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What each student-athlete -- and their family -- should know:
Athletic Scholarships are a long shot ... at best

Less than 2 percent of all college undergrads receiving sports-related aid

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (January 21, 2013) -- It's a long shot.

Many high school student-athletes dream -- often with encouragement or even prompting from families and coaches -- of a scholarship offer to play their favorite sport on the collegiate level. Certainly, it's important that young people have goals, and vigorously pursue them.

But it's also healthy to temper dreams with a dose of reality. And when it comes to assessing any high school competitor's chances of earning a Division I athletic scholarship, the numbers don't lie.

According to *FinAid.org*, the number of undergraduate students in bachelor's degree programs nationwide who receive athletic scholarships doesn't exceed two percent. And while the approximate annual total of \$1 billion paid out to them is growing at a rate of 4.5 percent each year, the percentage of those actually receiving athletic scholarships hasn't risen above 1.8 percent since 1995-1996.

"I don't consider it discouraging that earning an athletic scholarship, or even playing college sports, is statistically unlikely," comments Steven J. Timko, executive director of the [NJSIAA](#), which was founded in 1918 and numbers 433 accredited public, private, and parochial New Jersey high schools as its members. "The reality is that high school sports are an extension of the educational process; they exist to help young people learn valuable lessons about teamwork and dedication. They're not intended to be a feeder system for college athletics, and that isn't how they should be viewed."

And even those who do manage to qualify for scholarship funds based on athletic prowess will likely still need to seek out other sources of revenue. In her blog *The College Solution*, Lynn O'Shaughnessy notes that the average annual athletic scholarship is less than \$11,000 -- certainly nowhere near enough to finance a "free ride" at a major university.

Further, the recruiting process itself is tremendously complex, and often fraught with hazards. Among these is the athletic recruiter who, while perhaps not lying, may make promises or offers that exclude information the athlete or the athlete's family would consider essential.

Considering the many facets and challenges of seeking a collegiate athletic scholarship, student-athletes would be best served to focus primarily on the core benefits of participation in scholastic athletics -- physical fitness, development of friendships, enhancement of reasoning skills, immersion in a team environment, and many others. These are the true payoffs of a commitment to high school sports.

About the NJSIAA

Established in 1918, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletics Association (NJSIAA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization comprised of 433 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools. A member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, the NJSIAA conducts tournaments and crowns champions in 32 sports. Championship competition for girls is sponsored in basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, field hockey, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, and volleyball. Boys' championships are determined in baseball, basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, football, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, volleyball, and wrestling.

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