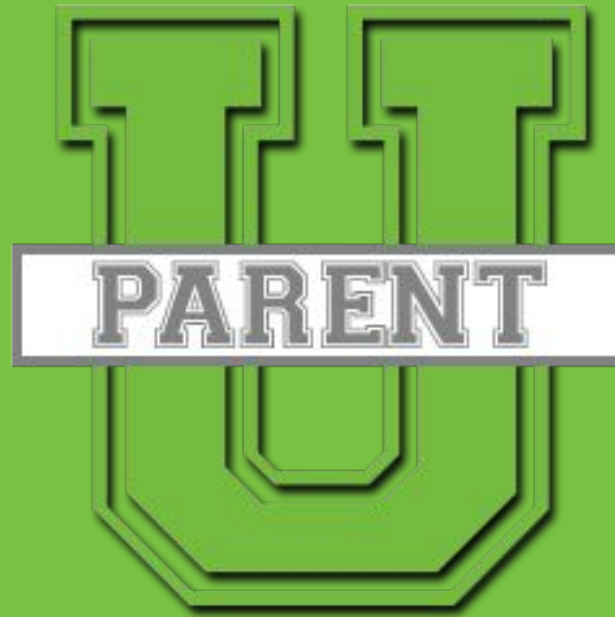




College-Bound
Student Athletes

What Aspiring College Athletes Need to Know

A Guide to NCAA & NAIA Eligibility, Academics, Standardized Testing, Participation and
Amateurism and Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)

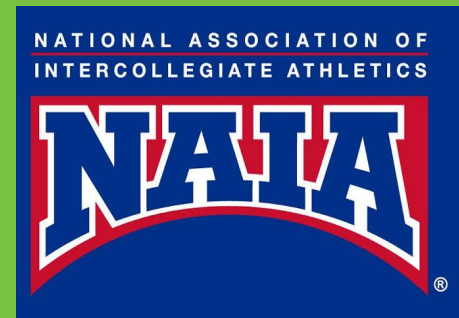
College-Bound Athletes



Governing Associations



Understanding the structure of college athletics and finding your best collegiate fit.



What is the NCAA and NAIA?

NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)

Governs ~500,000 student-athletes across 1,100+ colleges and universities in 3 distinct divisions:

- **Division I:** Highest competition level, major athletic budgets, offers full athletic scholarships.
- **Division II:** Balanced athletic and academic experience; offers partial scholarship model.
- **Division III:** Academics-first focus; non-athletic financial aid only (no athletic scholarships).

NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics)

Governs ~83,000 student-athletes across 250+ smaller, private, and regional colleges with a close-knit campus culture:

- **Streamlined Process:** Flexible recruitment rules and quicker eligibility determinations.
- **Scholarship Funding:** Offers generous athletic and merit-based financial aid.
- **Character-Driven:** Focuses heavily on five core values through the *Champions of Character* program.

NCAA vs. NAIA



What is the NCAA and NAIA Eligibility Center?





NCAA PATHWAY Division I or II

Requires full certification by the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to competition.

- Must create a **Certification Account**
- Required for official university visits
- Necessary to sign a National Letter of Intent (NLI)

NCAA ELIGIBILITY

\$110 Fee



NCAA PATHWAY Division III / Undecided

Designed for student-athletes exploring Division III or early stage recruiting.

- Create an initial **Profile Page**
- No fee required to begin profile creation
- Can be upgraded to Certification Account later

NCAA ELIGIBILITY

FREE



NAIA PATHWAY PlayNAIA Center

Official clearinghouse for all NAIA athletic eligibility nationwide.

- Mandatory registration via **PlayNAIA.org**
- Required for all NAIA college or university athletes
- Ensures academic and athletic clearing

NAIA ELIGIBILITY

\$110 Fee

Eligibility Center





High School Timeline

High School Timeline



High School Timeline





Initial Eligibility Standards

	Dist. 203 Graduation Requirements	Average College Admission Requirements*	NCAA Eligibility (Div. 1) Requirements
Communication Arts	4.0	4.0	4.0~
Mathematics	3.0	4.0 <i>Minimum of Algebra 2</i>	3.0~ <i>Algebra 1 or Higher</i>
Science	2.0	3.0 - 4.0* <i>Minimum of Biology & Chemistry</i>	2.0~ <i>Must include a Lab Science</i>
Social Studies Civics (0.5) US History (1.0) Elective (1.0)	2.5	3.0 - 4.0*	2.0
Physical Education Physical Education (3.5) Health (0.5)	4.0	Varies*	N/A
Career & Technical Ed (CTE)	1.0	Varies*	N/A
Fine Arts	0.5	1.0*	N/A
Consumer Education	0.5	Varies*	N/A
Foreign Language	0.0	2.0*	N/A~
Electives	3.5	Varies*	4.0 <i>Additional courses, including: Comm Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, or Foreign Language</i>

Initial Eligibility Standards



Initial–Eligibility Standards

Requirement	NCAA Division I	NCAA Division II	NAIA
NCAA/NAIA Core Courses	16 Core Courses (10 locked before 7th sem.)	16 Core Courses	High school graduation + 2 of 3 criteria
Minimum Core GPA	2.30 Core GPA	2.20 Core GPA	2.30 Overall Cumulative GPA
Academic Lock-in Rule	10/7 Rule (7 in Eng/Math/Sci)	No lock-in timeline constraint	Class Rank: Top 50% of graduating class
Amateurism Review	Required Certification	Required Certification	Required Certification

Initial Eligibility Standards



Step-by-Step Portal Lookup

To verify whether a specific NNHS course is NCAA-approved, follow these steps to access the official database:

- 1 Visit the official NCAA Eligibility Center portal at eligibilitycenter.org.
- 2 Click on "NCAA High School Portal" or select "List of NCAA Courses".
- 3 Enter the Naperville North High School **CEEB Code: 143106** (or search by School Name: *Naperville North High School*, City: *Naperville*, State: *IL*).
- 4 Click **Submit** to view and download the complete, up-to-date list of approved courses.

NCAA Transcript Evaluation

Core GPA Calculation

The NCAA Eligibility Center calculates its own GPA using **only approved NCAA core courses**. Non-core electives (e.g., PE, Health, Keyboarding, Art) are excluded entirely.

Standard grade values are applied: **A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0.**

Honors & AP Weighting

If Naperville North High School weights Honors or AP classes on official transcripts, the NCAA will only recognize that weighting if NNHS's official NCAA course list includes the weighted scale and aligns with strict NCAA guidelines.

Initial Eligibility Standards



Crucial Academic Benchmark



Understand the 10/7 Lock-In Rule

For Division I eligibility, student-athletes **MUST** complete **10 of their 16 NCAA core courses** prior to the start of their seventh semester (senior year).

- **7 of those 10 courses** must be in English, Math, or Natural/Physical Science.
- **Locked GPA:** Grades in these 10 core courses are locked in prior to senior year and cannot be retaken or replaced for GPA calculation purposes.

Initial Eligibility Standards





[DIVISION I: INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS](#)
[click here](#)



[DIVISION II: INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS](#)
[click here](#)



[DIVISION III: INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS](#)
[click here](#)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS



[NAIA: INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS](#)
[click here](#)

Initial Eligibility Standards





Standardized Test Score Information

Standardized Test Score Rules

KEY TAKEAWAYS



SAT & ACT Requirements Updated

In January 2023, NCAA Divisions I and II permanently removed standardized test score requirements for initial eligibility.



Eligibility vs. Admissions

While the NCAA no longer requires SAT/ACT scores for athletic eligibility, individual colleges may still require them for general enrollment.



Academic Scholarships

Test scores often qualify student-athletes for lucrative institutional merit scholarships and academic financial aid packages.



Recruiting Edge

High test scores reassure college coaches that you will easily pass admissions checks, making you a safer, high-priority recruit.

Test Score Information





Sports Participation

Sports Participation & Amateurism



Prize Money Limits

Athletes can accept prize money up to necessary educational and sporting expenses. Exceeding actual expenses can compromise amateur standing.



Agents & Professional Contracts

Signing a representation agreement with an agent or signing a pro team contract renders an athlete ineligible for NCAA competition.



Delayed Enrollment

Participating in organized competition after high school graduation without enrolling in college can activate a gap-year clock and lose eligibility years.

Sports Participation



NIL Regulations in Illinois

High school student-athletes are permitted to earn NIL compensation under IHSA bylaws, provided strict separation is maintained from school identity.



IHSA Framework

Athletes can build individual commercial brand value, but must navigate strict boundary lines to preserve high school eligibility.

 Bylaws 3.081 & 3.082



No School Branding

Athletes **cannot use school names, logos, uniforms, mascots, trademarks, or facilities** in any NIL promotional content or endorsements.



No Pay-for-Play or Inducements

Compensation **cannot be tied to athletic performance**, stats, or team success, nor used as a recruiting incentive to transfer schools.



Strict Time Restrictions

NIL activities and promotional work **cannot take place during school hours**, team travel, or official IHSA events and practices.



Prohibited Vice Industries

Endorsements are **strictly barred for restricted industries**, including alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, gambling, firearms, and adult products.

Sports Participation



Critical Compensation Safeguards

Essential financial compliance standards, proposed legislative measures, and state tax obligations for Illinois student-athletes.



Commercial Valuation

Market Value Standard

Earnings must reflect **actual commercial value** for services rendered (posts, camps, signings). Inflated payouts for minimal work can be flagged as an **illegal recruiting inducement** or pay-for-play.



Proposed HB 1116

Academic Aid Impact

Be mindful of state legislative proposals. Measures such as **Illinois House Bill 1116** aim to scale back school-funded academic aid if third-party NIL earnings cross major thresholds (e.g., **\$250,000**).



4.95% IL Flat Tax

Tax Obligations

NIL earnings count as **self-employment income**. High-earning student-athletes must report revenue and pay the **Illinois individual income tax (4.95% flat rate)** alongside federal tax filings.

Sports Participation





Next Steps

Best Practices for Aspiring College Athletes



Counselor Check-ins: Meet with your high school counselor annually to verify your course list against your school's official NCAA Core Course List.



Professional Digital Presence: Maintain a clean, professional email address and curated social media profiles that reflect your character positively.



Proactive Outreach: Email college coaches directly with your NCAA ID number, athletic resume, academic stats, and updated highlight reels.



Prompt Submissions: Ensure your high school submits official transcripts to the Eligibility Center after 11th grade and immediately upon graduation.

Next Steps





Resources

Contact Info

Feel free to reach out with any questions regarding NCAA eligibility, recruiting guidelines, or athletic compliance.



DIRECT EMAIL ADDRESS

mmurray@naperville203.org

 Always consult official NCAA and IHSA guidelines for the latest policy updates.

Naperville CUSD 203

Resources



RESOURCES

- <https://play.mynaia.org/>
- <https://www.naia.org/landing/index>
- eligibilitycenter.org
- [NCAA Initial-Eligibility Brochure](#)
- ncaa.org/playcollegesports
- [Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#)

Resources



- [NCompass](#)

Dist. 203 Postsecondary Planning Guide

- [In-School College Visits](#)

Instructions on how students can attend in-school college visits

- [On-Campus College Visit Tips](#)

Tips for students planning to visit college campuses

Additional Resources



Tonight

Sessions 2 & 3 Tonight

A few options for families to choose from to help with postsecondary planning [cite: 10]

**Sept 1 -
Oct 30**

In-School College Visits

Connect with admissions representatives directly at your school [cite: 10].

Sept 26

NACAC National College Fair @ Navy Pier (Chicago)

A national college fair, featuring more than 200 colleges & universities from across the country [cite: 10].

Sept 29

Navigating a Shifting Testing Landscape

An evening program at Naperville Central (6:30pm in Auditorium) to discuss college admission testing [cite: 10].

Oct 13

Illinois Regional College Fair @ Benedictine Univ. (Lisle)

Another college fair opportunity, bringing in additional colleges & universities from across the country [cite: 10].

Upcoming Opportunities

