

Six Recruiting Myths

That May Keep You Out of the (Scholarship) Money

Colleges come in many shapes and sizes and offer a variety of academic and athletic programs. A high school athlete who wants to continue participating on the college level and land scholarship dollars should familiarize him/herself with the opportunities available. That includes dispelling some prevailing recruiting myths.

Myth #1

Division I schools have plenty of full-ride athletic scholarships to offer in their sports.

People are most familiar with the three divisions governed by the NCAA. NCAA Division I and II schools offer the majority of all athletic scholarships in the US. Even so, it is common to hear an NCAA Division I or II coach say, "I'd really like to offer you a scholarship, but I can't because I have no money left." This is often true. The NCAA sets specific limits on the number of scholarships a school can award. For example, in the sport of soccer, NCAA D-I are authorized to award 9.9 men's and 12.0 women's scholarships. NCAA D-II are authorized to award 9.0 men's and 9.9 women's scholarships. Colleges aren't required to award these allotted scholarships. Schools may choose not to award any money for some sports.

Myth #2

Athletes have the best chance of finding scholarships at Division I and II Schools.

Getting a full-ride scholarship at a D-I or D-II school is not that common. Most coaches have special personal formulas, which they use when dividing up the money allotted to their program. Full scholarships do not have to be awarded to one individual. A coach who is allotted 12 scholarships is actually allotted the amount of money that it would cost for 12 students to attend. He/she does not have to award the entire amount of one year's fees to one student. The cost of one year's tuition can be given out in a number of partial scholarships. Many coaches choose to increase the amount they offer for each year an athlete participates on a varsity squad. It is not uncommon in the very strongest programs for players to receive no scholarship aid until their sophomore year. The coaches at these programs often tell promising young players that if they prove themselves during their freshman year, they will receive money next year. What is left unsaid is that it is also possible that the coach will decide not to award them any money in the following years.

NCAA Division III schools are not allowed to award athletic scholarships but they often have academic or various grant monies, which they can award to deserving individuals. You would be surprised at the amount of money that a Division III school can actually award a deserving student athlete. Be aware that many of the nation's most prestigious schools are Division II. NAIA and other smaller college programs should not be overlooked. A number of these programs also have money available to aid a promising student-athlete. In the early stages of trying to identify schools, do not rule out investigating certain schools simply on the basis of affiliation or division. Look at colleges to see if they have BOTH an academic and athletic program which interests you. Talk with coaches and college officials about what they feel they can offer you both on and off the field.

Myth #3

Some schools are just too expensive to consider.

Never assume that a school is too expensive for your family finances. In considering college costs, be familiar with the term "discounted tuition". Many institutions give merit awards, need-based grants, or a combination of both. Discounted tuition is the true cost of what the family pays after the school has offered a financial aid package. Most admissions offices will work with their coaches and financial aid officers to help provide the best packages for a student-athlete who they feel will be a positive addition to their college.

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