

Agawam High School



Student-Athlete's Guide to College Admissions



An Agawam High School Guidance Department Publication

A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS GUIDE FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE

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Dear Student:

This booklet is designed as a service to provide you with important information about NCAA Divisions I, II, and III initial-eligibility standards for athletic participation. The information contained here is critical if you plan on participating in college athletics at a Division I, II, or III institution.

In addition to listings of resources and some excellent “tips” from Agawam High School coaches, we offer a suggested timeline to be followed by individuals interested in pursuing athletic scholarships. We suggest that you also secure copies of the **NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student/Athlete** by contacting the NCAA (www.ncaa.org or 317/917-6222). This guide provides summaries of various NCAA rules and offers guidance on many topics that are important for you to know. The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse Information is available on-line at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

THE STUDENT-ATHLETE’S GUIDE TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS includes information on creating an athletic resume as well as information supplied to us by the NCAA, answering the most frequently asked questions about the clearinghouse, and the initial eligibility certification process.

Please feel free to contact the AHS Athletic or School Counseling Offices, the NCAA legislative services staff of the NCAA Clearinghouse if you need assistance.

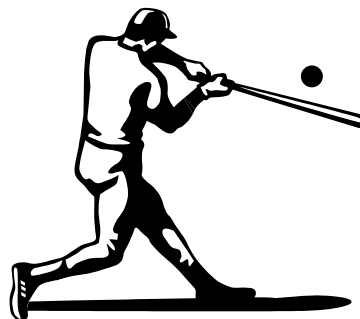
Sincerely,

The AHS School Counseling and Athletic Departments

SO YOU WANT TO PLAY IN COLLEGE

Who is involved?

Student
Parents
College Coach
College Admissions Officer
College Financial Aid Officer
High School Coach
High School Guidance Counselor



What do they do?

Student:

- Obtains strong grades in challenging courses.
- Investigates colleges thoroughly - look for a college that is the “right-fit”.
- Meets with high school and club coaches during junior year to assess level at which she/he can play in college.
- Clearly understands the level of college’s athletics program and financial aid policies.
- Investigates support services available to students at the college to include special services available to athletes.
- Knows the NCAA rules governing the recruitment process (included in this guide).
- Registers with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Contacts college coaches by letter during junior year as part of initial college exploration.
- Sends unofficial transcript to college coaches early in the process so they will have some idea of the player’s chances of admission.
- Makes arrangements for DVDs during season and produces a 10 to 15 minute recording of a segment of play that demonstrates the player’s abilities.
- Learns about the team and college by talking to current players.
- Keeps school counselor informed of coach contacts and level of interest displayed by the coach.
- Verifies any offer of admission before making a commitment to a college. Remember, the admissions office, not the athletic office, signs decision letters.
- Looks for opportunities to gain visibility and honest evaluation at tournaments and camps.

College Coach

- Identifies a set of team needs (e.g. keeper, outside speed) and then recruits students to fill those needs.
- Communicates needs and provides list of recruits for the admissions office.

College Admissions Officer

- Processes all applications and official academic information that is sent to the admissions office.
- Issues all official university correspondence including the offer of admission.

College Financial Aid Officer

- Makes final decision regarding need-based and academic scholarship offers.

High School Coach

- Provides student with realistic assessment of athletic capability and potential level of college play.
- Based on direction from the student, follows up with college coaches by telephone or by letter of recommendation.

High School Counselor

- Assists student in all phases of the college application procedure, to include exploration, selection, application completion, college visit, and interview.
- Insures that materials in support of the college application are submitted in a complete and timely manner, to include transcripts and letters of recommendation.
- Insures that the player takes the appropriate courses to meet NCAA eligibility requirements.
- Advises student regarding college admission testing.

Parent

- Meets with high school and premier club coaches during student's junior year to clarify level of ability and helps set realistic expectations for level of play.
- Identifies financial constraints regarding college and discusses them with a guidance counselor as well as the student in the junior year.
- Meets with guidance counselor in junior year to review strategy for college selection.
- Helps student organize a checklist to keep track of correspondence, DVDs and contacts with coaches and colleges.

How Do I Become Eligible to Play College Sports?

While being an exceptional athlete can allow you to play at the next level, there are certain requirements you must complete. Colleges want to recruit players who are strong academically as well as to ensure that their athletes will be able to handle college level classes while spending large amounts of time on the athletic field. There are four major parts to becoming eligible to play college athletics. The four parts to initial eligibility (being eligible to play sports in your first year of college) are:

1. Graduation from high school.
2. The NCAA Clearinghouse 16 Core Course requirement.
3. Obtain a minimum core grade-point average.
4. Obtain a minimum ACT or SAT test score.

Hopefully, if you are thinking about which colleges you would like to attend and where you would like to play, then you will already be well on your way to satisfying the first part of obtaining initial eligibility – **graduating from high school**.

In order to be eligible to play college athletics in your first year, you must first be determined a “qualifier”. Becoming a “qualifier” means that you have completed all required core courses and have been cleared through the NCAA clearinghouse. The following pages outline the NCAA core course requirements and minimum GPA and SAT/ACT needed in order to become a “qualifier”.



The NCAA Clearinghouse Core Course Requirements

In order to participate in sports at the collegiate level, there are certain core course requirements that you must meet while still in high school. These requirements have changed many times over the past few years, so what may have been true last year regarding initial eligibility for Division I and II athletics may not be the case this year.

The requirements that must be met are as follows:

You must have 16 core courses completed in high school to be eligible to practice, play, and receive financial aid for athletic ability at a Division I or II college. The break-down of core course requirements is listed below.

Division I
16 Core Courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 years of English• 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)• 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)• 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science• 2 years of social science• 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

Division II
16 Core Courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years of English• 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)• 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)• 2 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science• 2 years of social science• 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

Division III
To play at the Division III level, you need only be accepted to the institution in order to be deemed eligible. It then depends on the Division III school and athletic program to implement their own requirements that must be met in order to remain eligible at that institution. A student who plans on attending a Division III institution does not have to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

Obtaining a minimum core grade-point average

Along with checking to ensure that you have completed the required core courses, the NCAA Clearinghouse will also calculate your core grade-point average. They will only use the 16 highest final grades obtained in the core courses that you have taken. (If you have taken more than 16 core courses, the NCAA Clearinghouse will only use the 14 highest final grades that meet the specified requirements).

- ∂ *Division I* – In order to meet the eligibility requirements for Division I institutions, you must take the SAT or ACT and achieve a score that corresponds to your core GPA as indicated on the Core Grade-Point Average/Text-Score Sliding Scale (right).

For example, if you were to have a 3.0 core GPA, you would also need to have received a 620 SAT (Critical Reading and Math sections only) or 52 ACT sum score in order to be eligible to participate in Division I athletics.

- ∂ *Division II* – There is no sliding scale requirement for Division II athletics, however there are still minimum core GPA and test scores that must be met in order to participate in Division II athletics. The minimum core GPA is 2.000. The minimum SAT score is 820 (Critical Reading and Math sections only) and the minimum ACT sum score is 68.

DIVISION I CORE GRADE-POINT AVERAGE/ TEXT-SCORE SLIDING SCALE NEW CORE GPA/Test Score Index		
Core GPA	SAT <small>Verbal and Math ONLY</small>	ACT
3.550 & above	400	37
3.525	410	38
3.500	420	39
3.475	430	40
3.450	440	41
3.425	450	41
3.400	460	42
3.375	470	42
3.350	480	43
3.325	490	44
3.300	500	44
3.275	510	45
3.250	520	46
3.225	530	46
3.200	540	47
3.175	550	47
3.150	560	48
3.125	570	49
3.100	580	49
3.075	590	50
3.050	600	50
3.025	610	51
3.000	620	52
2.975	630	52
2.950	640	53
2.925	650	53
2.900	660	54
2.875	670	55
2.850	680	56
2.825	690	56
2.800	700	57
2.775	710	58
2.750	720	59
2.725	730	59
2.700	730	60
2.675	740-750	61
2.650	760	62
2.625	770	63
2.600	780	64
2.575	790	65
2.550	800	66
2.525	810	67
2.500	820	68
2.475	830	69
2.450	840-850	70
2.425	860	70
2.400	860	71
2.375	870	72
2.350	880	73
2.325	890	74
2.300	900	75
2.275	910	76
2.250	920	77
2.225	930	78
2.200	940	79
2.175	950	80
2.150	960	80
2.125	960	81
2.100	970	82
2.075	980	83
2.050	990	84
2.025	1000	85
2.000	1010	86

Obtaining a minimum ACT or SAT test score

Considering the most recent changes that have been made to both the SAT and the ACT, it is important to understand the NCAA's requirements regarding these new tests. The most notable addition to these tests is the writing section, which is mandatory when taking the SAT, but optional if taking the ACT.

The NCAA will not require a writing test as part of its initial-eligibility requirements. Rather, the Clearinghouse will combine the critical reading and math sections of the SAT to come up with a combined score between 400 and 1600. Since the NCAA will also not consider the writing section scores from the ACT, the previous ACT scores will remain the same

To report your test scores to the NCAA Clearinghouse, use **code 9999** when registering for the SAT. Doing this will automatically, (and efficiently), send your scores to the Clearinghouse. If you have already taken the SAT and did not enter the Clearinghouse code when registering, simply contact the SAT office to have your score sent. Sending your scores this way will cost a little extra money, but it is your obligation, if you want to play in college, to get those SAT or ACT scores to the Clearinghouse!

The College Board has information about the new SAT on its Web site at www.collegeboard.com, and ACT has information at www.act.org.

Registering with the NCAA Clearinghouse

Let's get started!

First of all, you need only register with the NCAA Clearinghouse if you are planning on playing athletics at any Division I or II institution. The most efficient way to register is by going on-line at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net and clicking on 'Prospective Student-Athlete'. By registering on-line, prospects will be able to view their eligibility information on-line, and will not have to call the clearinghouse for updates. On-line also allows prospects to view their eligibility status up to six weeks faster than through the paper registration process. The Clearinghouse recommends that you register at the conclusion of your junior year. By registering early, you give yourself and your counselors enough time to figure out any snags in your clearinghouse application, if any should arise.

SAT fee waiver candidates may also have NCAA registration fee waivers. A counselor letter is needed, so ask your counselor for more details. You should also see your counselor to have them send a six semester transcript to the Clearinghouse once you have registered. The Clearinghouse will not process any transcript with fewer than six semester represented, so do this at the conclusion of your junior year, or at the very beginning of your senior year. At the conclusion of your senior year, your counselor will send the Clearinghouse a final transcript (with proof of graduation). Once your final transcript has been received, that transcript is usually 'frozen', meaning that no other classes can be used to determine your eligibility. Therefore, plan accordingly and do not rely on summer classes after your senior year to count towards your initial-eligibility.

If you have attended multiple high schools, the Clearinghouse will require an official transcript from each school. Contact your previous high schools to have them send a transcript to the Clearinghouse as soon as possible!



Once registered, a student will receive a preliminary report regarding their initial-eligibility status. The Clearinghouse prioritizes incoming information by the following categories:

- Students who are being actively recruited by an institution and are on an institutional request list
- Students with disabilities who have taken a non-standard test or who have registered with the NCAA disability services
- Students who request a report.

It takes the Clearinghouse approximately two weeks to process individual information, so be patient. Continue to work hard and take the appropriate classes.

Agents & Amateurism

Along with the latest changes in the NCAA Clearinghouse eligibility requirements is the creation of an amateurism certification process. In order to protect prospective student athletes from the sometimes harmful practices of sports agents and to address concerns regarding prospective student-athlete's amateurism status, all future collegiate athletes will undergo this certification process.

The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse registration form will include an amateurism certification section that will be used to determine the amateur status of freshman and transfer prospective student-athletes initially enrolling at NCAA Division I and II institutions. At Division III institutions, certification of a prospect's amateur status is completed by each individual institution.

You can complete the amateurism section when registering with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Registering for Amateurism Status through the Clearinghouse

When registering with the Clearinghouse via the internet, (after your junior year), you will be asked a series of questions regarding your sports participation history as part of the amateurism certification process. Registering early and answering the participation questions will ensure that college coaches will have preliminary information regarding your amateur status, thus assisting in the recruiting process. Final amateur status certification will occur at the end of your senior year of high school or approximately two to three months prior to your initial full-time enrollment at a NCAA Division I or II institution.

The NCAA Clearinghouse amateurism certification process does not, however, cover all necessary areas of amateurism status that need to be clarified in order for a prospective student-athlete to be eligible to play college athletics. An institution will ask questions regarding your amateur status because it is their responsibility to certify that all areas of amateurism have been met for their incoming student-athletes beyond the amateur status that the NCAA Clearinghouse certifies.

In order to gain certified amateur status, you must **not** have participated in or obtained any of the following:

- ∂ Contracts with a professional team (Division I)
- ∂ Salary for participating in athletics (Division I)
- ∂ Prize money above actual and necessary expenses (Division I)
- ∂ Play with professionals (Division I)
- ∂ Tryouts, practice or competition with a professional team (Division I)
- ∂ Benefits from an agent or prospective agent (Divisions I and II)
- ∂ Agreement to be represented by an agent (Divisions I and II)
- ∂ Organized-competition rule (Division I and II)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE



Q: Why do I need to register and be certified?

If you intend to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman in college, you must be registered with and be certified as eligible by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Refer to the [Academic Eligibility Section](#) to determine the initial-eligibility standards that apply to you. Please note that initial-eligibility certification pertains only to whether you meet the NCAA requirements for participation as a freshman in Division I or II athletics and has no bearing on your admission to a particular Division I or II institution.

Q: When should I register?

You should apply for certification after your junior year in high school if you are sure you wish to participate in intercollegiate athletics as a freshman at a Division I or II institution. If you fail to submit all required documents, your incomplete file will be discarded after three years, requiring you to pay a new fee if certification is requested after that time.

Q: Is there a deadline to register?

There is no deadline to register with the clearinghouse; however, you must be certified before receiving an athletics scholarship, practicing and competing at a Division I or II institution.

Q: How do I register?

Students have two options for registering with the clearinghouse. You may complete your registration online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net or by completing and mailing the [Student Release Form](#) to the address included on the form.

Q: What if I have attended more than one high school?

If you have attended multiple high schools since ninth grade, you must have an official transcript from each school. These transcripts can either come from each school or the high school from which you are graduating. The transcripts must come by mail directly from the high school (not from you). You should give the pink and copy of the student-release form to the counselor at the high school from which you will be graduating. You may also need to make copies of this form and send them to the counselors at the other schools that you have attended. Faxed transcripts are not acceptable under any circumstances.

Q: Are standardized test scores required?

Qualifying test scores are required for participation at both Division I and Division II colleges. If you intend to participate at either a Division I or II school, the test scores may be taken from your official high-school transcript or be sent to the clearinghouse directly from the testing agency.

Q: How can I arrange for my scores to be sent directly from the testing agency?

When you register to take the ACT or the SAT, you can mark code 9999 so that the clearinghouse will be one of the institutions receiving your scores; or alternatively, you can submit a request (and fee) for an "Additional Score Report" to the appropriate testing agency by indicating code 9999 on your request form.

Q: What will the clearinghouse provide to the colleges that are recruiting me?

The clearinghouse will send your eligibility status to any Division I or II college that requests it. Please note that the clearinghouse will not send your eligibility information at your request; rather, the college must make the request for that information. Additionally, if no member institution requests your eligibility status, a final certification decision may not be processed.

Q: How can I check on the status of my file at the clearinghouse? For questions about whether your transcript, student release form, etc. were received, or about when you will be cleared, you can check the status of your file by logging in no-line as a registered student, (link can be found at the top left hand corner of web-page). You may also call the automated system at 877/861-3003 (toll free in the USA) or 319/339-3003. (You will need your Personal Identification Number (PIN) you received while registering or Social Security number to use the on-line service as well as the automated system).

If you've misplaced your PIN or need other information contact the Clearinghouse at:

Customer Service:

877/262-1492 (toll free in the USA)

Fax:

319/337-1556

Mail:

NCAA Clearinghouse

301 ACT DRive

P.O. Box 4043

Iowa City, IA 52243-4043

Office Hours:

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday

On-Line:

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net



SEASON SCHEDULE

(COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE)

If you're feeling overwhelmed or just anxious to get the process underway, stick to this schedule and you'll be on your way!

FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Check with your counselor to be sure that you are taking courses that meet the NCAA's initial eligibility requirements. (It is your responsibility to inform school personnel of your intent to play college sports.) Your scholastic record is important.
- Begin to keep photocopies of all "press releases" mentioning your name, including articles in local newspapers and our own school paper. You will want to include a couple of the best ones in your mailings to interest coaches.
- You may wish to have your performances video taped. This will give coaches the chance to see you playing your sport. (See Appendix for guidelines on creating an effective presentation video.)
- Be a team player both on and off the field, your ATTITUDE will be noticed by coaches and teachers. Remember, these people may be writing college recommendations for you in the future.
- It is appropriate to write a brief letter of introduction and interest to college coaches at this time, but you will send a more detailed communication with your athletic resume your junior year.



JUNIOR YEAR

- Continue to build a strong transcript by taking challenging academic courses, earning good grades, and taking the PSAT and SAT I. Work to be a leader both on and off the field. Take the PSAT in the fall in preparation for the SAT and for eligibility for National Merit Scholarships.

- Ask your high school coach to write a letter of recommendation for you to include in your correspondence to college coaches.
- Keep a record of your best performances in individual events. A coach may also want to know your time for the “mile” or “50 yard dash” as well. Keep track of your personal and team statistics and please **BE HONEST!**
- Write letters to college coaches at the institutions you are interested in attending to provide an introduction and to obtain information about the colleges you are evaluating. Include your resume and **one or two** of your most impressive “press” communications. Include: the name of your school, sport and coach; recognition, leadership and awards earned in the sport; SAT/PSAT scores, Grade Point Average; and a listing of school and community services and activities.
- In response to your letter you may receive written communications from college coaches, but be aware that they **may not** contact you in person or by telephone until on or after July 1, between your junior and senior years.
- If you receive a card or questionnaire from a college coach asking about your academic background, be sure to complete and return the information as soon as possible.
- If you receive a card or questionnaire for your high school coach to complete, it will be your responsibility to give it to him or her. Follow up to be sure that it is returned to the college in a timely manner.
- You may be asked to write a short essay explaining why you are interested in playing college athletics.
- Request information brochures from those colleges that interest you the most. Please be sure to follow the college admissions process as described in the Guidance Department’s publication “Junior Planning Guide”. You can’t play college sports if you are not accepted to the institution.
- Attend college fairs and meet with college representatives who visit South Windsor High School. Visit colleges during the summer between your junior and senior year, if not sooner. You may want to take advantage of open houses or schedule one-on-one interviews and tours with an admissions counselor.
- Begin to prepare college essays.
- Explore your options and examine plans for financing your education. Attend financial aid informational meetings with your parents. Begin to search for potential scholarships on the Internet, at your local library, through local business and review postings in the School Counseling department.

- Stay in top physical and mental condition. It will be important if you are to meet your great expectations for athletic and academic success.
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. If you are not registered, you will not be able to participate in college sports or participate in “recruiting trips”. You can register on-line at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Junior Year Calendar Outline

Although college is two years away for juniors, there is plenty to do. Your junior year will be a busy time...



Fall

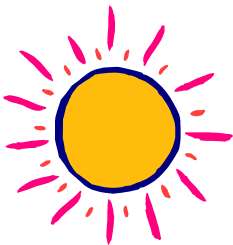
- If you haven't already chosen your major for your post-secondary schooling, begin narrowing your choices.
- Attend college fairs and meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Attend financial aid informational meetings with your parents.
- Request information brochures from those colleges that interest you the most.
- Take the PSAT in preparation for the SAT and for eligibility for National Merit Scholarships.
- Begin searching for potential scholarships on the Internet, at your local library, and through local businesses, associations, and municipalities.

Spring

- Take the SAT I or the ACT Assessment (depending on the requirements of the schools that you are interested in attending). If SAT II tests are required, this would also be a good time to take those. Send scores to the NCAA Clearinghouse. (code 9999)
- Narrow your list of choice colleges and make plans to visit those campuses. You may take advantage of open houses or schedule a one-on-one interview and tour with an admission counselor. Request information regarding those scholarships for which you are eligible. Scholarship search engines are available on sites such as FastWEB, and Peterson's.
- Look for a summer job.



Summer



- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the conclusion of your junior year. Have your counselor send a six semester transcript directly to the Clearinghouse.
- Complete admission application forms for the schools that you would like to attend. (If you attend an upcoming open house, many colleges will waive the application fee if you bring your application with you to the campus.)

SENIOR YEAR



- Consider playing a summer league, participating in a clinic/showcase or going to a sport camp sponsored by the college of your choice between your junior and senior year. It may be your last chance to demonstrate your skills to potential coaches.
- Take a senior SAT I and/or SAT II if required by the colleges to which you will apply and STUDY. Don't slack off now, your senior grades are very important!
- Complete college applications and apply as early as possible. Be sure to use any application sent to you by the college coaches (even if you have received another application from the schools admissions office). The application the coach sent you may be specially coded to alert the admissions office that he or she is interested in you.
- Consult your guidance counselor and high school coach regarding your academic and athletic plans. Solicit their help.
- Keep in touch with college coaches. The college coaches recruiting you may send you cards or letters daily, but may **ONLY CALL OR SPEAK WITH YOU** once a week, that includes "scouts" or assistant coaches.
- You may wish to invite a coach to an important game or meet. You may also wish to include a copy of your team schedule.
- You may be invited on a recruiting trip during your senior year, a visit to the college campus hosted by the coach and his team. If you are, be sure to write a thank you note to the coach and your student "host" upon your return.
- Whatever you do...don't sit around and **wait** for things to happen. Be pro-active. Create a plan of action for college admission and communicate with coaches and **FOLLOW THROUGH**.

Senior Year Calendar Outline



Your senior year is the time for completing applications, applying for financial aid, and taking care of a lot of things you probably haven't thought about yet. Just remember, take it one step at a time.

<p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request applications and information from those colleges in which you're most interested. The applications for many colleges and universities are available on-line. • Visit schools and/or plan fall visits to help narrow your choices. • Look into fall overnight and weekend college visitation programs 	<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark your calendar for college fairs and admissions representative visits. • Meet with your counselor to develop a college admissions plan. • Register for the SAT, ACT Assessment, and/or prep courses. • Consider early decision/early action programs.
<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a schedule of admissions and financial aid deadlines. • Begin applications and admission essays. • Request transcripts from your guidance office and letters of recommendation from teachers, activity leaders, coaches, and/or community members. • Explore college and scholarship information on line, at the library, and throughout your community. 	<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up to ensure that letters of recommendation are submitted. • Complete essays and applications. • Submit applications for early decision/early action programs.
<p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete, photocopy, and submit your applications. Keep the photocopies for your records. • Obtain a Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). You can do this on line by visiting http://www.fafsa.ed.gov. • Obtain any other financial aid forms that may be required by the schools to which you are applying. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your parents about obtaining income tax information and/or completing their taxes early to help in completing the FAFSA. • Complete, photocopy, and submit the FAFSA.
<p>April</p>	<p>May</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive admissions notifications. • Compare financial aid awards relative to cost of attendance. • Make your final enrollment decision and submit the enrollment deposit, if requested. • Make a decision regarding your housing. If you will be living on campus, you need to apply for housing. • Notify those schools that you will not be attending. • Sign and return financial aid forms for the school that you will be attending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take AP exams. • Send final transcript and student loan applications to your chosen college. • Contact your financial aid office to check your status.
<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete any remaining financial aid forms. • Plan for college orientation and transportation to school. 	<p>July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize college transportation and housing.

Selecting the Best School for YOU

Where will you ultimately go to school? We hope that you make a wise decision based upon:

1. The academic offerings of the institution. Will it meet your academic needs now and in the future? It is important to have a good academic “match”. If an unfortunate injury occurs, you’ll be in the right place to continue your education.
2. Scholarship money offered to you.
3. The athletic program and the coach. Do you fit into the athletic program?



Choosing a college is just like any other challenge that you face as an athlete. You need to map out a game plan that will enable you to achieve your goal, and then you need to get out there and do it. Selecting a college is not something to be taken lightly after all, you will be spending the next two to four years of your life there.

The first step is to start making a list of possible colleges. Obviously you will want to choose a college that has an outstanding team in your particular sport, but there is so much more to consider. First, you need to make sure that the college offers an academic program that meets your interest - this will be critical to life after college. No two colleges are alike; you need to look carefully at what each campus has to offer.

Use the resources here to help guide you through the process. You may be an outstanding member of your sports team, but you are an individual above all else. Every person has different interests, values, and goals. Taking a good look at your own likes and dislikes will help you narrow down the list of colleges to consider.

Once you have a list of colleges that offer your desired academic program and sport, you can narrow your search by evaluating what else is important to you. Things to consider:

- campus size
- housing/food
- location
- curriculum
- student/faculty ratio
- tuition and other costs

When you have decided that you are interested in a particular college, call the admissions office and arrange a time to visit. It's important for you to see the campus firsthand so that you can judge whether or not you will feel comfortable there. Try to arrange your tour while classes are in session, so that you aren't touring a ghost town. It's perfectly okay to choose several schools that are your dream schools, but make sure that you keep your feet on the ground. Balance the list with several schools that you know you have a good chance of getting into, as well at least one college at which you know you'll be accepted.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INSTITUTION



The following are key but often overlooked questions on athletics and academics that will be of help.

Athletics

Describe your coaching style.

All coaches have different coaching styles and use different techniques for motivation and discipline. It is to your benefit to ask this question to determine whether your learning style and the coach's style would be a good fit.

What are your expectations for the upcoming year?

Obviously, all coaches would like to see their programs succeed each year. By asking this question, you will learn the goals and objectives the coach has set forth to reach the final destination – a successful season.

Describe the walk-on process and the scholarship program.

You will learn how the coach handles his/her walk-ons. Each coach and institution treats walk-ons differently. Also, the scholarship programs will vary to some degree.

What role will I play on your team?

Many coaches will already have an idea of how they would like to utilize certain recruits. You will be able to find out where the coach sees you fitting in on his/her team and why.

What demands does this sport require physically and what time is required?

It is important to know the physical demands that will be placed on you during your tenure as an athlete. Also, you need to know how much time is spent with this sport so you may manage your study time wisely.

Academics

How strong is my degree program?

There are some institutions that have stronger programs than others. There are also those institutions that specialize in specific degree programs.

Does this major mix well with athletics?

Some majors are more time consuming than others and may require labs or mandatory work outside of class hours. You need to know the demands that will be placed on you within your major, to know if you are spreading yourself too thin through participating in athletics.

What is your view on academics?

Many coaches have different thoughts regarding athletics. It is important to know that the coach's philosophy on academics will compliment yours.

What percentage of athletes graduates in four years?

This will tell you about a coach's commitment to academics. Also, the team grade point average is a good indicator of academic commitment.

College Life

What is a typical day for a student-athlete?

You will learn a typical schedule that will include courses, practices, meal times, study times, etc. This will give you insight as to how to manage your time and assist you with needed adjustments.

What does the institution's services entail?

You will be informed of any study hall hours that may be required of you during your tenure. Also, this is a good time to ask about the availability of tutors.

What is the average class size?

You will learn what type of attention you will be receiving as a student. Some larger institutions have large classes that tend to be taught by teaching assistants.

How would you describe the residence halls/campus housing and will I be required to live in campus housing as a student-athlete?

Sometimes student-athlete housing is provided and included in the scholarship you are allotted. It is important to know this before enrolling with the institution. Also, coaches and other institutional faculty have a better idea of what the residence halls are like and where they are located on campus.

Financial Aid

What is the length of my scholarship and what type of scholarship is it?

Most institutional scholarships are for only one year. Also, there are some scholarships that cover just tuition (or housing, or books) and others that cover housing, books, tuition, or full-ride scholarships.

Is there financial aid available for summer school?

Some athletes prefer to simply take the necessary course hours to be eligible to play during the season. This could leave you with several credit hours that you may wish to pick up during the summer.

However, you may need financial assistance in the summer, so ask whether or not your financial aid packages cover summer expenses.

Describe the different financial aid packages.

Athletic scholarships are typically assessed and renewed on a yearly basis. It is important to know what your athletic scholarship entails. Also, it is important to know if you can supplement your athletic scholarship with other financial aid packages the institutions offers.



If I get seriously injured and I am unable to participate, what will happen to my scholarship?
Institutions are not obligated to offer scholarships or financial aid past the term of the agreement. It is important to know what the institution's commitment to injured athletes is.

May I be employed while receiving a scholarship?
Find out if you can be employed while in season, or out of season. Also, find out if you can be employed during vacations without violating your scholarship.

“Playing sport was somewhat frivolous, but I liked it. I rebelled a little bit, and wouldn’t go to music lessons and things like that, but I would go play ball. My parents learned to love it because they saw how much I got out of it.” –Mike Krzyzewski

COACHES' COMMENTS

We asked several AHS coaches to offer advice to students based upon their experience and expertise. Their “words of wisdom” are as follows:

“The best advice I can give is, don’t procrastinate. As soon as you finish your junior season send all of your stats from 9th through 11th grade, along with a video of yourself, either in a game or just performing skills to the colleges that you are interested in. These should be sent to the head coach. Also, you should send a schedule of your senior season so the coach can attend a game if they are interested in scouting you. If you play a spring sport, it is best to send a schedule of your junior season, because by the spring of your senior year, you should already know where you are going to attend and most coaches have already completed their recruiting and given out all of the scholarships they have available. Along with your stats, send a copy of your transcript, this will allow the coach to determine if you would be a good candidate for admissions. Before they can offer your financial assistance, you must be accepted to the school. They may also have scholarships to offer based on your academic performance, especially if you are interested in Division III. D-III schools cannot give athletic scholarships.



If in the end you do not receive a scholarship before you start school, tryout as a walk-on. While you may not receive scholarships for the initial semester, you can for the next semester and school year.”

-Kathy Georgina
Varsity Softball

“Student Athletes need to recognize that athletics can open doors but at the end of the day, it’s academics that are more of a focus. When choosing a college, look for the greatest number of opportunities, (not just the one sport) that can be available when looking at schools.

Also, playing a sport in college is a serious commitment. With the amount of time, energy and focus required at any of the levels (Division I, II, III), students need to be very adept at time management. The opportunity to play a sport in college is fantastic, but it needs to be viewed in the proper perspective and handled in the correct manner.

I benefited greatly from playing hockey in college, but it was a constant challenge to meet the demands while I was involved.”

-Rich Feeley
Varsity Hockey

SAMPLE LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

Coach's Name
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Coach (Coach's Name):

Upon recommendation of my coaching staff, I am forwarding the attached athletic resume to you outlining my scholastic and athletic achievements while a starting varsity soccer and lacrosse player at Agawam High School, Agawam, MA.

I am very interested in attending your school and presently plan to pursue a degree in Business Administration upon graduation from Agawam High in June of 20__.

I would be very interested in discussing with you, or your representative, the possibility of participating in your athletic program.

For your convenience, I have attached the remainder of the soccer schedule as well as videotape and several press releases highlighting my accomplishments. I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number

Sam Thompson
2126 Anywhere Avenue
Agawam, MA 01001
(555) 555-5555
jthompson@internet.com

Coach Joseph Smith
Northpoint College
111 Westhall Avenue
Easthampton, MA 01100

September 14, 2003

Dear Coach Smith:

I'm writing to express my sincere interest in attending Northpoint College and becoming a member of your basketball team. I am currently a senior at Agawam High School in Agawam, Massachusetts and have maintained a solid 3.1 GPA with a full roster of upper level classes geared towards a college major in biology. I've been a forward for the South Windsor Bobcats basketball team for two seasons, and was voted Most Improved Player for the 2002 season. Please see my attached resume for a full listing of my basketball statistics.

My goal for college is to obtain a solid education so that I can pursue further education in veterinarian science. I also plan to work hard to maximize my talents in basketball, and would be a definite asset to your team. Last season I played an integral part in bringing home a 18 – 2 winning season for the Brownies. My skills are solid, my heart is in my sport, and I've got the dedication to train hard to become an even better athlete.

I'm sending a video of a few of my best plays, but I'd also like to talk with you personally about my qualifications. I can be reached at 555-555-5555 after 4 p.m.

Sincerely,

Sam Thompson

SAMPLE ATHLETIC RESUMES

Name:
Address:
City, State Zip Code:
Phone Number:

Year in School:
GPA:
SAT: Verbal
Math

EDUCATION:

Agawam High School
760 Cooper Street
Agawam, MA 01001
(555) 555-5555

SPORT: Football

Height:
Position:
Conference:
Class:

Weight:
Uniform Number:

STATISTICS:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tackles</u>	<u>Assists</u>	<u>Sacks</u>	<u>Fumbles Rec.</u>	<u>Team Record</u>
01-02	21	22	1	2	6-4
02-03	32	24	5	1	5-6
03-04	44	50	10	3	11-0

HONORS:

Captain 2003
All Conference 2002, 2003

OTHER SPORTS PLAYED: Basketball, Lacrosse

REFERENCES:

Head Football Coach Name:
 Address:
 Telephone:

Varsity Basketball Coach Name:
 Address:
 Telephone:

Athletic Director Name:
 Address:
 Telephone:

Sam Thompson
767 Anywhere Avenue
Agawam, MA 01001
(555) 555-5555
jthompson@internet.com

DOB: 04/03/1989

GPA: 3.3/4.0

Height: 6'4"

SAT: Verbal – 550, Math - 580

Weight: 220 lbs.

Senior

Agawam High School, Agawam, MA 01001

Classes:

Grade 9

List classes completed

Grade 10

List classes completed

Grade 11

List classes completed

Grade 12

List classes (note in progress)

Main sport/position: basketball/forward

Coach: Harold Smith (555) 555-5555

Stats:

	<u>2003 – 2004</u>	<u>2001 – 2002</u>
Points per game	24.5	15.7
Shooting percentage	54%	49%
Rebounds	12	8
Block Shots	6	4
Field goal percentage	87%	83%

Other sports: baseball, football

Athletic accomplishments: *list athletic accomplishments such as awards, service as team captain, Most Improved Player, etc.*

Extracurricular activities: *list extracurricular activities such as club memberships, volunteer work, student government, etc.*

Recruiting

After all your hard work has paid off (making recruiting videos, contacting athletic programs and visiting colleges), being recruited by a college coach can be an exciting time! However, for many juniors and seniors it can prove to be stressful and confusing as well. There are many rules and regulations that college coaches must abide by as outlined by the NCAA. These regulations vary from sport to sport and from division to division, however they are in place to protect you and other high school student-athletes from being bombarded by aggressive recruiters.

It is not important that you know every single regulation that governs college athletic recruiting, but it is important that you know some basic facts so that you do not make mistakes when college coaches do not abide by their end of the bargain.

Printed Materials

Generally, college coaches can send printed materials to you (sport programs, schedules, sport view-books) on or after September 1 of your junior year. This does vary by sport, so be sure to consult your coach or guidance counselor if you feel as though you need to be aware of this timeline.

Phone Calls

For Division I, the allowance of phone calls from recruiters to high school athletes varies by sport:

- ∂ **Football** – One phone call is allowed in May, after an athlete's junior football season and once weekly after September 1 of an athlete's senior year.
- ∂ **Men's Basketball** – One phone call is allowed in March of an athlete's junior year. Another phone call is allowed on or after June 21 until the end of June, after an athlete's junior year, and three phone calls are allowed in July, after an athlete's junior year as well. One phone call a week is allowed thereafter.
- ∂ **Women's Basketball** – One phone call is allowed on or after June 21 until the end of June, after an athlete's junior year and three phone calls in July, after an athlete's junior year as well. One phone call a week is allowed thereafter.
- ∂ **Other Sports** – Phone calls are allowed on or after July 1, after an athlete's junior year.

For Division II, coaches for all sports are allowed to call prospective recruits on or after June 15, after an athlete's junior year.

Unofficial Visits

Unofficial visits are visits that prospective student-athletes make to a college campus at their own expense. Though the prospect pays all expenses, the college may provide up to three complimentary admissions to on-campus athletic events. A prospect may take an unofficial visit at any time, and may take as many unofficial visits as they wish.

Official Visits

Official visits are visits which are initiated by the institution or sports program, and where the college finances all or part of the visit. A prospect can make up to five official visits total, and only one official visit per college. Official visits can be a maximum of 48 hours in length. As a prospective student-athlete, one must bring academic records to the official visit. At Division I institutions, a prospect must bring their test scores (SAT or ACT) and an official or unofficial transcript. At Division II institutions, a prospect need only bring their tests scores.

The rules and regulations surrounding athletic recruiting can be overwhelming. If you find yourself needing more information than is available in this guide, please see your school counselor or take advantage of the resources and websites listed on the last pages of this guide in order to conduct your own search for answers.

“Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan.”

--Sparky Anderson

National Letter of Intent

Once you have thoroughly researched each college that interests you, talked to students, professors and coaches, as well as your high school counselor and parents, it is now time to make a decision. For some, this means signing a National Letter of Intent (NLI). The NLI is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and an institution by which the student agrees to attend the institution for one academic year while the institution agrees to provide athletic financial aid for one academic year. Most *Division I* and *Division II* institutions are members of the NLI program. *Division III* or *NAIA* institutions do not participate.

Once a National Letter of Intent is signed by the prospective student-athlete, it brings an end to the recruiting process. All colleges and universities that participate in the NLI program agree to not recruit a student-athlete once that student-athlete has signed a NLI with another member institution.

A valid and complete NLI must be accompanied by an institutional financial aid agreement. In other words, a NLI is only valid if you are being offered an athletic scholarship. If a student-athlete does not enroll at the institution for a full academic year after signing a NLI for that institution, he/she may be subject to penalties, including loss of a season (or more) of eligibility. It is also important to pay attention to the NLI signing periods for the sport of which you are being recruited to play. Signing an NLI when it is not the appropriate signing period will make the letter null and void. The signing dates for 2010-2011 academic year are below.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Initial Signing Day</u>	<u>Final Signing Day</u>
Basketball (Early Period)	November 10, 2010	November 17, 2010
Basketball (Regular Period)	April 13, 2011	May 18, 2011
Football (Regular Period)	February 2, 2011	April 1, 2011
Field Hockey/Soccer	February 2, 2011	August 1, 2011
All Other Sports (Early Period)	November 10, 2010	November 17, 2010
All Other Sports (Regular Period)	April 13, 2011	August 1, 2011

If you are considering signing a National Letter of Intent, please do your research. For more information, go to www.national-letter.org or see your Guidance Counselor.

Sports Wagering

The NCAA opposes all forms of legal and illegal sports wagering, which has the potential to undermine the integrity of sports contests and jeopardizes the welfare of student-athletes and the intercollegiate athletics community.

NCAA Drug Testing Program

The NCAA Drug-Testing Program was created to protect the health and safety of student-athletes and to ensure that no one participant might have an artificially induced advantage or be pressured to use chemical substances.

For additional information concerning the NCAA's drug-testing program visit the www.drugfreesport.com.

RESOURCES FOR THE COLLEGE-BOUND ATHLETE

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is very important for student athletes to be in close contact with high school coaches and the AHS School Counseling Department to obtain up-to-the-minute information. Contacts with college coaches will be essential too! For information about rules and regulations for college athletes write:



NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse
301 ACT Drive
P.O. Box 4043
Iowa City, Iowa 52243-4043
Customer Service Line - 877/262-1492
24-hour voice response - 877/861-3003

Fax: 319/337-1556

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
All Packages: 1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Dr.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Phone: 317/917-6222
Fax: 317/917-6888

National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
23500 West 105th Street
Olathe, KS 66051
Phone: 913/791-0044
Fax: 913/791-9555

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)
1755 Telstar Dr., Suite 103
Colorado Springs, CO 80933
Phone: 719/590-9788
Fax: 719/590-7324

Online Resources

National Recruiting Network - www.nationalrecruits.com

For fee site assists student athletes with selecting a college and obtaining a scholarship.

National Scouting Report - www.nsr-inc.com

The National Scouting Report is a football recruiting center for college coaches & high school athletes. Athletes can enter personal data about their sports performance for coaches to consider.

NCAA - www.ncaa.org

This site contains much valuable information for the potential college athlete including eligibility requirements for Division I, II, & III schools. This site also has a link which you can use to check if your high school courses will meet NCAA approval.

NCJAA - www.njcaa.org

The National Junior College Athletic Association provides opportunities for student-athletes to continue their athletic careers. The NJCAA is divided into three divisions just like the NCAA. The schools who are members of this organization are two-year community and junior colleges. After completing their eligibility, a student-athlete may choose to continue their academic and athletic career at a NCAA or NAIA school.

NAIA - www.naia.org

The small, private colleges and universities that are members of NAIA offer most of the same opportunities as NCAA schools.

National Letter of Intent Program – www.national-letter.org

The NLI program is one to be familiar with if you are considering playing for a Division I or II institution under an athletic scholarship. Research NLI participating schools and the program itself.

University Sports - www.universitysports.com

USP specializes in helping top student-athletes make contact with college coaches who are searching for top prospects for their athletic programs. For fee.

Financial Aid Sites

www.fafsa.ed.gov - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is required of all applicants for college financial aid. This site answers frequently asked questions, allows users to file the FAFSA online, or check the status of a previously submitted FAFSA.

www.profileonline.collegeboard.com - This site provides information on completing the Profile and also always you to complete the form online.

www.studentaid.ed.gov - Good and accurate that's always up to date.

www.fastweb.com - Largest online database for scholarships. Also provides excellent information on all aspects of the college process.

www.csif.com – Connecticut Student Loan Foundation, a non-profit, private organization that administers guarantees, originates and services the Federal Family Education Loan Program. This site also has a calculator that can assist families in estimating their expected family contribution for their child's education.

www.collegeanswer.com - Plenty of information on scholarships as well as loans.

www.nelliemae.com – Leading national provider of higher education loans for students and parents.

www.salliemae.com – Provide funds for educational loans, primarily federally guaranteed student loans originated under the Federal Family Education Loan Program.

College Sites

www.collegeboard.com - One stop shopping for college planning. You can register for the SAT, search for colleges, and scholarships that meet your criteria.

www.petersons.com - Test preparation, college and scholarship searches, as well as advice on college visits. There are sections on specialized schools such as nursing, culinary arts and visual and performing arts.

www.ctmentor.org - Information and applications for Connecticut institutions, tours, comparisons, costs, etc.

www.allaboutcollege.com – Links to thousands of colleges and universities around the world.

www.campustours.com – Virtual campus tours that provide students with their first glimpse of a college.

www.collegenet.com – Over 1500 customized internet admissions and applications.

www.bls.gov/oco/ - Source for career information designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives.

www.usnews.com – In addition to ranking colleges, this site has a detailed school directory, interactive tools, a step-by-step admissions guide, articles and more!



**List of Approved Core Courses (formerly 48H)
AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL**

The NCAA has approved the following courses for use in establishing the initial-eligibility certification status of student-athletes from this school.

NCAA legislation permits a student to receive credit for a core course only one time. As a result, if a student repeats a core course, the student will only receive credit once for the core course and the highest grade earned in the course will be included in the calculation of the student's core-course grade-point average. Likewise, if a student completes a course that is duplicative with another core course, the student will only receive credit once for the core course and the highest grade earned in the course will be included in the calculation of the student's core-course grade-point average.

The NCAA has approved the following courses for use in establishing the initial-eligibility certification status of student-athletes Agawam High School. NCAA legislation permits a student to receive credit for a core course only once.

✓ English

- English 9
- English 9 Honors

- English 10
- English 10 Honors

- English 11
- English 11 Honors
- English 11 AP

- English 12
- English 12 Honors
- English 12 AP

- Journalism
- Multicultural Literature
- Contemporary Teen Literature
- Creative Writing

✓ Social Science

- US History and Government I
- US History and Government I Honors
- US History and Government II
- US History and Government II Honors
- US History and Government AP

- World History & Geography II
- World History & Geography II Honors

- AP Microeconomics
- AP European History

- Civics
- Economics
- Practical Law
- Psychology
- Sociology

✓ Mathematics

- Algebra I Part I (.5 Unit Max)
- Algebra I Part II/Intro to Geometry (.5 Unit)
- Algebra I
- Algebra I Honors
- Algebra II
- Algebra II Honors

- Geometry
- Geometry Honors

- Pre-Calculus
- Pre-Calculus Honors
- Calculus Honors
- Calculus AP

- Statistics AP

✓ Natural/Physical Science Lab

- Biology Honors X
- Biology AP X
- Biology College Prep

- Chemistry Honors X
- Chemistry AP X
- Chemistry College Prep

- Physical Science
- Physical Science Honors X

- Physics Honors X
- Physics AP X
- Physics Conceptual

- Astronomy/Earth Science
- Environmental Science
- Genetics Honors
- Horticulture
- Human Anatomy
- Microbiology Honors
- Science and Science Fiction
- Science Ethics

✓ Additional Core Courses

- French I
- French II
- French III
- French III Honors
- French VI
- French VI Honors
- French V
- French V Honors
- French Language AP

- Italian I
- Italian II

- Italian III
- Italian VI

- Spanish I
- Spanish II
- Spanish III
- Spanish III Honors
- Spanish VI

- Spanish VI Honors
- Spanish V
- Spanish V Honors
- Spanish Language AP



GLOSSARY: TERMS TO TACKLE

- **NCAA:** The National Collegiate Athletic Association is one of several “rule making” groups which oversee intercollegiate athletics. Students should know that academic requirements differ according to the type of college or university a student plans to attend.

Others include...

National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

- **DIVISION I:** Division I colleges and universities are usually considered the best of the best in college athletics. But in order to be a Division I college, it takes more than just recruiting the top talent. Division I member institutions must sponsor at least seven sports for both men and women. Each gender must be represented in at least two team sports, and each playing season must be represented by each gender. There are participant and contest minimums, as well as scheduling criteria, for each sport as well.

Where football is concerned, Division I schools classify their programs as Division I-A or Division I-AA. The only difference is that I-A football schools must meet minimum attendance requirements (15,000 people on average per home game), which must be met at least once in a two year period. I-AA teams do not need to meet any such attendance requirement.

Division I schools do offer minimum financial aid awards for their athletic programs, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that must not be exceeded.

- **DIVISION II:** Division II colleges and universities have similar criteria as Division I institutions, only to a different degree. Division II schools must sponsor at least five sports for both men and women, with at least two team sports for each gender. Each playing season must also be represented by each gender, just as at Division I schools. Also similar to Division I institutions are the contest and participant minimums, as well as scheduling requirements, but in Division II, these scheduling requirements only pertain to football and basketball.

There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that must not be exceeded as well. Division II sports programs usually include a mix of local and out-of-state student-athletes. Many athletes use scholarship money, grants, loans and employment earnings to pay for their education.

Division II athletic programs are treated much like any other academic program at their institutions in that they are financed through their school's budget. Much of the Division II athletic schedule is played regionally against traditional school rivalries rather than nationally, like Division I athletic programs.

- **DIVISION III:** Division III institutions differ from the other divisions to a greater degree, however they still are held to certain requirements. Division III member institutions must sponsor at least five sports for both men and women with two teams sports for each gender. Each gender must also be represented in each playing season, just like at Division I and II schools. There are also contest and participant minimums for each sport.

One major difference that sets Division III athletics apart is that student-athletes receive no financial aid related to athletic ability. Division III athletic departments are also funded through their school's budget like any other academic department at the school.

A great feature about Division III athletics is that the focus is on the student-athlete, not on the number of spectators a program attracts. By offering a variety of athletic opportunities and sports programs, Division III schools can encourage participation and enhance the experience of their student-athletes. The Division III playing season is dominated by regional and conference competition, and so when researching a Division III program, it is wise to research the conference it's athletic program belongs to as well.

- **NCAA INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY CLEARINGHOUSE:** Administered by the NCAA. All students planning to participate in college athletics at the Division I or II level must REGISTER with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Forms are available on-line at www.ncaa.org. The NCAA will charge a fee for registration.
- **OFFICIAL VISIT:** Transportation, expenses, etc... are funded by the athletic programs of a college. If you are one the lucky student-athletes to be "officially invited" by a coach to visit his/her campus, remember the rules of the game. You may go to a specific college only once for an "official" visit AND you may participate in only five "official" visits. You may, however, visit a college any number of times on your own. Be sure to contact the NCAA if there is any doubt.
- **ATHLETIC RESUME:** An excellent tool to communicate your interest in a college athletic program. In addition to highlighting your athletic success and experience, the resume and cover letter should express why you are interested in the college and sports program, how they fit into your overall goals and how you will fit into the program.
- **QUALIFIER/NON-QUALIFIER:** After submitting all necessary information to the NCAA Clearinghouse, you will be deemed a 'qualifier' or a 'non-qualifier'. Being a qualifier simply means that you will be eligible to play on an athletic team in your first year of college. If you are a non-qualifier, you will not be eligible to play, receive athletic scholarships, practice, or travel with the team.

- **NLI:** National Letter of Intent. When planning to play at a Division I or II institution, you may be required to sign a National Letter of Intent (NLI) agreeing to attend a college or university for one academic year. A NLI is only valid and complete if it is accompanied by an athletic scholarship. The NLI is a binding agreement. Any breach of the agreement may result in penalties including loss of eligibility.
- **CONTACT PERIOD:** permissible for authorized athletic department staff members to make in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts and evaluations.
- **DEAD PERIOD:** not permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts or evaluations on- or off-campus or permit official or unofficial visits.
- **EVALUATION PERIOD:** permissible for authorized athletics department staff to be involved in off-campus activities to assess academic qualifications and playing abilities. No in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts with a prospect are permitted.
- **QUIET PERIOD:** permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts only on the member institution's campus.