

## What the College Bound Student Athlete Needs to Know

One of the toughest parts of my job is telling a student and their family that they are coming to me too late to accomplish their goals of attending college when or where they wish to attend because they did not know or understand what needed to be done. There are so many factors that go into the college search and application process for all students, but the student who wishes to participate in college athletics has yet another layer of requirements and deadlines to watch out for; this column is directed to that student and their family.

College student athletes are governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). There are athletic rules, there are recruiting rules, there are behavioral rules and there are academic rules. Students who wish to attend college on an athletic scholarship need to be aware of all of these rules starting into high school. Athletic standouts need to work with their counselors and coaches to make sure they are on track and adhering to the rules, because if they are not, they will not be allowed to pursue their athletic dreams in college.

There are three NCAA divisions in college athletics: I, II, and III. Each have their own rules for scholarships and admission. NCAA Divisions I and II schools provide more than \$3.8 billion in athletic scholarships annually to more than 195,000 student-athletes. Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships. It is important to note that only 2% of high school athletes are offered scholarships though, so it is really important to keep strong academics throughout high school so you do not rely on athletics as your only path to college. According to the NCAA, to be eligible to compete in Division I, students must earn a minimum core-course GPA of 2.3. Students hoping to compete in Division II must earn a minimum core-course GPA of 2.2. This may sound easy, but keep in mind that these guidelines are MINIMUM standards, and unless you are one of the top recruits in the nation, you will need to make yourself a strong candidate in academics as well as athletics to be considered by a top school. As of 2022, the NCAA has dropped their requirement for standardized testing, however, be advised that not all colleges have dropped their requirements, so students need to be aware of what each college where they wish to apply requires.

The state of Hawaii has basic requirements for high school graduation, and all colleges have their own requirements for admission. But the College Bound Athlete also needs to be aware of the NCAA's list of core subjects that students need to take to be eligible to compete in college athletics. Your counselor can help you with this, make sure to ask them about this starting freshman year.

One of the more complicated aspects of considering competing in college athletics is knowing how recruiting works, and when and how it is okay to be in contact with colleges and their coaching staffs. I wish I could say there was an easy timetable for this, but it is not the same for all sports. There are very specific rules for when and how coaches and families can be in touch with each other in the recruiting process, and for more information about that, you can consult the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Athlete\*\*.

In brief, if you want to pursue college athletics, here is what you need to do:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade: -Take the right courses and earn your best grades  
-Find your high school's list of NCAA core courses at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org)  
-Register for a profile page at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org)
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade: -If you are being recruited by an NCAA school, transition your Profile Page to a Certification Account  
-Monitor your Task List in your Eligibility Center account for next steps  
-At the end of the school year, ask your counselor to upload your official transcript to your NCAA Eligibility Center account.
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade: -Make sure you are on track to complete NCAA core courses and graduate on time.  
-Confirm that your sports participation information is correct  
-Share your NCAA ID with schools recruiting you
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade: -Request your final amateurism certification beginning April 1 in your NCAA eligibility center account

It is the student's responsibility to monitor their progress in academics and to make sure that they are doing their best to achieve good grades in all their coursework. Work closely with your counselor and coaches to make sure you are staying on track with what needs to be done for the NCAA. If you need additional help or advice, please contact me.

\*\*Link to the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Athlete can be found on my webpage.

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