

NCAA College Softball Recruiting

Overview of the NCAA Division I & Division II Rules to Follow:

- 1.Coaches may not contact prospective recruits before Sept. 1st of the players' junior year in high school. You can call or write but they cannot call you or send any promotional softball material about their program.
 - 2.Coaches may not contact you by phone or in person before July 1st after your junior year.
 - 3.Coaches may not talk to senior players at tournaments until their team has been eliminated. They can talk to a family member, which will constitute an official contact.
 - 4.Coaches may only call prospective student athletes once a week. (You may call them as often as you like.)
 - 5.Coaches can only have 3 in person official contacts with a player. (Parents talking to a coach is a contact.)
 - 6.A player can only have 5 official visits. (You must be in your senior year to take an official visit.)
 - 7.Early signing period is during the 2nd & 3rd week of November of your senior year; the next signing period is in April of your senior year.
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Please remember it's great to receive letters from schools and coaches, but most schools send out hundreds of letters to athletes. This is only the first step in the recruiting process. So ***don't slow down on marketing yourself because you are receiving some letters***, no matter how interested the coach seems. They are sending the same letter out to a lot of other athletes. Most programs will only be recruiting 3 to 4 players a year.

Recruiting

NCAA member schools have adopted rules to create an equitable recruiting environment that promotes student-athlete well-being. The rules define who may be involved in the recruiting process, when recruiting may occur and the conditions under which recruiting may be conducted. Recruiting rules seek, as much as possible, to control intrusions into the lives of student-athletes.

The NCAA defines recruiting as “any solicitation of prospective student-athletes or their parents by an institutional staff member or by a representative of the institution’s athletics interests for the purpose of securing a prospective student-athlete’s enrollment and ultimate participation in the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program.”

How do I start the process?

First, consider what *type of school* you want to go to (small, large, urban, rural, state, out of state, etc.) and *what you want to study*. Use a tool like College Matchmaker to help. For details visit: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp

Second, *get started on your Personal Profile Webpage and skills video*. Once you complete these two steps, you will know which coaches you need to contact and will be ready to show them what you are all about.

NCAA Softball Scholarships

Division I	12 Scholarships per College	272 Schools	See Schools
Division II	7.2 Scholarships per College	273 Schools	See Schools
Division III	No Scholarships	400+ Schools	See Schools

NCAA Timeline
9th and 10th Grade
At the beginning of your Freshman(9 th grade) year, you become a prospective student athlete and NCAA rules regarding recruiting go into effect. <u>You may visit an institution at your own expense as often as you wish and all contacts with a coach must be on the college campus.</u> The athlete can call the coach, but the coach cannot call, email, instant message, text message or encourage contact of any kind prior to the athlete's junior year.
Identifying the colleges you want to attend is a crucial part of the process. It will help you determine which coaches to contact.
Junior Year – Sept 1st
Coaches may send athletes recruiting letters, emails, instant messages, text messages and information about the athletic program. Coaches may not call prospects until after July 1(Div I) or June 15(Div II). Players may call or email coaches, but coaches cannot return these calls until these dates.
July 1st after Junior Year
In person, face to face contacts can begin. A Division I college is allowed three total off-campus contacts with a prospect during her senior year in high school. Coaches may only call prospects once each week, and these calls include conversations with any family members. Be sure to keep your NCAA Clearinghouse and Amateurism information updated.
Senior Year – First Day Classes
On-campus official visits may begin. You are limited to five official visits expense paid visits at five different institutions. A coach is allowed unlimited telephone calls during the five days before an official visit to a campus. Coaches are also allowed unlimited telephone calls during the day of a home visit.
National Letter of Intent Early Signing begins the 2 nd Wednesday in Nov. of Senior Year. Late Signing begins the 2 nd Wednesday in April of Senior Year.

College choice and application process for athletes

For high school students going on to play college sports, the process of choosing and applying to colleges may include the following steps beyond the usual application process:

- Getting clear about what level of play to aspire to. If you are working with a student who wants to get a scholarship to play a Division I sport, talk with his or her coach to see if the plans are realistic.
- Attending summer sports camp at a college of interest. The college coach will see the student play, and the student can check out the feel of the campus.
- Registering with the NCAA Clearinghouse (athletes who aspire to NCAA Division I or II schools). See [NCAA Clearinghouse Basics](#).
- Sending letters of interest to colleges they think are a good fit (sophomore and junior year).
- Keeping good records of contact with college coaches. The details of every meeting should be written down to avoid confusion later.
- Preparing an athletic resume with three sections: basic information about the student, sports statistics, and academic record. Students should keep track of athletic statistics starting in ninth grade and have an up-to-date resume by the end of their junior year.

- Submitting a *videotape that portrays the athlete* in a competitive contest, and showcases his or her skills. Accompany the tape with a statistics summary.
- Using a special application—marked with a code—supplied by the college's athletic department. Students given such an application must use it—it tells the admissions office that the athletic department is interested in the student.

Topics to cover when discussing the college application process

Stress to students that **athletic participation is only part of the college choice decision**. Ask students how they would feel about this college if they couldn't play (perhaps because of injury) or decided not to play.

Make sure they also know that **athletic eligibility does not guarantee admission**. The admissions committee—not the college coach—decides whether students are admissible.

Students may not be clear whether contact from a college coach means they are being recruited. Suggest they ask the coach three questions:

- Are you recruiting me?
- Do I fit the accepted student profile at your college?
- Am I likely to be admitted?

Urge students to look at colleges' team rosters (these are usually posted on the college website) for information: for example, how many players a team has for each position and the athletic stats of the players.

Advise students to look at the graduation rate of athletes at the colleges they plan to attend. A lower graduation rate may indicate that the college accepts student athletes whose academic abilities aren't up to par, or that the life of the athlete on that campus is not conducive to academic success.

Tell students to take note of what percentage of the student population is made up of athletes, and to consider whether they want to attend a school where athletes are a large presence or a small minority.

Remind students that if they play sports in college, they will be spending a lot of time with the coach. They should feel a rapport with the coaches at the colleges they are applying to.

Warn students about scouting and recruiting services that offer to "package" students for maximum appeal to colleges. **The NCAA does not sanction or endorse any of these firms.**

College Board: www.collegeboard.com

Learning how to stay on top of a calendar and see a task through to its end are vitally important skills. These action plans help students take responsibility for the college planning process.

- [Senior Action Plan](#)
- [Junior Action Plan](#)
- [Sophomore Action Plan](#)
- [Freshman Action Plan](#)

When to apply

Student athletes also may face special considerations in application timing. For example, because **NCAA Division I and II coaches can't contact students until July 1 before senior year**, students playing spring sports who hope to participate in Division I or II events must reach out to college coaches in time for the coach to watch them play in spring of their junior year—or plan to attend sports camp the summer between junior and senior year, the peak recruiting time for their sports. And these students may need to commit to a college as early as November of their senior year.

College coaches eager to secure their athletes may urge students to apply early decision. Students who are considering applying early should know the [rules and obligations of early decision programs](#). Some student athletes delay college entrance by a year. A thirteenth year or postgraduate program in high school can allow them to mature mentally, bring grades and test scores up to speed, and gain weight and strength. Division rules are complex about how grades for this year count toward eligibility. Any student considering this option should seek expert advice.

Students may transfer from a two- or four-year college to an NCAA college. Students must meet eligibility requirements to participate in sports or receive financial aid at that college. Download the NCAA Transfer Guide from the [Publications section of the NCAA website](#).

Why you need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse

- If you are going to play NCAA DI or DII athletics you have to be cleared by the NCAA
- You can't receive official scholarship offers until you have registered
- You can't go on official visits unless you have registered
- All NCAA coaches use the Clearinghouse/Eligibility Center to verify your academics

You should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the start of your junior year. If you are a senior, register immediately and get your official documents ready.

Please note the NCAA now refers to the Clearinghouse as the Eligibility Center. These are the exact same organizations.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Your GPA from your core courses are used in combination with your SAT or ACT test scores to determine your academic eligibility. You need to achieve a minimum of 2.0 GPA in your core course. There are total of 16 core courses you are required to pass. You will need 4 years of English, 3 years Math (Algebra 1 or higher), 2 years Science (natural or physical including lab), 2 years Social Science, 1 extra year of Math, Science or English and 4 years of any of the previous courses or Foreign Language, Religion or Philosophy.

SAT or ACT Score Requirements

You will need to take the either the SAT or ACT test and have the records sent directly to the NCAA. Your test score is then combined with your GPA to determine your eligibility. Please see the sliding scale at the bottom of the page to see what test scores you will need given your GPA.

*It is best to take the either test more than once as you can combine your highest subject scores for the best total score.

Amateurism Requirements

95% of athletes do not have problems regarding their amateurism. The NCAA reviews amateurism issues related to contact with professional teams, salary based on participation, prize money, playing with professionals, tryouts or practice with professional teams, benefits from agents, contracts with agents, financial assistance based on athletics or delayed enrollment to participate in organized athletics.

Steps after registering

You will need to send complete academic records, test results, finish your amateurism certificate and submit payment. Complete instructions are below.

Academic Records – you will need official copies of all of your academic records. If you have attended multiple schools in high school you will need the official records from each school. International athletes from non-English speaking countries will need to have their documents translated by an official translator.

Test Scores – you will need take either the SAT or ACT tests and have your results sent directly to the NCAA by the testing organizations. When you are preparing for the test there will be an area to indicate where you would like to have your results sent by entering a four digit code of 9999.

Amateurism Certificate – once you have created your account you will have series of questions to answer online to determine your status as an amateur athlete.

Payment – the cost for registering with the NCAA is a onetime fee of \$65 for domestic athletes and \$95 for international athletes. There are opportunities for a fee waiver and all instructions are made available once you have created your account.

FAQs about the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse

Student athletes must register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse to be eligible to play NCAA Division I or Division II sports in college. (Athletes playing in NCAA Division III do not have to register.)

What is the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse?

The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse is the organization that determines whether prospective college athletes are eligible to play sports at NCAA Division I or Division II institutions. It does this by reviewing the student athlete's academic record, SAT or ACT scores, and amateur status to ensure conformity with NCAA rules.

What are NCAA Divisions I, II, and III?

The NCAA is the governing body of many intercollegiate sports. Each college and university regulated by the NCAA has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid, and falls into one of the three membership divisions (Divisions I, II, and III). Divisions are based on school size and the scope of their athletic programs and scholarships.

When should students register with the clearinghouse?

The NCAA recommends that student athletes register with the clearinghouse at the **beginning of their junior year** in high school, but many students register after their junior year. There is no registration deadline, but students must be cleared by the clearinghouse before they receive athletic scholarships or compete at a Division I or Division II institution.

How do students register with the clearinghouse?

Students can register online at the [NCAA Eligibility website](#). They will have to enter personal information, answer questions about their athletic participation, and pay a registration fee. The website will then prompt them to have their high school transcript and ACT or SAT scores sent to the clearinghouse.

Can students have the registration fee waived?

Students who have received a waiver for the SAT or ACT are eligible for a waiver of the clearinghouse registration fee. The student's counselor must submit confirmation of the student's test fee waiver. Go to the [NCAA Eligibility Center High School Portal](#) for more information.

What records does the clearinghouse require?

Students should arrange to have you send their high school transcript to the clearinghouse as soon as they have completed at least six semesters of high school. The transcript must be mailed directly from their high school. They must also arrange to have their ACT or SAT test scores reported directly by the testing company to the clearinghouse. Students can arrange this when they register for the ACT or SAT. **You are responsible for sending in students' final transcripts and proof of graduation** at the end of their senior year.

How often can students update their athletics participation information?

Students can update the information on the athletics participation section online as often as they want (and should update it regularly), up to the time when they request a final certification of their status. At that point (usually three to four months before enrolling in college), students must finalize their information.

What are the NCAA academic eligibility requirements?

To play sports at an NCAA Division I or Division II institution, the student must:

- Complete a certain number of high school core courses (defined below)
- Earn a certain minimum grade point average in these core courses
- Earn a certain minimum score on the SAT or ACT (for Division I, this is scaled according to the student's core-course GPA)
- Graduate from high school

For more information, see the NCAA's *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*, available at the [Publications section](#) of the [NCAA website](#).

What are core courses?

"Core courses" is the name that the NCAA gives to high school courses that meet certain academic criteria specified by the association. Students must complete a certain number of core courses for NCAA Division I and II eligibility.

How are high school courses classified as core courses?

All participating high schools submit lists of the courses that they offer that meet NCAA core-course criteria. If approved, the courses are added to a database that the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse maintains. You can check this database, or view a list of approved core courses on the [High School Portal](#) to see whether your student athletes are enrolled in courses that will count toward NCAA eligibility.

It will most likely be your job as counselor to provide the NCAA with the list of your school's core courses, and to update this list annually. The NCAA may ask for more information before approving a core course.

What are the NCAA amateurism eligibility requirements?

To play sports at an NCAA Division I or Division II institution, the student-athlete must follow NCAA amateurism rules as regards receiving a salary or prize money for athletic participation, playing with a professional team, and other areas. For more information, see the *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete* linked above.

Keep in mind

The best way for students to prepare for a future in college athletics is to complete the approved core courses and earn appropriate grades in them. Indeed, more students fail to qualify to play NCAA sports because of lack of appropriate course work than for low test scores.

Make sure your athletes are enrolled in the courses on your high school's core-course list, and also know the eligibility requirements on the [NCAA Eligibility website](#). Then make sure your athletes are taking the necessary courses, earning the necessary grades, and doing anything else they must to stay on track for NCAA eligibility.