

Layla Armas | UCLA Soccer

Hello my name is Layla Armas I go to UCLA and I play women's soccer One of the best pieces of advice that I've gotten from a coach was that pressure makes permanent not perfect always so you should always be practicing to better yourself and to better the people around you because it doesn't make it necessarily perfect It makes it permanent So whatever you're doing on the field keep working to the highest level you can possible and ask questions get to know your teammates around you and strive in that environment During training we usually do lots of technical first and then we go into playing games We make sure our technical is really really sharp because if you can't get the basics down then it can't translate into a bigger scale So we always start smaller whether that's possession or just little technique or little technical things in our game and then we add up on to bigger games playing at a bigger scale Then after training we usually have this thing called pro time which is a time where the coaches either leave or you go with your teammates and you work on something that you know that you need to get better at So whether that's long balls or your first touch or even the mental side we have that time after practice whether that's 10 minutes or 15 minutes just to get the extra reps of what we know that we need to get better at The mental side is a little tough for me So what I like to do and what I've been told to have is a um short memory so a quick memory loss I'm a goalkeeper So right when you make a mistake it's not getting in your head and it's on to the next play and encouraging yourself and your teammates especially out loud I feel like when I'm telling everybody OK like let's go like let's get it um that's a lot That helps me and it helps my teammates also to know that it's like it's OK Like you're gonna Make a mistake and when you do the mistake it's done It's on to the next thing So I feel like realizing that pressure is a privilege but not diving too deep into that aspect and putting too much on yourself Be happy like you're playing your sport you're having fun so it's really pressure is a privilege but that is a hard thing to balance which is what I like to do is having a short a quick turnaround and um A short term memory One of the biggest challenges that I face as an athlete and I know other athletes can relate to this too is the injury part of the game because you have to sit out for a certain amount of time or you don't feel like you're all the way in with the team That can be a really hard part of being an athlete How I overcome injuries whether that's little injuries where you're out for only a week or two or that's bigger injuries

where you're out for a year or two I like to keep a growth mindset There's so much that you can do within your game while you're injured whether that's rehab whether that's eating right whether that's watching film I feel like just because you injure your leg doesn't mean that your mind is injured too Like you can keep working I'm a goalkeeper so when I hurt my hand I I I broke my hand um when I was in high school I broke my hand And I couldn't play goalkeeper but I could still play on the field So for that certain amount of time I got so good with my feet which challenged me and improved me in significant ways for my game outside of my injuries So I would encourage athletes whether you're injured and you can't really run or you can't participate in your sport or you can only partially I would challenge them to find something that you can do because there is always something that you can do My recruitment process was um pretty it was sort of rocky I mean recruitment process is like a weird time in everybody's life and you are reaching out to colleges and some colleges are interested and some colleges aren't I was very lucky enough to be playing on an ECNL club team so we went to showcases and we got a lot of attention on our team We had a pretty good team I was part of Mustang which is out of Dan in the Bay Area and we had a lot of coaches come to our games So before I was able to talk to coaches I would email them and I would send them film I would cut my film up cut clips of me my successes whether that's with my hands or with my feet or whatever I was doing I would cut pieces up even of training too I would cut film up from that send it out to coaches They're not really allowed to respond to you in that In that sort of time when you're younger in your high school years but when it came to the time where the coaches can talk to you I was making sure I was reaching out to coaches telling them where I was playing My club coach really helps me out with that and I eventually got in touch I knew I wanted to stay close My family's from the Bay Area and all my my my home was there so I knew I wanted to stay here and not go too far Plus we're in California and who doesn't love California so I knew I wanted to stay here I narrowed it down and I found UCLA and it was a perfect match for me I loved it The players the coaches I took my official visit It was great I had so much fun I loved everything about it and I got the opportunity to get a scholarship to come play at UCLA and that was my dream school and that's exactly what I did So I was very grateful for it If I were to give advice to a high school athlete In the recruiting process I would say that you can never be too annoying If you email a coach and they don't email you back keep emailing them There's no harm in emailing coaches and getting

yourself out there You never know If it's a yes or no if you never ask So keep emailing coaches even if you think there's no way I could go to that school like that school's way too big for me or that's not a school that I like I would encourage you to keep emailing keep reaching out go to ID camps If it's a school that you really really really want to go to go to an ID camp Make sure make sure you're there make sure you're shaking the coach's hands make sure you're getting out there being vocal Sometimes you won't do very much in a game Sometimes you will have a bad game but as long as you're working hard and the coaches see that you're a player that can have that can be developed and that can be something more than what they are right now that's what coaches love to see So being vocal being a leader and doing as much as you possibly can to show them that you truly want it UCLA because it's the best school in the nation UCLA because the coaches when I took my official visit were very welcoming They were getting back to me quickly They were showing me how amazing the school was um academically I mean it's amazing There's so many smart people and being around such an intelligent group really um just grows your your personality and grows grows everything around you The girls when I took my official visit the team atmosphere and the team chemistry was something that I'll never forget Everybody looked like they were having fun You you can see something on Instagram and be like oh that team looks like they're having fun and then you go there and they look miserable But I came to UCLA and I realized that soccer was fun The best part of the game is laughing with your teammates and UCLA really brought the environment where everyone's welcome and they want you to have fun They want you to enjoy the game They want you to keep trying new things until you fail And on top of that UCLA doesn't take their athlete And make them who they want them to be They take their athlete take the best traits about them and and let them excel in that They don't try to make you something that you're not which is um a really big reason why I love UCLA and also the environment Come on we're next to the beach and who doesn't love the beach so What I've picked up from training at UCLA that's ultimately made me a better player is that there's so many different ways to achieve your goals and there's so many different ways to um bring the best player out of you that is possible For example not everybody plays the same and not everybody Um does the same moves or has the same playing style and that's not necessarily a bad thing I would just say that there there is such a beauty in difference and how different players play and I feel like something I've realized something that I've learned from

playing at UCLA is that you don't have to have one playing style and all play the same. Have so many different varieties of players and playing styles and you can create that into something beautiful and amazing and something that's super super successful. I balance my soccer schedule and my academic schedule by planning before every Sunday. I feel like it's really important. We have this app called Teamworks and it shows us what time we have classes, what time of soccer, what time our food is open until, so making sure that on Sunday before the week starts that I have everything in that calendar and I have everything ready to go so I know where I need to be, what time I need to be there at, and what I need to do beforehand because it can kind of get a little a little crazy especially in season when we have those long hour weeks. So planning ahead and being aware of being aware of what I have planned for the week is something that I use. My calendar I love my calendar so that's something that I use to stay organized and stay ready for the week. The goals I have in my college time at UCLA on the athletic side I would say winning an Adie of course because he doesn't want to win an Addie and um also impacting the game on a positive scale especially for um women's athletes. I feel like embracing feminine athleticism is something that I strive for and something that I want to share with the community whether that's look good, feel good, play good or doing something connecting with your audience and letting them know that you can be beautiful and you can be strong at the same time is something that I want to achieve on the athletic side and with my community and letting them know and being a positive role model of that. Aspect. And then um on the academic side I just I want to keep growing that. I'm not sure I don't I haven't I'm a first year right now so I don't have my major picked out yet. And I think that's totally fine because I feel like there's so much out there and there's so much that I can do and so much that I can be and so much that I can learn. So I feel like just excelling in the academics so my athletics can come with that too. And so that's soccer and. And what I learned and the intelligence that I create can combine and can create something amazing. On my team we have a few athletes that are sponsored and have NIL deals with Adidas which is really really awesome. And um I think that's really cool. They've gotten to go to really cool places um cool meetings like nice photo shoots and they get shoes and actually last season whoever scored would get um Adidas shoes by the girls that were sponsored by Adidas. So that was pretty awesome. My advice for athletes trying to grow their social media is um one don't care what other people think. They're not running your social media you're running it. So don't take criticism from

other people because they're not controlling your social media They don't know what you like and they're not having fun like you are so Um I would also say just post everything Everything is content whether that's somewhere where you're going you're going grocery shopping um me and my teammates we like to do Trader Joe's taste tests So Trader Joe's comes out with like new products like every week and um especially during the holidays they have a lot of new products and we started this thing where we um would buy some of the products from Trader Joe's And taste test them because it was something fun and it would get views and we would just have a good time So I say you have content There's no there's no doubting there's no saying that you don't have content you have content because you live your daily life So post to get ready with me post to what I eat in a day post to come with me to soccer practice or come with me to a different Event or something and um everything's content so just have fun with it and keep posting and be yourself My last piece of advice for anyone trying to get a scholarship is to be yourself and to be confident love the game and work as hard as you can If you follow all of those four things then you will find success whether that's going to college or whether that's Go to the next level whatever that is for you but having confidence in yourself is really important Hardworking be the hardest worker If there's something that you can control it's being a hard worker So make sure you control that and um just be yourself be genuine to who you are what you like the things that you do and that will eventually put you in the right place that you want to be in My name is Layla Armas I play on UCLA women's soccer and you can check me out on Next Level Prep