

## Information about Types of College Athletics

Determining whether or not to play collegiate athletics is a daunting decision for many student-athletes. Although many of today's athletes have played their sports(s) since they were in grade school, and have spent countless hours (and dollars) on club sports, by the time their junior or senior year rolls around, some of them are just simply ready to move on. Others are as passionate as ever and want more than anything to fulfill their life-long dream of playing collegiate athletics.

Once a student has decided to pursue collegiate athletics, there are many factors to consider when beginning the recruitment process. One major consideration is the size of the college which often correlates to the Division of athletics the school participates in. Here is a breakdown of those options:

- 1) NCAA – Division I and II schools can offer athletic scholarships, however only approximate three to five percent of high school athletes will receive one. Some sports can offer a pre-determined number of full-ride scholarships and others can split up their scholarship money into partial amounts. At these levels, coaches will recruit for specific position needs.

Division III schools cannot offer athletic scholarships. However, 75 percent of student-athletes receive some type of merit or need-based financial aid. Some coaches at this level use a “shotgun” approach which means they will bring in as many candidates as possible for a position and then hold tryouts similar to high school programs.

- 2) NAIA – This governing body for college athletics is much smaller in number of colleges. Some of the institutions offer scholarships, commonly partial ones. Other NAIA colleges may function much like NCAA Division III schools.
- 3) Junior Colleges – These colleges are two-year institutions and some may offer financial assistance for athletes. Some junior college athletes are recruited to continue their career as a junior or senior in a program at an NCAA or NAIA school.

Here are some resources to gain further information about each of these levels of collegiate athletic programs:

- NFHS Learning Center: This course only takes 20-30 minutes to complete and it is free! <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/ncaa-eligibility>
- NCAA Website: Under “About Us” on the main navigational bar, there is an overview of the three divisions. When you click on “Student-Athletes”, one of the postings is the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete. Students who want to compete at the Division I or II levels will need to create an account and register at the Eligibility Center. Under each division heading there will be recruiting calendars that will give you the timelines for college coaches to recruit student-athletes. <https://www.ncaa.com>