

## [High School Sports Recruiting](#)

### Your Online Guide To Gaining A College Athletics Scholarship

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## A MUST READ – The Athletic Scholarship

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### NCAA Division I and II Recruiting

Are you one of the more elite, highly recruited high school athletes in the country? If so, you will likely have several scholarship offers to ponder from colleges and universities all over the country.

If your talent is a little less than elite, then perhaps college recruiters will acknowledge your talent with personal letters, an occasional phone call, or extend an invitation for you to attend a home athletic contest. Unfortunately, this scenario does not always translate into a sure scholarship offer from a Division I or II school.

The odds of receiving an NCAA Division I or II scholarship are somewhat overwhelming. In the sport of Football, consider that 98 percent of all scholarship offers are complete by Christmas. Yet there remain hundreds of high school seniors who maintain the slim hope of a scholarship offer through the signing date in early February.

To better understand the complexity of athletic scholarships, look closely at the following table:

NCAA Division I Football	
85	Scholarships allowed by NCAA per school
110	Certified NCAA Division I schools
9,350	Total scholarship players nationally
7,150	Approximate number of returning players each year
2,220	Scholarships available each year for approximately one million high school seniors

<b>NCAA Division I Basketball</b>	
13	Scholarships allowed by NCAA per school
298	Certified NCAA Division I schools
3,874	Total scholarship players, nationally
1,788	Approximate number of returning players each year
2,086	Approximate number of new scholarships for 500,000 seniors

The Division I and II recruiting process has intensified for all sports over the years as budget constraints and Title IX have impacted the scholarship scene. Some athletic programs such as women's basketball, soccer and softball have prospered under Title IX. Today, more colleges and universities have started new soccer programs, offering more new scholarship opportunities for female athletes. Other programs, such as football and wrestling, have been adversely affected through the loss of scholarships or discontinuing the program altogether.

### **Coaching points ...**

- Have your academic credentials in order (grades, test scores, class rank, etc.).
- Keep your parent(s) and/or guardian involved and informed.
- Be responsible for your actions and develop a strong, moral character.
- Ask tough questions in the recruiting process.

Division I and II recruited athletes now experience more intense scrutiny as coaches make final decisions on scholarship offers. When a scholarship offer is extended to an athlete, it occurs only after a thorough review of the athlete's ability (academic and athletic) and personal character is determined.

Scrutiny is, however, a two-way street. In other words, you must recruit the college as hard as the college is recruiting you. What is the best way to do this? Be prepared.

Throughout the recruiting process, there will be times when your scholarship status is unclear. To help clarify exactly where you stand with a coach, ask hard questions of the person(s) recruiting you. For example:

- How many players are you recruiting at my position?
- If I decide to visit, are you asking me to commit right away?
- How long do I have to accept or decline your scholarship offer?
- Are you offering the same scholarship to other players?
- Are you offering me an official campus visit?
- Where am I on your priority list?
- If you offer one scholarship to me and to others, will it go to the first player who commits?
- What percentage of all students graduate in four years? What percentage of all athletes graduate in four to five years? What percentage of athletes from your team graduate in four to five years?
- What are the placement rates of your athletes into graduate school? Professional schools (i.e., medical school, law school, etc.)? and/or professional jobs?
- Of the athletes who do not turn pro, what are their outcomes after graduation? What post-graduate successes have they experienced?

You are entitled to ask the questions you deem necessary to help you and your parents understand the recruiting process better. It does not ensure that you will always get straight-forward answers. It is imperative that you and your parents

understand how to communicate with college recruiters. College recruiters are masterful at evaluating your athletic ability; you must be equally as masterful at evaluating their professional ability and integrity.

## NCAA Division II Athletic Recruiting

If the odds of earning a Division I scholarship are slight, imagine the difficulty of earning a full Division II scholarship. Just as there are qualifiers and partial qualifiers for Division I and II, there are full scholarships and partial scholarships. Unfortunately, a majority of scholarships in Division II are partial scholarships.

There are student-athletes who earn full scholarships in Division II, but in no way do they compare with the number of full scholarships in Division I.

<b>Division II Baseball</b>	
11.7	Total scholarships allowed by NCAA per year
\$7,000	Total cost of tuition, room and board, books
\$81,000	Total dollars in scholarship pool
25	Total team roster
15	Total of senior players and transfers to replace

The head baseball coach in the above scenario has to manage a pool of \$81,000 and distribute scholarship money accordingly. Some of his incoming players might receive full scholarships. The coach obviously can not afford to give full scholarships to all 15 incoming players. Some of his incoming players might be transferring in from junior college programs and will need two to three years of scholarship assistance. The coach will have to decide whether that player will receive a full or partial scholarship.

Often, the coach will base his decisions on the ability of the player to secure federal and/or state financial aid. If the difference between the cost of the school and the financial aid offer is moderate, a coach might decide to make up the difference with athletic scholarship money. Look at the following example:

<b>Theoretical Baseball University</b>			
Tuition	\$5,000	Financial Aid	\$5,000
Room & Board	\$2,000	Baseball Scholarship	\$2,500
Fees	\$500		
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>Total Award</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>

Of course, a coach has the sole authority to make decisions on the amount of athletic scholarship money to award strictly on the basis of athletic ability.

## **NCAA Division III Athletic Recruiting**

There is a myth in Division III athletics that athletes do not receive scholarships. In fact, many athletes in Division III do receive numerous undergraduate and post-graduate scholarships, though they do not receive them as a result of their athletic talent. Their scholarships are primarily based upon financial need, leadership and/or academic merit.

And while rivalries and intense competition thrive in Division III, the athletes at this level compromise nothing. If they suffer unfortunate career-ending injuries or simply lose their passion for the sport, they do not lose their scholarship(s) and/or financial aid. Division III is perhaps the last domain for true, amateur athletic competition where the student-athlete competes for the genuine love of the sport.

In general, Division III can be as, if not more, intense than Division I or II. Numerous visits from college coaches at the recruit's high school, phone calls from coaches, letters from the colleges and recruiting visits to college campuses are exhaustive, time consuming and expensive. This is fast becoming the norm in Division III recruiting, yet there will never be an offer of an athletic scholarship. A majority of families have no choice but to wait on the financial aid package before deciding on which school to attend. Unfortunately, choices are often made on the size of the financial aid package without regard to the quality of a school. Schools fortunate enough to complete a competitive financial aid package ahead of the competition usually have the upper hand in the recruiting wars.

## **NAIA Division I and II**

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is not affiliated whatsoever with the National Collegiate Athletic Association. NAIA Member Schools are divided into Divisions I and II. The total number of NAIA member schools pale in comparison to the NCAA. There are approximately 200 in Division I and 200 in Division II. Although NAIA schools offer athletic scholarships in Divisions I and II like their counterparts in the NCAA, there are very few schools offering full scholarships to athletes. Most NAIA scholarships are a combination of partial athletic scholarships and financial aid.

The NAIA does not require its student-athletes to be certified academically, and schools within the association come in all shapes and sizes. Yet, each school may offer a unique experience to your career as a student-athlete. Consider the coaching points to the right about an NAIA school:

Here are some tips on handling the Division III recruiting process:

### **Coaching points ...**

- The NCAA's Clearinghouse does not apply to non-scholarship schools.
- Be sure to have academic credentials that match those of the school recruiting you.
- Follow up on all admission and financial aid deadlines and time lines.
- Visit the campus admission office ... meet with an admission counselor, financial aid counselor and coach.

## **Thinking of Turning Pro?**

The odds of turning professional as an athlete from any level of the NCAA or NAIA are not encouraging. If you have your heart set on going to college with the intention of turning professional, consider the following statistics:

- Out of approximately one million high school varsity football players in the country, approximately 150 will make an NFL roster: 6,000 to 1 odds.
- Out of 500,000 high school basketball players, approximately 50 will make NBA rosters: 10,000 to 1 odds.
- For every 1,223 high school senior football players, 44 will become “major college” players. Just one will make an NFL roster.
- Fewer than 30 percent of all NBA players graduate from college. Less than one percent graduate after turning professional early.

## Final Thoughts

Perhaps now, it is clear that it is important to have distinct goals and a game plan for the future. A college degree should figure prominently in your educational plans regardless of whether you are a scholarship athlete, future pro prospect or just an amateur. Choosing the right college is the most difficult part of the recruiting process. It is a process that has evolved into a science rather than an art these days.

Even if you are fortunate enough to receive an athletic scholarship, there is no guarantee that the school offering the scholarship will be a good fit for you. In the long term, it is imperative that you choose a college that will benefit you in all phases of your undergraduate and post-graduate plans.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE RECRUITING IN GENERAL, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

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December 2008

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