NCAA

College Athletics and Eligibility

Irondequoit High School • Post High School Planning Workshop

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Plan the academics. Understand the rules. Choose the right fit.

NOVEMBER 2026

WORKSHOP MAP

Goals



BETHANY MARREN

Associate Director /
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1. **Learn how to choose the correct NCAA Eligibility Center account**
2. **Compare Division I, II and III initial-eligibility rules**
3. **Build a grade-by-grade action plan and avoid timing surprises**

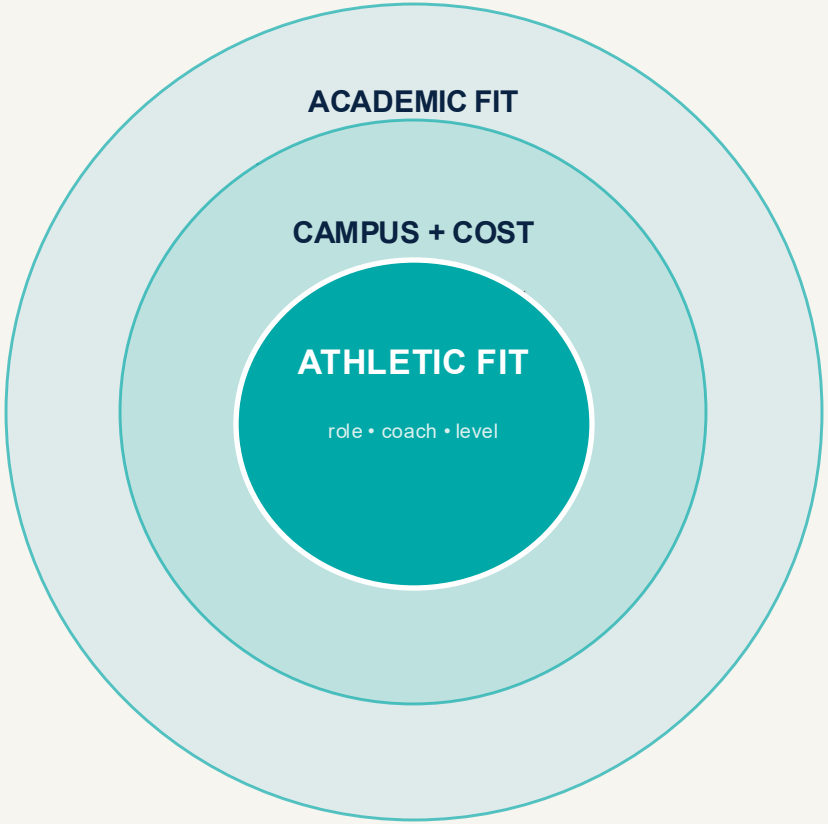
START WITH FIT

Athletics is one part of a college decision

A strong match survives an injury, a coaching change—and graduation.

ASK EVERY COACH

- Where do I fit on the depth chart?
- What happens if I stop playing?
- What is the full cost after all aid?
- Which major and schedule are realistic?



THE DECISION ORDER

1. **College**
2. Academic program
3. Affordability
4. Athletic opportunity

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

CHOOSE A PATHWAY

Three divisions. Three different experiences.

DIVISION I

ACTIVE SCHOOLS	MEDIAN ENROLLMENT
361	8,900

Athletics aid available

Largest budgets; highest number of athletics scholarships; high travel and time demands.

LARGEST AID POOL

DIVISION II

ACTIVE SCHOOLS	MEDIAN ENROLLMENT
296	2,100

Partial scholarship model

High-level competition with emphasis on academics, service and a balanced experience.

BALANCED MODEL

DIVISION III

ACTIVE SCHOOLS	MEDIAN ENROLLMENT
416	1,600

No athletics scholarships

Competitive athletics integrated with academics and broad campus involvement.

BROAD PARTICIPATION

Source: NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete 2026–27

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THE NJCAA PATHWAY

Junior college can be a smart first step

01

ACADEMIC

BUILD YOUR RECORD

Need time to strengthen your grades?

Two years at a junior college can raise your GPA before you transfer to a four-year school.

02

ATHLETIC

KEEP DEVELOPING

Want more playing time and exposure?

Compete in games sooner, build film, and get seen by NCAA and NAIA coaches.

03

FINANCIAL

LOWER THE COST

Want to cut the cost of college?

NJCAA Division I may offer full athletics aid; Division II, partial aid; Division III, none.

525 NJCAA colleges, 24 regions, 3 divisions: compete two years, then transfer.

Source: NJCAA divisional structure (njcaa.org)

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

THREE CHECKPOINTS

Eligibility is not one decision—it is three

01

ADMISSION

THE COLLEGE

Are you admitted to the institution?

College requirements can be higher than NCAA minimums.

02

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY CENTER / CAMPUS

May you practice, compete and receive aid?

Division I/II: NCAA certification. Division III: school standards; special account rules apply.

03

TEAM + AID

COACH / FINANCIAL AID

Is there a roster spot—and what will it cost?

Eligibility does not guarantee recruitment, aid or playing time.

You must clear all three checkpoints—at the same time.

Source: NCAA initial-eligibility overview

WHAT COACHES EVALUATE

Coaches evaluate you in three areas

01

ATHLETIC ABILITY

ON THE FIELD

Can you compete at this level?

Film, stats, camps and game performance show skill and potential.

02

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

IN THE CLASSROOM

Can you succeed in school and stay eligible?

Core-course GPA, test scores and progress toward graduation.

03

QUALITY OF CHARACTER

OFF THE FIELD

Will you strengthen the team culture?

Coaches talk to your coaches and teachers and review your conduct.

Coaches look for strength in all three areas—not just one.

ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Create the account that matches your path

Where might you compete?

Not sure yet? Start with a Profile Page; transition once Division I/II recruitment becomes active.

Use one account only. Use an email address you will keep after graduation.

DIVISION I OR II

Academic + Athletics Certification Account

Required for academic and athletics certification.

DIVISION III • DOMESTIC

Profile Page

All incoming DIII students register for an NCAA ID beginning fall 2026.

DIVISION III • INTERNATIONAL

Athletics Certification Account

Required for athletics eligibility certification.

Note: All accounts will have a fee starting in January 2027.

Source: NCAA Eligibility Center registration and account types

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

FROM REGISTRATION TO CERTIFICATION

The Eligibility Center workflow

1 REGISTER

Choose account; get NCAA ID

2 PLAN

Use approved core-course list

3 DOCUMENT

Counselor uploads transcripts

4 CONNECT

Share NCAA ID; school adds you to request list

5 CERTIFY

Update sports history; request final athletics review

6 FINISH

Final transcript + proof of graduation

STUDENT OWNS account • sports history • task list

COUNSELOR OWNS official transcripts • proof of graduation

Source: NCAA Eligibility Center and 2026–27 college-bound guide

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

WHAT COUNTS—AND WHAT DOES NOT

Core courses are the academic foundation

16

NCAA-APPROVED CORE COURSES

DI + DII

✓ **CORE GPA ≠ OVERALL GPA**

Only NCAA-approved courses are included.

✓ **VERIFY BEFORE SCHEDULING**

Course titles that look similar may not all be approved.

✓ **KEEP THE PAPER TRAIL**

Every school attended must submit official records.

ACTION NOW **Search Irondequoit High School’s NCAA-approved course list with your counselor.**

Source: NCAA approved core-course search

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

Division I: four academic checkpoints

16

CORE COURSES

4 English • 3 math • 2 science • 1 extra English/math/science • 2 social science • 4 additional

2.3

MINIMUM CORE GPA

Calculated from NCAA-approved core courses—not the overall transcript GPA.

10 / 7

PROGRESSION RULE

10 core-course units before semester 7; 7 must be English, math or science.

8

CONSECUTIVE SEMESTERS

Complete the 16 courses in the Division I time limit; on-time graduation matters.

Final step: counselor submits the final official transcript with proof of graduation; the Eligibility Center completes academic + athletics certification.

Source: NCAA Division I initial-eligibility requirements

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

Division II: similar foundation, different flexibility

16 NCAA-approved core courses

2.2 minimum core-course GPA

FINAL transcript + proof of graduation

WHERE DIVISION II DIFFERS

COURSE DISTRIBUTION	3 English • 2 math • 2 science • 3 extra English/math/science • 2 social science • 4 additional
COURSE TIMING	Core courses may count until initial full-time enrollment at a two- or four-year college.
PARTIAL QUALIFIER	May practice and receive athletics aid in year one, but may not compete.

Do not assume Division I and II are interchangeable—run both audits.

Source: NCAA Division II initial-eligibility requirements

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

Division III: the campus sets academic standards

Division III does not use the Division I/II 16-core-course certification model.

ACADEMICS

CAMPUS

The college sets admissions and academic standards. Ask each school directly.

NCAA ID

REGISTER

Beginning fall 2026, all incoming Division III student-athletes should register to obtain an NCAA ID.

FINANCIAL AID

NO ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Merit-based and need-based aid may be available.

ACCOUNT RULE

Domestic → Profile Page | International → Athletics Certification Account

Source: NCAA Division III initial-eligibility requirements

QUICK COMPARISON

Division I, II and III—side by side

QUESTION	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III
Certification	Academic + athletics	Academic + athletics	Campus academics; account rules vary
Core courses	16 + 10/7 progression	16	Campus standard
Minimum core GPA	2.3	2.2	Campus standard
Athletics scholarships	Yes	Yes—often partial	No
Age-based 5-year model	Yes	Yes	No

Minimum NCAA standards are not admission standards. A college can require more.

Source: NCAA initial-eligibility requirements by division

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

AGE-BASED MODEL • 2026–27

New for Division I + II: a continuous five-year window

The window starts at the earlier trigger:

A — INITIAL FULL-TIME COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Any college or university, including two-year and international institutions.

OR

B — AGE-BASED TRIGGER

Start of the regular academic year following the 19th birthday, based on the Sept. 1 timing rule.

NOT "5 FOR 5"

Five seasons are not guaranteed—especially when enrollment is delayed.

ONCE IT STARTS...

- ✓ **Runs continuously for five years**
- ✓ Does not pause for a transfer, time away or not competing
- ✓ Replaces athletics redshirts and seasons-of-competition tracking
- ✓ Eliminates waivers, with minimal exceptions
- ✓ Other academic and athletics rules still apply

Transition: initial enrollment in 2026–27 → better of old/new rules; fall 2027 or later → age-based rule only.

Source: NCAA Division I and II age-based eligibility rules

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

TRY TWO SCENARIOS

Enrollment timing can change the usable window

SCENARIO A

Dual enrollment in high school

1. Takes college classes while still enrolled in high school
2. Does not compete for the college team
3. Usually does not start the five-year window

LOWER TIMING RISK

SCENARIO B

Delayed full-time enrollment

1. Turns 19 before Sept. 1
2. Waits a year beyond the next academic year to enroll full time
3. The clock may already be running before enrollment

LESS USABLE TIME

Planning a gap year, prep school, junior hockey or another delayed pathway? Ask before deciding.

Source: NCAA Division I and II age-based eligibility rules

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

CONNECT WITH COACHES

Recruiting rules vary by division, sport and date

CONTACT

Face-to-face contact, evaluations, school visits, calls and messages may be allowed.

EVALUATION

Coach may watch and visit school, but no off-campus face-to-face contact.

QUIET

No off-campus contact or evaluation; calls and messages may continue.

DEAD

No face-to-face contact or evaluation; calls and messages may continue.

OFFICIAL VISIT

School pays permitted expenses. Before a Division I/II official visit: register with the Eligibility Center and provide transcripts.

UNOFFICIAL VISIT

Student/family pays expenses. Timing and coach contact still depend on division, sport and recruiting calendar.

Best practice: verify the current calendar before every visit or off-campus meeting.

Source: NCAA recruiting guidance and calendars

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

ATHLETICS AID + NIL

Read every offer as a financial package

ATHLETICS AID

- ✓ Division I and II may offer athletics aid.
- ✓ Division II commonly uses partial scholarships.
- ✓ Written offers—not the old National Letter of Intent system—govern aid commitments.

DIVISION III AID

- ✓ No athletics scholarships.
- ✓ Merit-based and need-based aid may be available.
- ✓ Compare the full net price—not just the headline award.

NIL

- ✓ Compensation for use of name, image or likeness is separate from a scholarship.
- ✓ Rules and reporting can change.
- ✓ Ask campus compliance before signing or promoting.

Ask for: amount • duration • renewal conditions • what happens after injury or roster change • total net cost

Source: NCAA 2026–27 college-bound guide; NCAA Division III guidance

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

YOUR NEXT ACTIONS

A grade-by-grade playbook

9–10 BUILD	Meet counselor • start Profile Page if exploring • choose approved core courses • protect grades
11 VERIFY	Transition account if recruited • upload six-semester transcript • share NCAA ID • update sports history
12 FINISH	**Apply + gain admission • compare aid • request final athletics certification • send final transcript**
AFTER YES CONFIRM	Ask compliance to review eligibility window • read aid agreement • complete campus requirements

ONE TASK THIS WEEK: open your account and your high school's approved course list.

Source: NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete 2026–27

Information reflects NCAA guidance available November 2026. Rules can change; confirm with the school's compliance office.

Questions?

Leave with the right next step.

ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Create or manage an account

APPROVED COURSES

Search your high school list

2026–27 NCAA GUIDE

College-bound student-athlete guide

NCAA Eligibility Center • 877-262-1492 • Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. ET

For an individual case: contact the Eligibility Center and the compliance office at the college you plan to attend.