



Athletic Scholarships



www.EducationUSA.state.gov

EducationUSA Advising Center in Canada

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Online Resources for Student Athletes

- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) www.ncaa.org
- Academic Guide for International Student—Athletes
- International Students – Frequently Asked Questions
- NCAA Eligibility Center www.eligibilitycenter.org
- National Association of Interscholastic Athletics (NAIA) www.playnaia.org
- NJCAA Eligibility Center www.njcaa.org
- National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) www.njcaa.org
- Peterson's College Search www.petersons.com
- EducationUSA Canada Advising Center www.educationusa.info/ottawa
- EducationUSA Canada YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/user/EducationUSACanada
- Hear the stories of Canadians who have studied in the United States

Are you a talented athlete seeking a degree in the United States? Are you currently competing in a sport at a high level of excellence?

Then you might be a candidate for a sports scholarship at a U.S. college or university

★ General Information about Athletic Scholarships

The competition for athletic scholarships varies from university to university in the United States. NCAA Division I schools, with large teams and budgets, can be very competitive. Division II schools may be less competitive, but may also offer fewer scholarship opportunities. Some institutions with excellent sports programs, notably the Ivy League and all Division III institutions, do not offer athletic scholarships, but may offer other forms of financial aid.

★ Major athletic organizations in the United States

Most U.S. colleges and universities with athletic programs belong to one of three major collegiate athletic organizations: the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), or National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA),

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

NAIA and NJCAA are also organizations that govern collegiate college athletics. Members of these organizations are mainly smaller schools (junior or community colleges in the case of the NJCAA), and they traditionally do not recruit as vigorously as NCAA members. However, athletic scholarships may be available to international students at these institutions. Learn more about the NAIA and NJCAA at <http://www.naia.org/> and <http://www.njcaa.org/>.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

Founded in 1906, the NCAA is the oldest and most well-known collegiate sports organization. The association divides institutions into three separate athletic divisions. Division I contains about one-third of the NCAA's members and includes the most competitive teams. Many schools in Division I have well-developed programs and large

scholarship budgets. NCAA Division II schools maintain competitive athletic programs, though generally with smaller teams and fewer athletic scholarships. Schools in Division III have athletic programs, but do not offer athletic scholarships. They may, however, offer need-based financial aid. A few Division III institutions offer Division I programs in certain sports, such as lacrosse, hockey, or soccer.

★ What do I need to do?

Get started

- The preparation and application process requires careful planning. Start the process 18-24 months before you intend to begin your studies. Note important deadlines and other dates and review entrance requirements.
- Many athletic scholarships do not cover the full cost of tuition and living expenses, so investigate other sources of financial aid and review your personal or family savings.
- Talk about your decision with friends, family, coaches, and school advisers. Do you know anyone who has received a sports scholarship in the United States?

- Become an expert on your sport as it is played at the U.S. university level. The better you know the sport, the easier it will be for you to identify the right program for you. Try to compare yourself to U.S. university athletes.
- Review requirements for the NCAA, NAIA, or NJCAA. Each organization has its own requirements for grade point average, standardized tests, amateurism rules, etc.

Prepare

- Take any required standardized tests, such as the SAT, ACT, and TOEFL. The SAT and ACT are required for NCAA certification and may be required for NAIA member institutions depending on your high school academic record.
- Register with the eligibility center. NCAA (Division I and II) and NAIA, require that you register with the eligibility center to determine your eligibility as an athlete. Begin this process as soon as you have your SAT or ACT scores.
- Think about whom you can ask for letters of recommendation, and contact them.

- How can you present/market yourself as an athlete? Create a resume that includes information about you as athlete. Save electronic copies of articles, photos, lists of results, etc. that highlight your sports achievements. Study athlete profiles and post your own on websites such as www.berecruited.com.

- Consider developing a video (5-8 minutes) to promote yourself as a student athlete. Talk to your coach or advisor about appropriate video content.

Find Schools

- Contact friends or acquaintances who have had sports scholarships in the United States. Ask them to introduce you to their coach(es).
- Find lists of schools in your sport on the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA websites.
- Identify schools that interest you and where you would make an attractive prospective student-athlete. Find e-mail addresses on school websites and start working on a draft e-mail.

Contact the Coaches

- Adapt your e-mail draft to the team and the coach that you are

contacting. Your e-mail is an opportunity to show your knowledge of the team and explain how you would be a good fit. Attach all relevant documents. You might also include a reference from a current or former coach in your correspondence with university coaches.

- Remember, you may write to many coaches, and only a few will reply. Consider following up with your coach contacts with a polite phone call. If you have good news about results from competitions, you can follow up with a new e-mail.

Review your options

- Keep your options open. If you are offered a scholarship, consider if this school is right for you. Would you attend this school even without a sports scholarship?
- You are guaranteed a sports scholarship when you have signed a contract called the "National Letter of Intent". Scholarships are awarded one year at a time.
- Be sure to stay in touch with friends, teachers, student advisers, and coaches, as you go through the process. They may be great sources of advice and encouragement!