. He scored from behind the cage, from up top, and from the wings. His agility makes for strong split dodges, but it is his burst after the dodge allows him to bull past defenders and get off very fast shots. He's good on groundballs, and very smart with the ball, especially in pressure situations. Not unlike Max Seibald in his wide-range of ability, dodging technique, and poise.

TOP DEFENSEMAN

Tyler Monaco (St. Peters Prep, NJ) played the best all-around defense that I witnessed. He had the size and strength to play physical defense and the quickness to stay with shifty attackmen. He had great ball control and was smart in transition. One of the best at the camp at scooping grounders quickly and cleanly. With so many college coaches present on the sideline, many defenseman at these showcases make mad dashes up the field and either lose the ball or make poor decisions. Monaco was the paragon of someone who, in this regard, played a conservative albeit smart game between the lines. Great overall performance.

TOP GOALIE

Dylan Rothenberg (St. Peters Prep, NJ) was a brick wall over the course of the tournament, and let in only 3 goals in the championship game to his team's 7. He made several incredible saves, especially in the big games, and made some difficult but perfect outlet passes to get things going in transition. He was a much larger part of his team's offensive output in the championship than one would expect.

OTHER NOTABLES



Joe French (St. Michael's, Toronto, ONT) stood out thanks to strong finishing skills and adept use of his size to jockey for position around the cage. His off-ball movement was better than most of the other players, and he set some smart picks to set up plays around the cage. Reminds me of Stony Brook's Kevin Crowley. **Connor Meth** (Ridge, NJ) played a very complete game at attack. Scored a ton of goals, but also has excellent vision from behind the net and is very savvy with groundballs. **Parker Self** (CB East, PA) was one of the better dodgers at the camp. Once he develops his left hand, his

aggressiveness and shot should make for a strong combination.

Other strong attackmen: Evan Zakow (Walt Whitman, NY), Ryan Curley (Eastport, NY), William Battaglia (Madison HS, NJ), Kyle Rhatigan (Sachem North, NY) and Sam Lindsey (C.E. Jordan HS, NC).

Jimbo Moore (E.C. Glass, VA), **David Kalin** (Summit HS, NJ), and **Daniel Muller** (Massapequa, NY) were three very strong two-way midfielders who played well the entire tournament and stood out amongst the rest. Moore has a tremendous second burst that allows him to outrun defenders and he didn't appear to slow down the entire showcase, even during his last game this morning. Kalin ran strong coast-to-coast and set up good plays on fast breaks. He also has a laser shot that actually went through the top of the net and way over the endline on one goal. Muller, too, has great speed, plays strong defense, and has a great split that led to two goals in the semifinals this morning. **Dominic Montemurro** (Kings Park HS, NY) was one of the more interesting players on the field this week. He's undersized but makes up for it with hustle and smart plays. His best asset, though, is his faceoff move: I saw him lose only one through 3 games (15 for 16 by my count), and nearly all were flips to either himself or a teammate to initiate fast breaks. One of the more dominant faceoff performances I've seen.

Other notable midfielders: Frank Luctuorto (Ward Melville HS, NY), Michael Mattson (Joel Barlow, CT), Jared Yon (North Alleghany HS, PA) are all fast, aggressive two-way players that excel in transition. Carlson Milikin (Woodberry Forest, VA), Daniel Plant (Huntington HS, NY), Cameron Moshyedi (Winston Churchill, MD), Thomas Brewster (Fairfield Prep, CT), and Sam Craighill (E.C. Glass, VA) also played particularly well, especially offensively.

Paul Clemente (New Canaan HS, CT), **Finn Sullivan** (Roxbury Latin, MA), and **Zachary Heard** (St. Andrews School, FL) are three big, physical defenseman that played well throughout. Sullivan landed a completely clean albeit massive hit that sent another player off the field in one game, and I saw him cause several turnovers. He needs to be more consistently aggressive but has all the tools to excel. Heard was pulled up from the regular division for the elite all-star game, and he did not disappoint those who felt he should upgrade. He needs to work on his quickness but he played tenacious, strong D against Joe French in the all-star game and was one of the best players on the field. **Conor Reilly** (Huntington, NY), **Graham Conlon** (The Hill School, PA), **Paul Bitetti** (Bethpage HS, NY), **Edward O'Donnell** (Wantagh HS, NY), and **Anthony Santo** (West Islip HS, NY) played especially well in transition at the LSM position. The stick skills of Reilly and Conlon were particularly impressive. **Connor McCann** (Episcopal, PA) and **Zander Baccile** (Brunswick School, CT) were also notable defenders.

Many goalies played well during the showcase, but here are a few that stood out: **Ryan Clair** (Cranbrook Kingswood, MI), **Alex Castle** (Pingry School, NJ), **Tyler Avallone** (Mendham HS, NJ) is big in net and a vocal leader; **Michael D'Allesio** (Hackley School, NY), **Mack Schwarz** (Marriott Ridge HS, MD) is great outside the cage; **Andrew Larrabee** (Byram Hills HS, NY) showed some versatility playing long-pole in all-star game; **Eric Caliendo** (St. Anthony's HS, NY).