

What does it *really* take to  
be an athlete in college?

Isn't it just as easy as saying I'm going to play a sport in college and then I'm all set?

Unfortunately, playing a sport in college isn't that easy.

Things that need to be considered:

- Do you have the talent to play at the college level?
- Do you have the minimum GPA to play a sport in college?
- Have you taken the courses that are required to be eligible to play a sport in college?
- What have you done to market yourself to play at the next level?

# The toughest question: Do you have the talent to play at the college level?

This is **NOT** a question that you or your parents can answer.

This is a question that must be answered by your high school coach and your club/travel coach.

This can be a very uncomfortable conversation, but you must ask your coaches:

- To be honest with you.
- Do you have the talent to play your college sport?
- What level does your coach see you at?
- What do you need to do to improve the possibility of playing at the next level?

# What does playing at the next level mean?

Playing at the next level means knowing where you fit in based on your academics and athletic ability. There THREE main different collegiate athletic programs:

- NJCAA (also known as JUCO, junior college, or community college)
- NAIA
- NCAA

\*You can find more information here:

<https://www.smarthlete.com/intercollegiate/divisions>

# NJCAA

## COMPETE NJCAA + TRANSFER CREDITS OR ENTER WORKFORCE = LOWER COST

- These are two-year colleges.... <https://www.njcaa.org/landing/index>
- You can earn an associates degree and/or transfer to a four-year university.
- Requirements:
  - High school diploma or GED.
  - Students are allowed to take credit recovery classes if they fail a class.
  - Have amateur status
  - There are three NJCAA divisions. Different scholarship levels are allowed:

ALLOWANCES PER DIVISION:	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III
TUITION & COURSE FEES	✓	✓	✗
ROOM & BOARD	✓	✗	✗
COURSE-RELATED BOOKS	✓	✓	✗
UP TO \$200 IN COURSE-REQUIRED SUPPLIES	✓	✓	✗

- NAIA schools are four-year universities
- “The NAIA is the ONLY athletic association that serves the interests of small colleges through holding national championships and by driving student-athlete enrollment and financial sustainability.”
- The NAIA prides themselves on the amount of scholarships available.
- Admissions Standards:
  - To participate in athletics in the NAIA, you must be admitted to the college or university under admission standards equal to or higher than those applied to the general student body.
  - The NAIA does not have any core course requirements.
  - The NAIA Eligibility Center will determine your eligibility based on your high school grades and sometimes your SAT/ACT scores, class rank, and/or dual credit.
  - Credit recovery courses are allowed if you failed a class.
  - Register at [PlayNAIA.org](https://www.playnaia.org) to access details in your resources.

# NCAA - Divisions I, II, and III


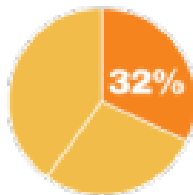
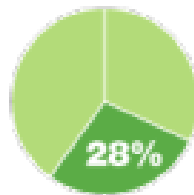
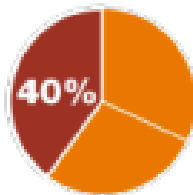

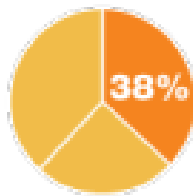
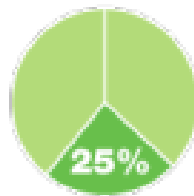
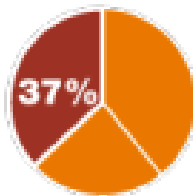



- The NCAA are four-year universities.
- They can be any size of enrollment.
- There are academic and core course requirements.
- When you enter ninth grade, you have four years (eight semesters) to complete your core-course requirement.
- You must graduate on time, with your class.
  
- The NCAA does not accept credit recovery classes, so if you fail a class, you must take the class over as NEW CREDIT.

- <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>



# OUR THREE DIVISIONS

	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III
 NUMBER OF SCHOOLS*	<b>350</b> 	<b>300</b> 	<b>432</b> 
 PERCENTAGE OF NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETES IN EACH DIVISION			
 ATHLETICS SCHOLARSHIPS	<b>Multiyear, cost-of-attendance athletics scholarships available</b> 57% of athletes receive athletics aid	<b>Partial athletics scholarship model</b> 60% of athletes receive athletics aid	<b>No athletics scholarships</b> 80% of athletes receive nonathletics aid

\*Numbers are from 2020-21. This does not include reclassifying, provisional or exploratory schools.



# Academic Requirements

- To study and compete at a Division I or II school, you must earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits.
  - Division I must earn a minimum 2.3 core-course GPA
  - Division II must earn a minimum 2.2 core-course GPA
- To study and compete at a Division III school, you must be in contact with the school as they set their own admissions and academic requirements.
- Register with the [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).
  - To start, only register for the FREE account.



## WHAT IS A CORE COURSE?

- » Four-year college preparatory course in one of these subject areas:

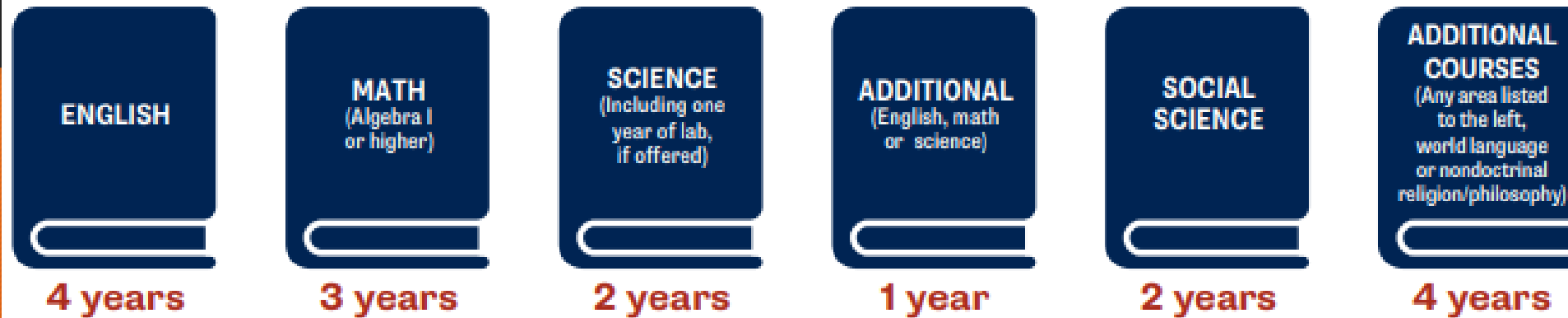


- » Taught by qualified instructor.
- » Taught at or above your high school's regular academic level.
- » On your official transcript with course title, grade and credit and receives credit toward your high school graduation.
- » On your **high school's list** of NCAA-approved core courses.

# Core Course Requirements for NCAA DI and DII

## DIVISION I

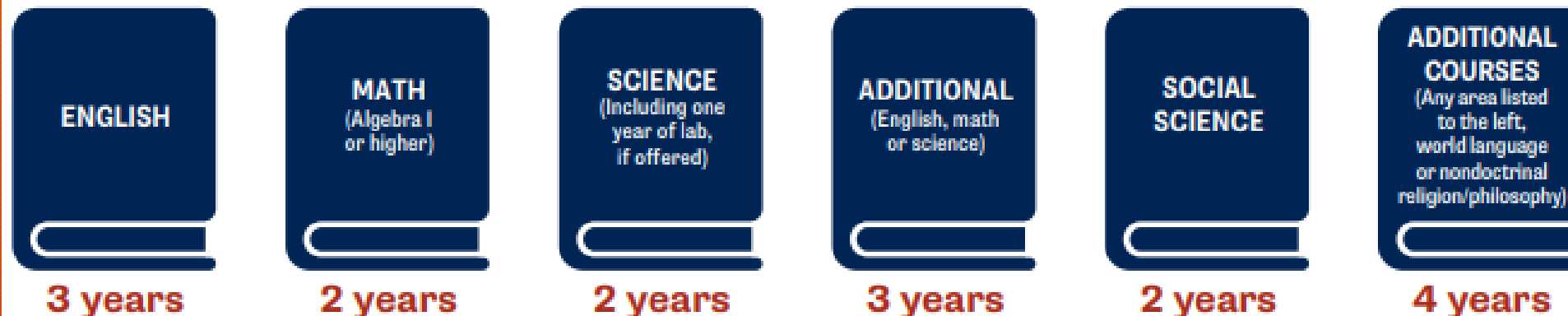
Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:



For Division I, 10 of your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits must be completed before the start of your seventh semester, including seven in English, math or science.

## DIVISION II

Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:



# Scholarships....

Athletic Association	Number of Schools	Number of Athletes	Maximum Number of Scholarships
NCAA Division 1	350	139,063	74,243
NCAA Division 2	310	85,385	36,343
NCAA Division 3	438	144,062	0
NAIA	260	56,354	25,778
NJCAA	464	53,248	41,195
Other	276	39,737	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>517,849</b>	<b>177,559</b>

- There are very few full ride scholarships at any school.
- NCAA DII schools usually give out partial scholarships of half or less.
- Notice DIII does not give out athletic scholarships!

# What percentage of high school athletes end up going on to play a college sport?

- There are about 8 million high school students who play sports each year.
  - A little over 7% of high school athletes (about 1 in 13) go on to play a sport in college.
  - Moreover, less than 2% of high school athletes (1 in 57) go on to play at NCAA Division I schools.
- Are you doing everything in your power to play at the next level?
- Are you setting yourself up for success academically so you can play your sport in college?

# Cast a wide net

If your coaches agree that college athletics could be in your future, and they have an idea of what level you could play at, cast a wide net of schools that may interest you.

Remember that the three large umbrellas of divisions are NJCAA, NAIA, and NCAA and you might not be a good fit for all three.

Then, find about 15 - 20 schools that interest you in the division(s) your coaches recommended (that have your sport) and start researching the schools. Take a virtual tour. What degrees do they offer? Do they provide academic support?

# How can you get yourself noticed?

- Create an Instagram and/or Twitter account dedicated to your sport.
- Include short highlight videos of training and games.
- Include pictures and videos of your leadership skills and of you interacting positively with your teammates.
- While searching for colleges that interest you, create a list/spreadsheet.
  - Visit the colleges or do a virtual tour online.
  - Follow them on your social media.
  - DM coaches and introduce yourself and your interest in their school.
  - Try to create a conversation to see if they have an interest in you.
  - DM coaches to update them with your progress. (More often in your junior and senior year.)
  - If you do not get a response from a coach after a few tries, try another coach from that college. If you still do not get a response, cross them off your list.
- Do NOT use third party companies like NCSA and Captain U. They are a turnoff to coaches. Coaches want to see prospective student-athletes take the lead on their future!!

# In Summary...

Keep in mind that there are three collegiate athletic program tracks:

- NJCAA
  - Two-year colleges with three different divisions
  - Students can take credit recovery classes in high school
- NAIA
  - Small four-year universities
  - Students can take credit recovery classes in high school
- NCAA
  - Four-year universities of any size with three divisions (DI, DII, DIII)
  - Students CAN NOT take credit recovery classes
  - DI requires specific core classes and a 2.3 GPA at a minimum
  - DII requires specific core classes and a 2.2 GPA at a minimum



# Website sources and resources

- <https://www.smarthlete.com/intercollegiate/divisions>
- <https://www.njcaa.org/landing/index>
- <https://www.naia.org/findyourpath/highschool/index>
- [PlayNAIA.org](http://PlayNAIA.org)
- [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/HS/HS\\_IE\\_Presentation.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/HS/HS_IE_Presentation.pdf)
- <https://www.ncaa.com/>
- <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3>