

# Girls Lacrosse: Passaic Valley's Perez signs historic National Letter of Intent

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LITTLE FALLS - Amanda Perez vividly recalls her first introduction to the sport of lacrosse at Passaic Valley High School.

"In my sophomore year, I had been cut from the softball team," said Perez. "And I'm in class the next day and my teacher is Mrs. (Lori) Demsey. She hears that I was cut from softball and suggested I come out for lacrosse. I guess it worked out well for me."

That's an understatement. Now a senior at Passaic Valley, Perez became the first lacrosse player from her school, female or male, to earn a college scholarship in the sport when she signed on to play at Pace University, starting this fall.

Demsey, Passaic Valley's girls' lacrosse coach since the program's inception, also recalled the day she 'recruited' Perez.

"We're a relatively new program, so any time I see a kid who's interested, I'm going to at least ask," said Demsey. "I remember her coming to our next practice that season and in about five minutes, I realized Amanda would be successful in this game. She was a natural."

Pace University is a NCAA Division II school for athletics and women's lacrosse will be a brand new sport for the Westchester, NY-based college next year. Michael Spinner, an alumnus of Pace, has been tabbed to be the program's first head coach.

"I had gone through some recruiting web sites and eventually got a call from the coach at Pace," said Perez, who plays left wing at PV. "He invited me to come up for a visit and I fell in love with the campus. It was a perfect fit."

According to its web site, Pace has an enrollment of almost 13,000 students in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs. There are two campuses, in Westchester County, New York and New York City. Perez plans to major in Computer Science with a minor in Criminal Justice.

Demsey is thrilled that Perez will continue playing lacrosse at the next level.

"Amanda has been our captain the past two years and she does a tremendous job in leading our team," said Demsey. "She's a defensive player, but is all over the field and can play just about any position. She's been a part of a new program here and now she'll be a part of a brand new lacrosse program in college. It's kind of a historical moment for our program, too, to have a student-athlete get a scholarship to play in college."

Perez played softball for a year at Passaic Valley and also played basketball for two seasons while also competing for the field hockey team, also coached by Demsey, the past two seasons.

"I'm really excited," Perez said. "I'm very honored to be the first from our program to get this chance."

The daughter of Maria and Miguel Perez, Amanda is the eldest of two children in her family, with a younger brother in Andrew.

"My dad was always encouraging me to work hard in athletics," said Perez. "My family has been great through the entire process, as has coach Demsey. I know the college game will be different, in that it's faster and more physical. I plan to work hard on conditioning, play fall lacrosse at Pace, and get better."

- See more at: <http://www.northjersey.com/sports/high-school-sports/girls-lacrosse/perez-signs-historic-nli-with-pace-1.998378#sthash.ojm9YGT.dpuf>