



## Information for a Prospective NJCAA Student-Athlete

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is committed to providing quality athletic opportunities to enhance the entire collegiate learning experience for its students. The Association and its member colleges strive to provide equal opportunities for all concerned student-athletes. The Association is sensitive to the special needs and circumstances of the Two-Year College student while keeping within the high academic standards of our 500+ member institutions.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Q: Who can participate in the NJCAA?**

A: The NJCAA's mission is to promote, govern and foster a competitive environment for two-year college athletics. The NJCAA recognizes the diverse nature of its membership, providing at all times a consistent and inclusive governance structure that provides opportunities for all stakeholders and emphasizes the academic, athletic and community involvement goals of all student-athletes.

Unlawful discrimination is incompatible with this mission and detracts from the organizations goal of promoting healthy and fair competition. The NJCAA prohibits unlawful discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in the NJCAA's governance, programs, regulations and employment practices.

**Q: Does a student have to have graduated from a high school in the United States in order to participate in athletics at an NJCAA member college?**

A: No, participation in the NJCAA is in no way reliant on or restricted in any manner based on where a recruit attended and graduated high school. Student-athletes in the NJCAA must be high school graduates or equivalent but where they received their credentials does not play a factor in their ability to participate on any of the NJCAA's certified sports.

**Q: What sports are sponsored by the NJCAA?**

A: The NJCAA provides opportunities for participation, including National Championships, for student-athletes in the following sports:

Fall Baseball, Spring Baseball, Basketball, Bowling, Cross Country, Football, Fall Golf, Spring Golf, Half Marathon, Indoor Track and Field, Fall Lacrosse, Spring Lacrosse, Outdoor Track and Field, Fall Softball, Spring Softball, Fall Soccer, Spring Soccer, Swimming & Diving, Fall Tennis, Spring Tennis, Fall Volleyball, Spring Volleyball and Wrestling.

**Q: Whose rules do I abide by?**

A: Students participating on an intercollegiate level in any one of the certified sports of the NJCAA shall conform to the requirements of the NJCAA Rules of Eligibility, the rules and regulations of the conference and region with which the college is affiliated, and also the rules of the college at which the students are attending and participating.

**Q: How do I determine my initial eligibility?**

A: Due to the unique academic and athletic situation of each individual, and the complexity of the NJCAA eligibility rules, it is recommended that each potential student-athlete discuss their athletic eligibility with the athletic personnel at the NJCAA college where they have chosen to attend. Should the athletic staff have any questions in determining an individual's eligibility, the college may contact the NJCAA National Office for assistance.

**Q: Must I have graduated from high school?**

A: Yes, A student-athlete must be a graduate of a high school with an academic diploma, general education diploma or a state department of education approved high school equivalency test.

**Q: Does the NJCAA have an “eligibility clock” or an age limit for participation?**

A: The NJCAA does not have an “eligibility clock” as other intercollegiate organizations do nor does the NJCAA have an age limit. An individual has eligibility in the NJCAA provided they have not previously competed in their first two or more years of intercollegiate competition in a sport and have maintained their amateur status.

**Q: How many seasons may I participate in a sport?**

A: Students are allowed two (2) seasons of competition in any sport at an NJCAA college, if they have not participated at any intercollegiate level (including varsity, JV, and/or club) during two (2) seasons previously. Participation in any fraction of any regularly scheduled contest during the academic year shall constitute one (1) season of participation in that sport. Participation includes entree into an athletic contest and does not include dressing for such an event.

Warning: Students who falsify their academic records and /or information about previous athletic participation shall be barred from any further competition in any NJCAA member college at any time.

**Q: Do I qualify as an amateur?**

A: Amateur players are those who engage in sports for the physical, mental, or social benefits they derive in participation and to whom athletics is a vocation and not a source of personal monetary gains. Be sure of your amateur status by checking the NJCAA Rules of Eligibility or checking with an NJCAA athletic director.

**Q: While playing a sport I want to enter an open tournament or play with another team. May I?**

A: While the season of any sport is in progress, as determined by the published schedule of the college, students are not allowed to participate in that same sport for any other team.

If a student wishes to enter any open competition as a representative of their college, the competition must be listed on the published schedule of the college and the student must meet all NJCAA eligibility requirements.

If a student is not representing an NJCAA college, they may enter open or "exhibition" competition without NJCAA approval. A college shall not, however, furnish the student with any assistance (equipment, transportation, lodging or meals) when participating in such events.

**Q: What about All-Star competitions?**

A: Student participation in athletic events such as All-Star games must be approved by the NJCAA National Office. The NJCAA does NOT restrict the number of All-Star games in which a HIGH SCHOOL student may participate prior to attendance at an NJCAA college.

## **LETTER OF INTENT/SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENT**

**Q: What is the NJCAA Letter of Intent?**

A: The NJCAA Letter of Intent is used to commit an individual to a specific institution for a period of one academic year. The form is only valid for NJCAA member colleges and has no jurisdiction over NCAA or NAIA colleges.

**Q: What if I sign an NJCAA and an NCAA Letter of Intent?**

A: A student is allowed to sign a Letter of Intent with both an NJCAA and a NCAA college without sanction. The student may not, however, sign an NJCAA Letter of Intent with two NJCAA colleges. If a student does sign with two NJCAA colleges, that student will become immediately ineligible to compete in NJCAA competition for the next academic year in any sport. Once a student-athlete signs an NJCAA Letter of Intent with an NJCAA member college they immediately become unrecruitable by any other NJCAA member college for the duration of the agreement.

**Q: If I am awarded an athletic scholarship and voluntarily do not participate, could I lose my scholarship?**

A: Cancellation or modification of an athletic scholarship during the period of its effectiveness is allowed for the following reasons only:

1. If the athlete becomes ineligible for participation in athletics because of academic and/or disciplinary reasons.
2. For misconduct (unrelated to athletic ability) found by the person or body in charge of general discipline at the institution.
3. If the student-athlete voluntarily withdraws from a sport prior to the institution's first competition in that sport.
4. Graduation

Colleges may also include attachments to the NJCAA Letter of Intent which stipulates conditions for the cancellation of an athletic scholarship that are more stringent than those listed above.

**Q: One NJCAA school can offer me a full scholarship, and one school can't offer me anything. Why?**

A: Each institution belonging to the NJCAA chooses to compete on the Division I, II or III level in designated sports. Division I colleges may offer full athletic scholarships a maximum of tuition, fees, room and board, course related books, up to \$250 in course required supplies, and transportation costs one time per academic year to and from the college by direct route. Division II colleges are limited to awarding tuition, fees, course related books, and up to \$250 in course required supplies. Division III institutions may provide no athletically related financial assistance. However, NJCAA colleges that do not offer athletic aid may choose to participate at the Division I or II level if they so desire.

## ELIGIBILITY RULES

**Q: Must I be a full-time student during the season?**

A: Students must maintain full-time status during the season of the sport(s) in which they have chosen to participate (full-time status being 12 credit hours or more).

**Q: What determines my eligibility after my initial full-time enrollment?**

A: Eligibility is determined at the institutional level and all previous college work is taken into consideration when determining NJCAA athletic eligibility. The basis for NJCAA academic eligibility is primarily based on the number of full-time terms a student has previously attempted.

**First Season Academic Requirement:** A first season participant must satisfy the academic progress eligibility requirement by meeting ALL of the requirements or at least ONE of the following rules or exceptions which apply to the student's situation: (Reference Appendix A)

**Zero (0) Previous Terms of Full-Time College Enrollment:** A student-athlete who is in his/her first full-time college term is deemed to have satisfied the academic progress eligibility requirement for their initial term of full-time enrollment or participation, OR

**One Previous Term of Full-Time College Enrollment:** On or before the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the student-athletes second full-time college term must have accumulated 12 credit hours with a GPA of 1.75 or higher, OR

**Two or More Previous Terms of Full-Time College Enrollment:** On or before the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the third full-time, and all subsequent terms of full-time enrollment, A student-athlete must have passed 12 credit hours with a GPA of 2.00 or higher in the previous term of full-time enrollment, OR

**Best Hours Accumulation Rule:** On or before the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the term the student-athlete wishes to participate in, a student-athlete must have accumulated passing credit hours with an associated GPA of 2.00 or higher in a number equal or greater than the student-athlete's terms of full-time enrollment multiplied by twelve, OR

**Total Hours Accumulation Rule:** On or before the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the term the student-athlete wishes to participate in, a student athlete-must have accumulated passing credit hours with a GPA of 2.00 or higher in a number equal or greater than:

- 36 total semester hours for a fall season or 48 total semester hours for a spring season OR
- 54 quarter hours for a fall sport, 63 quarter hours for a winter sport, or 72 quarter hours for a spring sport.
- A student-athlete may only use this rule once per sport within the same term. Once this rule is exhausted, the student-athlete must meet the requirements of **Two or More Previous Terms of Full-Time College Enrollment** or **Best Hours Accumulation Rule** to maintain eligibility.

**First Participating Term Accumulation Exception for student athletes with prior enrollment in multiple full-time semesters:** A student-athlete entering his/her first season of participation in a sport must have accumulated passing credit hours at a minimum of 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours with a GPA of 2.00 or higher, on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the term.

- The First Participating Term Accumulation Exception may only be used once to establish a student-athlete's eligibility in the initial term of participation. This exception may not be used to establish eligibility in subsequent terms

**Second Season Academic Requirements:** Prior to a student-athlete's participation in a second season of a sport he/she must meet the appropriate Academic requirements of a first season participant AND.

- Have accumulated 24 earned/passing semester hours with a GPA of 2.00 or OR
- Have accumulated 36 quarter hours with a GPA of 2.00 or higher.
- If the student-athlete has been enrolled in two quarter terms or less, the second season requirement becomes 28 quarter hours with a 2.00 GPA or higher.

**Q: I played one year on a club team, how many years of intercollegiate eligibility do I have left?**

A: Participation on a designated collegiate club team in an NJCAA certified sport will constitute one (1) season of participation.

**Q: I took a semester off to earn money for college, will I be immediately eligible to play once I enroll as a full-time student?**

A: Students must be enrolled full-time (twelve or more credits) at the college where they have chosen to participate when the regular season schedule of a sport begins. Students not enrolled during the term when the season begins remain ineligible throughout the season schedule unless they enroll on the first possible enrollment date following:

1. Their release from Active Armed Services of the United States with a discharge other than dishonorable.
2. Their return from a religious mission.
3. Their graduation from a high school or receipt of an equivalency diploma.
4. Their transfer from an NJCAA member college which has dropped a sport after the school year begins.

Students that satisfy one of the four exceptions become eligible after the previous term has ended upon registration as a full-time student for the new term. (Students must be added to the eligibility form before participating.)

**Q: What if I start college and then withdraw?**

A: The following withdrawal policy applies to students that are attending any college.

1. Students are allowed fifteen (15) calendar days from the beginning date of classes to withdraw completely or to withdraw to less than twelve credits (part-time) and not have that term affect their future eligibility, provided they have not participated in any athletic competition
2. Students that have participated and withdraw within the first fifteen (15) calendar days of a particular term are not eligible for athletic participation and must re-establish their eligibility in accordance with the provisions of Academic Progress Eligibility. The term in which the student participates must be considered the same as a term of full-time attendance.

**Q: Upon returning to college following an extended absence, must I meet the current eligibility requirements?**

A: Students who have not been enrolled in college in twelve (12) or more credit hours (full-time) for a period of eighteen calendar months or longer shall be exempt from previous term and/or accumulation requirements as set forth in First Season Academic Requirements of the NJCAA bylaws. Second season student-athletes are not exempt from the Second Season Academic Requirements of the NJCAA bylaws.

Students who have served eighteen calendar months in the Armed Forces of the United States, church mission or with a recognized foreign aid service shall be exempt from the First Season Academic Requirements and Second Season Academic Requirements. This must be approved by the NJCAA National Office.

Note: this is a one time exemption, available only for the first full-time term after the period of non-attendance.

**Q: What are the requirements for transfer students?**

A: All transfer students must adhere to the eligibility rules of the NJCAA to be eligible for participation at a member institution. Review the Transfers section of the NJCAA Handbook to make sure you meet all transfer requirements of the NJCAA.

**Q: What requirements will I have to meet to transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college?**

A: Questions relative to a transfer from an NJCAA college to a four-year program must be addressed by the four-year college and/or their national governing body (ie. NCAA or NAIA).

**Q: Are the rules uniform throughout the entire membership?**

A: The various regions of the NJCAA may adopt rules which are more stringent than the national rules, but none that are less stringent. It would be best for you to check the rules that exist within the region in which you are interested in attending. Any member college can assist you with any regional differences, which may exist.

**Q: I am a recent high school graduate and coaches have started to recruit me to play. What is allowed?**

A: The following is permitted under NJCAA recruitment rules:

1. No institution shall permit an athlete to be solicited to attend by the promise of a gift or inducement other than an athletic grant-in-aid.
2. An institution may pay for one visit to its campus by direct route, for a stay not to exceed two days and two nights. The paid visit must be limited to the campus and local community where the college is located. A student-athlete must have completed his/her junior year in high school in order to receive an official recruiting visit by a member NJCAA college.
3. While recruiting a potential athlete on campus, a college representative may purchase meals for the athlete. The value of the meals may not exceed the amount provided to a college employee while traveling on college business.
4. A college official must authorize all funds utilized for recruitment purposes.

For further clarification of the recruiting rules, see the Recruitment section of the NJCAA Handbook. If a student-athlete signs an NJCAA Letter of Intent, all NJCAA institutions are obligated to respect that signing and shall cease to recruit that student-athlete. The student-athlete is obligated to notify any recruiter who contacts him/her of the signing.

Revised May 22, 2017