

NAIA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete



When you attend one of nearly 300 NAIA member colleges or universities, you are welcomed into a supportive environment of students, faculty and athletics professionals dedicated to your success.

NAIA schools strive to help student-athletes grow on all levels. The focus is on accomplishing academic objectives as much as it is on competing in collegiate sports.

Not only do small colleges offer the benefits of reasonable class sizes and more opportunities to get involved outside the classroom, the NAIA offers student-athletes:

- Fewer recruiting restrictions with greater opportunity for contact between prospective students and college recruiters
- Maximum opportunities to participate in regular season contests and national championships
- Flexibility to transfer without missing a season of eligibility
- A focus on education and character development

National Championships

The NAIA offers both men and women the opportunity to compete at his/her highest level. National championships are offered in 13 sports.



Fall sports

Men's Cross Country
Women's Cross Country
Football
Men's Soccer
Women's Soccer
Volleyball

Winter sports

Men's Basketball (Divisions I & II)
Women's Basketball (Divisions I & II)
Men's Swimming & Diving
Women's Swimming & Diving
Men's Indoor Track & Field
Women's Indoor Track & Field
Wrestling

Spring sports

Baseball
Men's Golf
Women's Golf
Softball
Men's Tennis
Women's Tennis
Men's Outdoor Track & Field
Women's Outdoor Track & Field

Recruiting

The NAIA recruiting process for both freshmen and transfers is less cumbersome, with few restrictions on the contact between a student-athlete and a coach. More frequent communication allows the student to become more comfortable with the school and athletics staff.

Once you have started your college experience by enrolling and/or attending classes, representatives from an NAIA institution cannot initiate contact with you. This no-contact policy applies even if you have not started classes yet, but have drawn equipment and begun organized practice.

What if you're interested in transferring to an NAIA institution? Because NAIA coaches cannot contact you, you'll need to take that initiative by calling or emailing them. Once contacted, within 10 days the NAIA institution must notify in writing the athletics director or faculty athletics representative at the school where you are currently enrolled. They don't necessarily need to receive permission to respond to you, but your current school must be notified that the contact has been made.

Campus visits for tryouts

Campus visits and tryouts can be conducted only if the school has a policy for evaluating and admitting students with special talents. If it also has a policy for reimbursing students with special talents for such visits, the same can be applied to you as a prospective student-athlete. Students are permitted a maximum of two days of tryouts throughout their entire career, and the tryout cannot interfere with school time. The tryout must occur on campus.

Admission standards for athletes

To participate in athletics in the NAIA, you must be admitted to the college or university under admission standards that are equal to or higher than those applied to the general student body.



Entering Freshman Eligibility Rules

If you will graduate from high school this spring and enroll in college this coming fall, the requirements are simple.

An entering freshman must:

- Be a graduate of an accredited high school or be accepted as a regular student in good standing as defined by the enrolling institution and
- **Meet two of the three** following requirements:

1. Achieve a minimum of 18 on the Enhanced ACT or 860 on the SAT.

Tests must be taken on a state, national or international testing date and certified to the institution prior to the start of each term in which the student initially participates (residual tests are not acceptable). The SAT must be achieved on the Critical Reading and Math sections only. The Writing score cannot be used. Scores must be achieved on a single test.

2. Achieve a minimum overall high school grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale

The NAIA accepts the grade point average determined by the high school, provided it is recorded and awarded in the same manner as every other student at the school.

3. Graduate in the top half of your high school class.

If a student's class rank does not appear on the transcript, a letter from the principal or headmaster, written on the school's letterhead and with the school's official seal, stating that the student meets the class rank requirement can be accepted.

If as an entering freshman you do not meet at least two of the three standards, you cannot participate in athletics for the first full year of attendance (2 semesters, 3 quarters, or equivalent).

PLAYNAIA

Your college sports experience starts here.

NAIA Eligibility Center to open Fall 2010

Beginning in the fall of 2010, students who wish to participate in athletics at a member institution will need to be certified by the NAIA Eligibility Center to qualify academically and be cleared as an eligible student-athlete for competition beginning in 2011. The NAIA Eligibility Center website — <http://www.PlayNAIA.org> — will launch in April, with registration starting September 1.

First-time NAIA participants — high school students, transfers from non-NAIA schools and those who have never participated in athletics at an NAIA-member school — must register with the online service.



Financial aid, scholarships, grants and student loans

Each school determines how much aid it awards to an individual student-athlete. Scholarships, grants-in-aid or student loans are controlled by each institution through the same committee that handles all student loans and scholarships.

Financial aid to the student-athletes limited to the actual cost of:

- Tuition
- Mandatory fees, books and supplies required for courses in which the student-athlete is enrolled
- Room and board for the student-athlete only, based on official room and board allowance listed in the institution's catalog.

Aid can be awarded in full or partial grants.

Each sport has a limit on the aid awarded to varsity athletes. The combination of full or partial awards to all athletes is limited in each sport. Academically gifted students can be exempted from these limits if they meet grade or test score criteria established by the NAIA.

Limits on the total amount of aid that can be given to varsity athletes in each sport:

Baseball — 12	Basketball (Division I) — 11
Basketball (Division II) — 6	Cross Country — 5
Football — 24	Golf — 5
Soccer — 12	Softball — 10
Swimming & Diving — 8	Tennis — 5
Track & Field — 12	Wrestling — 8
Volleyball — 8	

Questions for parents

- What types of financial-aid agreements does your school have?
- Which campus representatives have to sign off on the agreement for it to be valid?
- What will the financial-aid agreement cover? Housing? Food? Books? Tuition?
- How long will the agreement last? A quarter/semester? A full academic year?
- If my student signs a financial agreement with your institution, can she/he sign with another school within your conference?
- If my student quits the team after the season, will he or she continue to receive the scholarship?
- If my student suffers a season-ending injury, will the financial-aid agreement be honored?
- If my student becomes academically ineligible, will the agreement be honored?
- On your campus, who is responsible for checking the student-athlete's eligibility?
- Is there an academic support program in place for student-athletes on your campus?
- Do you offer my student's major?

Entering Freshman Eligibility Rules

GED students will be recognized as satisfying the grade point average equivalent. The GED student must achieve a score of 18 on the Enhanced ACT or 860 on the SAT to meet the freshman requirements.

Home-schooled students must receive the certificate (or equivalent) granted by the appropriate state verifying successful completion of home schooling requirements and achieve the minimum ACT/SAT score to meet the freshman requirements.

If the state does not issue certificates (or equivalent) the case must go to the NAIA National Eligibility Committee, and the student must achieve the minimum ACT/SAT score to meet the freshman requirements.

Learning Disabilities. Students with diagnosed learning disabilities, who do not meet the freshman eligibility requirements, may have their academic profiles reviewed by the NAIA National Eligibility Committee at the request of an NAIA institution.

International students An incoming freshman international student must meet the entering freshman requirements.

If the GPA and class rank for an international student cannot be determined from a transcript, the student can be ruled eligible by meeting the specific institution's admission criteria for international students and by meeting the following NAIA criteria:

- A score of 18 on the Enhanced ACT or 860 on the SAT
- Meet the entering freshman requirements as defined for students from each country in the most current *Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility*, published by the NCAA (based on AACRAO guidelines).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does the NAIA recognize national letters of intent?

A: No. However, some NAIA conferences will recognize letters of intent. Additionally, there may be obligation that the letter creates with the institution.

Q: Who regulates scholarships?

A: The NAIA only regulates the number of athletic scholarships each institution is allowed to give. The individual institution will regulate how much aid it gives to each athlete.

Q: What rules apply if I transfer to an NCAA institution?

A: NCAA rules will apply.

Q: Can I transfer from one 4-year NAIA institution to another and play immediately?

A: Possibly. If you receive a release from the current institution and meet all of the ongoing NAIA eligibility requirements.



Amateurism

In the NAIA, only amateur students are eligible to participate in a given sport. An amateur engages in athletics contests for educational values, personal pleasure, satisfaction, and for the love of the sport, not for monetary or material gain.

If you become a professional in a particular sport recognized by the NAIA, you will be considered a professional in that sport only and are ineligible for intercollegiate competition in that sport, except as permitted by the governing legislation of the NAIA.

Should you lose amateur status in a sport, amateur standing can be reinstated in that sport upon the following conditions:

- Ceasing to participate in violation of NAIA amateur-standing regulations.
- Being charged a season of competition in that sport for every competition season in which the student competed in any manner as a professional or in which the student was in violation of the NAIA amateur code.
- Attending two consecutive semesters/three consecutive quarters (or equivalent) at the NAIA institution at which the student wishes to participate prior to being allowed to represent that school in that sport in any manner in intercollegiate athletics.
- Having appropriate verification regarding satisfaction of these criteria submitted to the NAIA National Coordinating Committee for review and final dispensation.

NAIA Rules Snapshot

An NAIA student-athlete

- May participate during four seasons of competition within the first 10 semesters (15 quarters) they are in college.
- Must be enrolled in at least 12 hours every semester or quarter and be making normal progress toward a baccalaureate degree.
- Must meet freshman and/or continuing eligibility rules.

Continuing Eligibility

- In the first semester/quarter, freshmen must pass at least nine of the 12 hours prior to the second term to be eligible to compete.
- To play during the second season, the student must have accumulated 24 semester or 36 quarter hours.
- By the third season, they must have 48 semester or 72 quarter hours
- By the fourth, a student must have accumulated 72 semester or 108 quarter hours and at least 48 semester/72 quarter hours general education and/or in the student's major.
- Once into junior and senior year, students have to maintain a 2.0 GPA.

Transfers

- Transfers must "sit out" 16 weeks (112 calendar days) unless they only attended a two-year college previously or never competed at previous four-year institution or have a 2.0 GPA and written release from previous four-year institution.

Seasons of Competition

In the NAIA, a student-athlete can compete during four “seasons of competition” within the first 10 semesters (15 quarters) they are in college. A season of competition is counted when you participate in one or more intercollegiate contests whether at the varsity, junior varsity or freshman level. For transfers, seasons of competition are determined under the rules of the association under which you competed previously.

To ensure that students in the NAIA are competing against those with comparable athletic experience, the NAIA has a “competitive experience” rule. If you have been involved in any athletic competition or training for which you receive compensation, including payment for expenses, after September 1 in the year of high school graduation or the equivalent, you can be charged with a season of competition.

Hardships

If as a student athlete you suffer a season-ending injury or illness, NAIA rules provide for a way to deal with the loss of the opportunity to compete.

Hardship requests must be verified by medical doctor treating the student. The injury cannot have occurred in last regular season contest or postseason and the student cannot have competed in more than permissible number of contests

If granted hardships restore a seasons of competition but do not restore any terms toward the maximum 10 semesters/15 quarters.

Useful Resources

List of NAIA schools — <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/about/members.htm>

NAIA Legislative Services — <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/legislative/>

NAIA Rules Education Resource Bank: Learn more about the eligibility rules — <http://naia.cstv.com/member-services/legislative/RulesEducation.htm>

