

NCAA AND NAIA SPORTS RECRUITING

NCAA National Collegiate Athletic Association Recruiting Guidelines and Rules

Recruiting

Recruiting happens when a college employee or representative invites a high school student-athlete to play sports for their college. Recruiting can occur in many ways, such as face-to-face contact, phone calls or text messaging, through mailed or emailed material or through social media.

Recruiting Terms

A **contact** happens any time a college coach says more than hello during a face-to-face meeting with a college-bound student-athlete or his or her parents off the college's campus.

An **evaluation** happens when a college coach observes a student-athlete practicing or competing.

A **verbal commitment** happens when a college-bound student-athlete verbally agrees to play sports for a college before he or she signs or is eligible to sign a National Letter of Intent. The commitment is not binding on the student-athlete or the school and can be made at any time.

When a student-athlete officially commits to attend a Division I or II college, he or she signs a National Letter of Intent, agreeing to attend that school for one academic year.

Recruiting calendars

NCAA member schools limit recruiting to certain periods during the year. Recruiting calendars promote the well-being of college-bound student-athletes and ensure fairness among schools by defining certain periods during the year in which recruiting may or may not occur in a particular sport.

- During a **contact period**, a college coach may have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents, watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools and write or telephone student-athletes or their parents.
- During an **evaluation period**, a college coach may watch college-bound student-athletes compete, visit their high schools and write or telephone student-athletes or their parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents off the college's campus during an evaluation period.
- During a **quiet period**, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write or telephone college-bound student-athletes or their parents during this time.

- During a **dead period**, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student-athletes or their parents and may not watch student-athletes compete or visit their high schools. Coaches may write and telephone student-athletes or their parents during a dead period.

Campus visits

- Any visit to a college campus by a college-bound student-athlete or his or her parents paid for by the college is an official visit. Visits paid for by student-athletes or their parents are considered unofficial visits.
- During an official visit the college can pay for transportation to and from the college for the student-athlete, lodging and three meals per day for the student-athlete and his or her parents or guardians, as well as reasonable entertainment expenses including three tickets to a home sports event.
- The only expenses a college-bound student-athlete may receive from a college during an unofficial visit are three tickets to a home sports event.

National Letter of Intent

A National Letter of Intent is signed by a college-bound student-athlete agreeing to attend a Division I or II college for one academic year. Participating colleges agree to provide financial aid for one academic year to the student-athlete as long as the student-athlete is admitted to the school and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules. Other forms of financial aid do not guarantee the student-athlete financial aid. The National Letter of Intent is voluntary and not required for a student-athlete to receive financial aid or participate in sports.

Signing a National Letter of Intent ends the recruiting process because participating schools are prohibited from recruiting student-athletes who have already signed letters with other participating schools.

A student-athlete who signs a National Letter of Intent but decides to attend another college may request a release from his or her contract with the school. If a student-athlete signs a National Letter of Intent with one school but attends a different school, he or she loses one full year of eligibility and must complete a full academic year at the new school before being eligible to compete.

Division III Celebratory Signing Form

Division III institutions are permitted to use a standard, NCAA provided, non-binding celebratory signing form. A college-bound student-athlete is permitted to sign the celebratory signing form at any point, including high school signing events, after the student-athlete has been accepted to the institution. Institutions should keep in mind, however, that they are not permitted to publicize a student-athlete's commitment to the institution until the student-athlete has submitted a financial deposit (Bylaw 13.10.7).

To access the Division III celebratory signing form, Division III coaches and administrators can use the “My Apps” link on ncaa.org to navigate to LSDBi. Log in to LSDBi by clicking the “login” tab at the top of the screen and entering your single source sign on information. Once logged in, select the “resources” tab. Once on the “resources” tab, the celebratory signing form can be found under the “compliance” heading.

When Can College Coaches Contact High School Athletes

The NCAA recruiting rules can be detailed and tricky to understand. One of the most common questions families ask is when college coaches can start contacting their athletes. **For most sports, coaches can begin reaching out to athletes starting September 1 or June 15 going into the athlete’s junior year of high school.**

More specifically, coach contact depends on your sport, age, division level and the type of communication. The NCAA recruiting rules are designed to limit the amount of communication elite athletes receive from coaches, giving them some respite from all the calls, emails and letters.

Insider Tip: As an athlete, you can reach out to college coaches at any time. The NCAA recruiting rules only limit when coaches can communicate with potential recruits. We recommend emailing coaches of programs you are interested in as early as possible. Send them your athletic resume, which includes:

- Your highlight video
- Any sport-specific stats
- Your academic information
- Why you are interested in their program

When the NCAA recruiting rules allow coaches to contact you, you will already be on their radar. Be sure to follow up each of your communications with a phone call, as coaches can take your call at any point. They just can’t call you back if they miss your call.

Updated NCAA recruiting rules change the timing for certain recruiting activities

The NCAA just approved a new set of rules that will change the way Division 1 college coaches can recruit athletes during camps and visits in an effort to cut back on early recruiting, or coaches giving scholarship offers to athletes before their junior year of high school. The rules take effect immediately, starting Wednesday, April 25, 2018. Here’s a quick breakdown of these changes:

- **Official visits:** Recruits can now start taking official visits starting September 1 of their junior year of high school. In the past, official visits weren’t permitted until the athlete’s senior year of high school, so this rule is actually bumping them up!

- **Camps and clinics:** Recruits and college coaches are not allowed to have any recruiting conversations during camps prior to September 1 of the athlete's junior year of high school. Previously, there weren't really any rules that prevented coaches from talking about recruiting to underclassmen during camps. In fact, it had become common practice for college coaches to extend verbal scholarship offers to top recruits during camps.
- **Unofficial visits:** College athletic departments-this includes college coaches-are not allowed to be involved in a recruit's unofficial visits. Quick refresher: Unofficial visits are any campus visits paid for entirely by the recruit's family. Before the rule change, unofficial visits were an easy way for underclassmen to visit a college camps, meet with the coach and get an early verbal offer. However, if athletes want to take unofficial visits now, they cannot schedule them with the coach-they should treat the unofficial visit just like any other student would. If the recruit happens to bump into the coach on campus, they can't have any recruiting conversations at that time.

Division I

Generally speaking, DI coaches can send athletes **recruiting questionnaires**, camp brochures, and non-athletic institutional publications freshman and sophomore year. Most other contact begins either June 15 or September 1 of the athlete's junior year, according to the NCAA recruiting rules.

Division II

The NCAA Recruiting Rules for Division II schools are slightly more relaxed than those for Division I, and the rules are the same across all sports:

- **General materials:** Athletes can receive brochures for camps, questionnaires, NCAA materials and non-athletic recruiting publications at any time.
- **Printed recruiting materials:** Starting July 15 before an athlete's junior year, coaches can begin sending recruits printed recruiting materials.
- **Telephone calls:** Starting June 15 going into the athlete's junior year, coaches can start calling athletes.
- **Off-campus contact:** Coaches can conduct off-campus communications with athletes and/or their parents starting June 15 before the athlete's junior year.
- **Unofficial visits:** Athletes can take unofficial visits at any time.
- **Official visits:** Athletes may start taking official visits starting June 15 going into their junior year.

Division III

DIII schools have the most relaxed NCAA recruiting rules of all the division levels. Similar to NCAA DII, they are the same for all sports:

- **Recruiting materials:** Athletes can receive recruiting materials at any time.
- **Telephone calls:** There is no limit on when college coaches can call athletes.
- **Digital communications:** There is no limit on when college coaches can contact athletes digitally.
- **Off-campus contact:** After the athlete's sophomore year, college coaches may begin to conduct off-campus communications.
- **Official visits:** Athletes can begin taking official visits after January 1 of their junior year.
- **Unofficial visits:** Athletes can make an unlimited number of unofficial visits at any time.

NCAA INITIAL ELIGIBILITY RULES

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is the governing body of most College Sport. Your first step towards playing your sport at college level is to register with the NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER FORMALLY CALLED THE Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

You must meet certain academic requirements before you can become eligible to receive an athletic scholarship.

The academic requirements to maintain your eligibility while competing in college have increased. College coaches and athletic departments are responding by putting more emphasis on recruiting athletes who can be better students. If the athletes don't meet the academic minimums, the NCAA will reduce the number of scholarships that school can offer.

For athletes who receive a scholarship from a Division I university on or after August 1, 2008, their initial eligibility will be evaluated under the 16 core course rule.

(2004-2005 ninth grade)

you will need 16 core courses as outlined below:

4 years of English

3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)

2 years of natural/physical science (one must be a lab science)

1 year of additional science, math or English

2 years of social studies

4 years of additional core courses (they can be from any listed above or from non-doctrinal religion or philosophy or foreign language)

For athletes who receive a scholarship from a Division II university the old 14 core course rule will still apply:

3 years of English

2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)

2 years of natural/physical science (one must be a lab science)

2 year of additional science, math or English

2 years of social studies

3 years of additional core courses (they can be from any listed above or from non-doctrinal religion or philosophy or foreign language)

NCAA RULE CHANGE. ATHLETES MUST NOW BE PLACED ON THE INSTITUTIONAL REQUEST LIST IRL.

Competing at the NCAA level is no longer as easy as simply getting recruited and then meeting the academic requirements for your chosen school. To play college sports, all athletes are required by the NCAA to be registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Until recent months, the registration process had been as easy as entering some personal information on the NCAA website, and then asking your high school to send transcripts to the NCAA. By maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.00, your eligibility process was satisfied. Unfortunately this is no longer the case. Due to the sheer number of athletes that register with the Eligibility Center, over 100,000 in fact, the Eligibility Center has enacted a new policy which requires all athletes to be placed on an active Institutional Request List (IRL).

Although the process by which you register with the NCAA has remained unchanged, the new IRL format can be a bit confusing. The process starts the same way by going to the eligibility center's website; filling out the online form and having your high school send transcripts to the NCAA. The next step is where the confusion begins. Before the recent rule change, the online registration and \$50 fee were enough to clear athletes through the clearinghouse. With the new rule, you must now contact a college coach and request that he place your name on his IRL list. Once a coach has decided to put you on his IRL list, he will contact the NCAA and request that your name be cleared through the clearinghouse. Once one

coach has requested your application to be cleared, you will be eligible to play at any NCAA school in the country.

The same guidelines for eligibility apply to the Clearinghouse's new rule. All athletes must maintain certain academic requirements including a GPA of 2.00, an SAT score of 810 or an ACT score of 18. The NCAA uses a graduated scale to evaluate students, meaning that the higher your high school GPA, the lower your test scores will have to be to gain entry into the school of your choice. Because the NCAA Eligibility Center is forced to handle such a huge volume of applications it can take up to six months to process your application, if you wait too long you may miss your chance to be cleared on time.

COLLEGE ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

AS AN ATHLETE YOU MUST KNOW THE RULES

There is a good chance that most of the colleges that you wish to attend are affiliated with one of the major intercollegiate athletic associations.

There are three main associations: the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). All of these athletic associations impose certain eligibility rules and standards.

The NCAA is the largest association, and is in charge of all areas of athletics for four-year colleges including recruiting, eligibility, and financial aid. Colleges affiliated with the NCAA are ranked as either Division I, II, or III schools, with Division I being the most competitive, made up of larger colleges and universities, and offering athletic scholarships. Division II is less competitive and generally made up of smaller schools, but still offers athletic scholarships. Division III does not offer athletic scholarships.

The NCAA regulates the maximum number of scholarships that colleges can award in each sport. The number varies by Division. The number also varies by college, because they are not required to give out the maximum number of scholarships. You'll need to contact individual colleges to find out how many scholarships they intend to award.

The NCAA also imposes strict high school academic rules for student-athletes who wish to continue playing their sport in college. There are core course requirements that must be fulfilled before you are allowed to play at

Division I or II schools in your freshman year. There is also a minimum combination of GPA and standardized test scores that you must achieve.

How to register for the NCAA Eligibility Center and check your NCAA eligibility status.

The NCAA Eligibility Center is a part of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and was created to ensure that student athletes are prepared to meet the academic rigors of college. Each year nearly 200,000 student athletes have their GPA and test scores sent to the NCAA. The NCAA processes nearly 75,000 student athletes' accounts.

You will not be eligible to play college sports or get an athletic scholarship from an NCAA school without registering and being cleared by the NCAA Eligibility Center.

You do not need to have all of your documents ready before you register with the NCAA. Before your high school sends an official copy of your transcripts to the NCAA, you need to have an account set up. If your high school or the SAT testing agency were to send your documents to the NCAA and you didn't have an account the NCAA would disregard the documents and you would need to resend them.

How to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center

- Create an account on the website *Parents you can create an account for your child
- Pay \$70 dollars (\$120 for international students) *fee waivers are available to student athletes and you can talk to your high school counselor about how to do this once you have created an account.
- Have your high school counselors send official copies of your transcripts
- Have the appropriate testing agency send official copies of your SAT or ACT test scores
- Complete the amateurism questionnaire online
- When you graduate high school you need to request final certification and have you high school send your final transcripts and proof of graduation
- The Eligibility Center used to be called the NCAA Clearinghouse

The NCAA Eligibility Center's Role in Your Recruiting and Athletic Scholarship

The NCAA is responsible for determining the academic eligibility of all student athletes at the DI or DII level. Without being cleared by the NCAA you will not be able to play college sports or receive an athletic scholarship.

Your ten digit NCAA ID number is your ticket to getting cleared by the NCAA. This ID number is used by coaches and universities to track your eligibility status and for tracking your official visits. Colleges that are recruiting you will submit their list of recruits to the NCAA on an "Institutional Request List" using the student athletes NCAA ID numbers. Your recruiting will be put on hold until you have an ID number. You can get your NCAA ID number immediately after creating your account and paying your NCAA fee (you do not need to pay a fee if you will be submitting a fee waiver).

Registering with the NCAA before an Official Visit

If you are planning on taking an official visit to a university you will need to be registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Before a coach or college can invite you on an official visit they need to add your NCAA ten digit ID number to the IRL (Institutional Request List). You are only allowed 5 official visits and the NCAA uses your ID number to keep track of the number of visits each student has taken. If you need to get your ID number to take an official visit, follow the instructions on this page to create an NCAA Eligibility Center account.

When will I know if I am eligible?

You will not get your final eligibility status from the NCAA until you have graduated high school. The NCAA cannot determine your eligibility status before then, because they need all of your high school grades and proof of graduation.

If you are waiting for your eligibility status, it can take several weeks or even months after you have finished high school. To ensure you are in line to receive your final eligibility status, you need to request certification within your account (you do this online), have your high school send your final transcripts and proof of graduation and make sure the coaches recruiting you have included your ten digit ID number on their IRL. If you have done all of that, here is how the NCAA prioritizes student athletes waiting for their eligibility:

Athletes competing in fall sports are processed first, followed by winter and then spring sports.

Within each season, athletes are prioritized by the order in which the NCAA received your request for certification. Depending on when all of this information was received, it can take several weeks to get your final status.

If your account needs to be reviewed by a specialist within the NCAA it can take longer to get your final status. In this situation you will usually be contacted and additional information might be requested.

If you have any questions about your account or eligibility status, it is best to contact the coach or the athletic department of the school recruiting you. The officials within their athletic department can check on the status of the athletes on their IRL. You will not be able to get an update from the NCAA by calling or emailing them.

NCAA Eligibility Center Mailing Address for Transcripts

There are two ways to contact the Eligibility Center, through mail and their phone number. There is no public email address to send your questions.

<p>Transcript Mailing Address: NCAA Eligibility Center Certification Processing P.O. Box 7136 Indianapolis, IN 46207</p>	<p>Overnight Mailing Address: NCAA Eligibility Center Certification Processing 1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive Indianapolis, IN 46202</p>
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Eligibility Center Phone Number

Customer service hours – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday. *the NCAA is closed for most public holidays.

U.S. Callers – (877) 262-1492

International Callers – (317) 223-0700