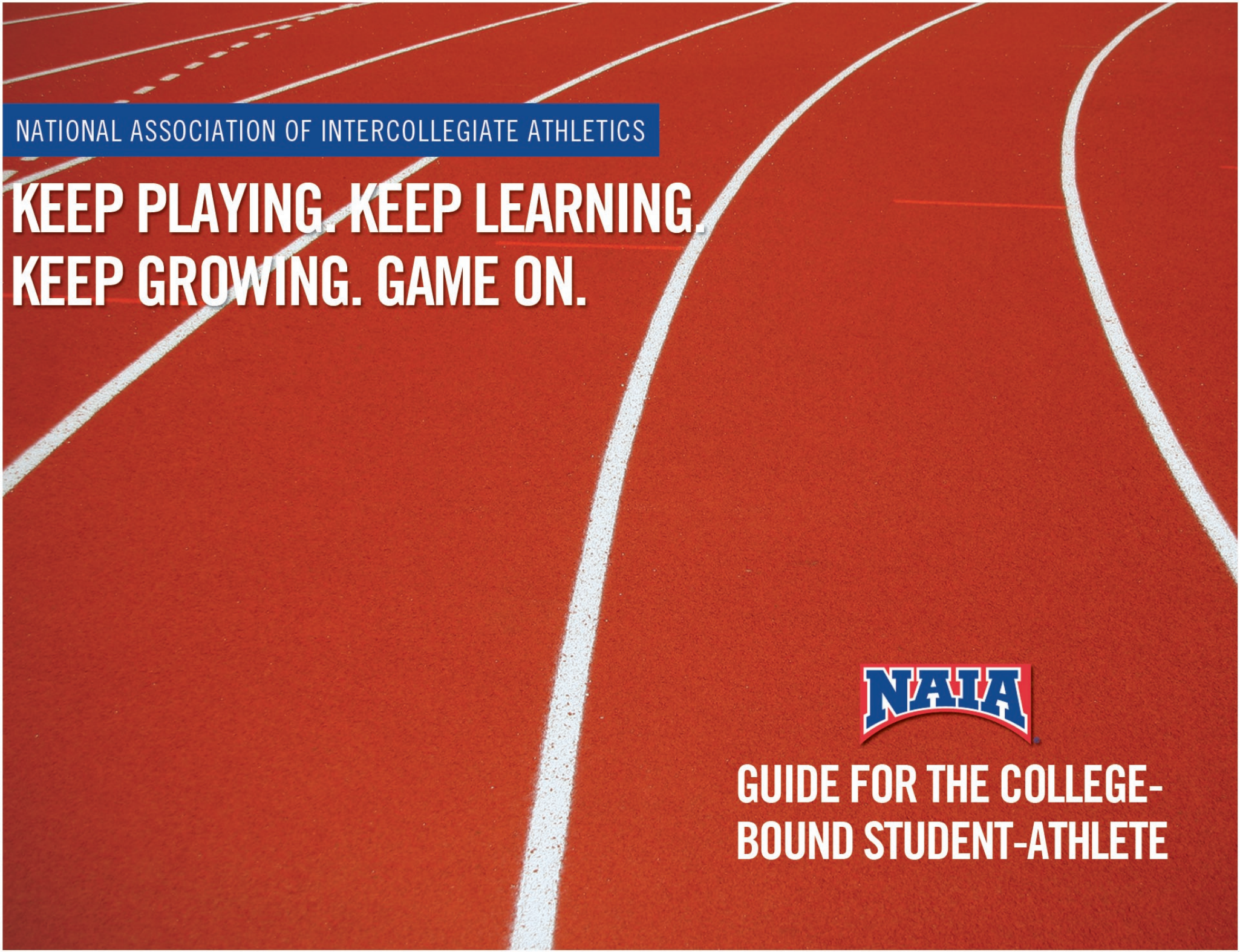

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS
KEEP PLAYING. KEEP LEARNING.
KEEP GROWING. GAME ON.
NAIA
GUIDE FOR THE COLLEGE-
BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETE

PLAYNAIA

Your college sports experience starts here.



Where Leaders Emerge: NAIA student-athletes take part in the American Red Cross-NAIA Collegiate Leadership Program.

Dear Prospective Student-Athletes,

Welcome to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, an association that boasts a proud tradition of intercollegiate athletics, academic excellence and character values.

As you explore opportunities to PlayNAIA you will discover a community of nearly 300 member colleges and universities, 60,000 student-athletes and an environment that focuses on athletic participation as one part of the total education process. Our members award more than $450 million in financial aid each year, compete for 23 national championships in 13 sports and offer a wide selection of academic and athletic programs.

Today, the NAIA is an association that, above all other things, cares about and is focused on student-athlete success – helping you to attain your education and athletic goals. Our members utilize athletics as a vehicle to transform lives to build better futures.

The NAIA is ready to assist you in taking that important first step in your college sports career. We invite you to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center at **PlayNAIA.org**. Once there, you'll learn more about the opportunities that await you.

Since the NAIA's founding in 1937, we are proud of the many accomplishments of our current and former student-athletes and we look forward to the legacy you will establish in the NAIA.

Jim Carr, NAIA President

23 National Championships

The NAIA offers both men and women the opportunity to compete at his or 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

Emerging sports
Men's Competitive Cheer & Dance
Women's Competitive Cheer & Dance
Men's Bowling
Women's Bowling
Men's Volleyball

Find NAIA schools that offer your sport at PlayNAIA.org.

View All Schools

NAIA participation experience

In the NAIA, a student-athlete can compete during four "seasons of competition" within the first 10 semesters (15 quarters) 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. To compete, student-athletes must be enrolled in at least 12 hours every semester or quarter and be making normal progress toward a baccalaureate degree. They must also meet freshman and/or continuing eligibility rules.

What's different about 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 another NAIA school 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 need permission to respond to you, but your current school must be notified that the contact has been made.

Can I visit a campus for a tryout?

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. If a school has a policy for reimbursing all students for such visits, the same can be applied to you as a prospective student-athlete.

What about letters of intent?

As an association, the NAIA does not have a letter of intent program in which students sign a binding agreement to participate in athletics at a particular institution. Student-athletes may sign letters of intent with an individual NAIA school, however, they aren't obligated to attend that institution. That said, some NAIA conferences require their member schools to recognize letters of intent that are signed with other institutions within the conference. Please check with your prospective school to see if any conference programs apply.

Admission standards for athletes

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

What about financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans?

NAIA rules on financial aid are straightforward. Each school determines how much aid it awards to an individual student-athlete. Under no conditions may anyone else provide direct financial assistance to any 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 student-athletes is 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 based on the official room and board allowance listed in the institution's catalog

Each sport has an overall limit on the amount of financial aid it can award as full or partial grants to students in that sport. For example, the overall limit in baseball is 12. Baseball scholarships can be awarded to any number of students (for example, 1 full scholarship, 10 half awards and 24 quarter awards) as long as the combined total does not exceed 12.

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

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

Academically gifted students can be exempted from these limits if they meet grade or test score criteria established by the NAIA.

Questions for parents to ask about financial aid

- 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 son or daughter signs a financial agreement with your institution, can she/he sign with another school within your conference without penalty?
- If my son or daughter quits the team after the season, will he or she continue to receive the scholarship?
- If my son or daughter suffers a season-ending injury, will the financial-aid agreement be honored?
- If my son or daughter 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?

Do I meet the freshman eligibility requirements?

If you will graduate from a U.S. 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. 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).

MUST MEET TWO OF THE THREE

1. TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT	2. HIGH SCHOOL GPA REQUIREMENT	3. CLASS RANK REQUIREMENT
Achieve a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT.	**Achieve a minimum overall high school grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.**	**Graduate in the top half of your high school class.**
Tests must be taken on a state, national or international testing date; scores must be achieved on a single test. The SAT must be achieved on the Critical Reading and Math sections only. The Writing score cannot be used. You must pass the standardized test prior to the term in which you want to participate in athletics. When registering for the tests, students should indicate the NAIA code "9876" to have their scores sent directly to the NAIA Eligibility Center.	The NAIA accepts the grade point average determined by the high school, provided it is recorded and awarded in the same manner as for every other student at the school.	If a student's class rank does not appear on the transcript, a signed letter from the principal or headmaster, written on the school's letterhead and with the school's official seal, stating the student's final class rank position or percent may be submitted.

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.

What if I didn't attend a U.S. high school?

The criteria for alternative high school experiences and those outside of the U.S. are determined as follows:

GED Students — must meet two of the three

1. TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT	2. HIGH SCHOOL GPA REQUIREMENT	3. CLASS RANK REQUIREMENT
Achieve a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT.	**GED students are recognized as having met the GPA requirement.**	**(Not applicable)**

Home Schooled Students

TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT — Home school students who have a 20 on the ACT or 950 on the SAT are considered to have met the freshman eligibility requirement.
If a home schooled student completes a home schooling program conducted in accordance with the laws of the student's state of residence, but does not meet the test score requirement, a home school waiver may be requested from the NAIA Home School Committee.

International Students — must meet two of the three

Graduates of high schools outside of the United States or one of the U.S. territories.

1. TEST SCORE REQUIREMENT	2. HIGH SCHOOL GPA REQUIREMENT	3. CLASS RANK REQUIREMENT
Achieve a minimum of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT.	**Achieve a minimum overall high school grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.**	**Graduate in the top half of your high school class.**
	International students must provide their academic records in both the language of issue as well as a certified, word-for-word English translation. See the NAIA Eligibility Center requirements for more on submitting international academic records.	

Note: For detailed information about the process for international students, please see the **NAIA Guide for the International Student-Athlete.**

NAIA Eligibility Center at PlayNAIA.org determines eligibility of all first-time NAIA student-athletes

The NAIA Eligibility Center, at **PlayNAIA.org**, is responsible for determining the NAIA eligibility of first-time student-athletes. Students must have their eligibility determined by the NAIA Eligibility Center, and all NAIA schools are bound by the center's decisions.

Every student interested in playing sports at NAIA colleges for the first time needs to register online with the NAIA Eligibility Center. This applies to high school seniors and transfers from both two- and four-year colleges.

What information will I need to provide? You'll create a personal profile with the basic facts about your academic history and sports participation to date.

- You'll need your current contact information, previous residences and addresses, high schools attended and history of your sports participation during and after high school graduation.
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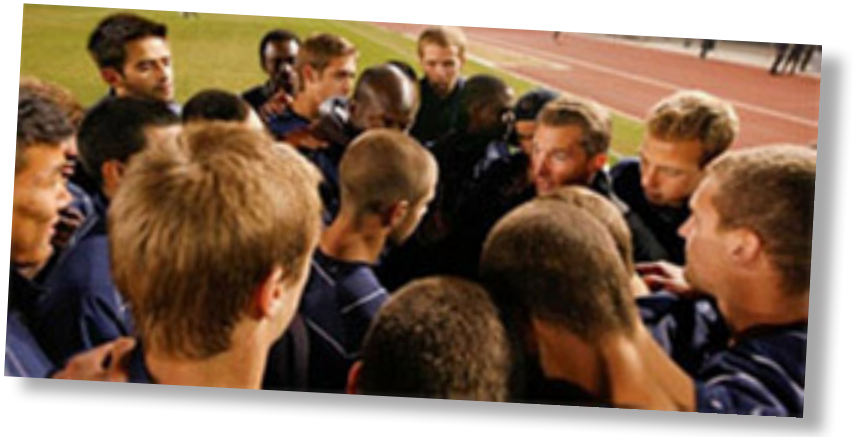
When you register for the ACT or SAT, include the NAIA Eligibility Center (9876) on the list of places test scores should be sent.
- Ask your high school counselors to send the NAIA Eligibility Center a final official transcript that verifies high school graduation, class rank and cumulative grade point average.

What are the costs?
Registration for students from the U.S. and Canada is $70; the international student fee US$120. Transfer students pay $90. This is a one-time nonrefundable registration fee and includes all services of the NAIA Eligibility Center.



The registration fee will be waived for students with demonstrated need. If you receive a fee waiver for the ACT or SAT test or qualify for the federal free or reduced-cost lunch program, contact your high school counselor, who can provide confirmation of your eligibility for a **fee waiver** to the NAIA Eligibility Center. Transfer students can qualify for a fee waiver based on receipt of a minimum of $4,500 in Federal Pell Grant funds.

Do I need to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center if I'm registering with the NCAA?
Determining if you meet eligibility requirements for NAIA eligibility is separate from NCAA eligibility certification. The NAIA and NCAA are two separate associations, with two different sets of rules and certification processes.



PlayNAIA.org connects you with NAIA schools



As an optional part of the NAIA Eligibility Center registration process, students can participate in the **NAIA Connections Service.** This unique feature allows you to create a customized Sport Resume highlighting your sports accomplishments, positions, events and honors. Use the search to find NAIA schools that offer your sport, the type of college (location, number of students, public or private) and the academic areas that interest you. Then indicate which schools you want to connect with, and we'll send your Sport Resume directly to them. NAIA coaches and admissions representatives will get in touch with you – and you've started the conversation about opportunities to play sports in college!

Early decisions for high school seniors

Students, who have completed their junior year of high school and have at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale and the minimum test scores required (18 ACT or 860 SAT), may obtain an eligibility determination before graduating from high school. Those students will need to request that their official transcripts after their junior year be sent to the NAIA Eligibility Center and contact ACT or SAT to have their test scores sent directly.



Register with the NAIA Eligibility Center at PlayNAIA.org.

NAIA Eligibility Center

Phone: 816-595-8300
Toll free: 866-881-6242
Email: ecinfo@naia.org
Hours: Monday-Friday
8:30 am to 5 pm Central

Transcripts & Fee Waiver Confirmations
NAIA Eligibility Center
P.O. Box 15340
Kansas City, MO 64106

What are the transfer student eligibility requirements?

If you enroll in 12 hours and attend any regularly scheduled class at a two- or four-year college and then decide to transfer to an NAIA school, the NAIA considers you a transfer student, regardless of whether you participated in intercollegiate athletics.

If you're a transfer who has never participated in athletics at an NAIA school, you'll need to register with the NAIA Eligibility Center at PlayNAIA.org to have your eligibility determined.

Residency Rules if transferring from a four-year school — If you participated in an intercollegiate contest in your sport at a four-year school, you must wait 16 weeks before participating in that sport unless you:

- Have a written release from the athletic department at your most recent four-year college
- Have a minimum 2.0 GPA from all previous colleges combined
- Meet all additional academic requirements and any conference-specific requirements for transfers

Residency Rules if transferring from a two-year school — A student transferring from a two-year school has no residency requirement. If, however, you have participated at a four-year college prior to attending a two-year school, you must have a written release from the athletic department of the four-year institution.

24/36 Hour Rule — Transfer students are required to have completed 24 semester/36 quarter hours of institutional credit in their last two semesters/three quarters of enrollment prior to transferring.

Progress Rule — If you're a transfer student who has already used one or more of your four seasons of competition in college sports, you will need to show completion of the following before you can compete:

- Second season: 24 semester/36 quarter institutional credit hours
- Third season: 48 semester/72 quarter institutional credit hours
- Fourth season: 72 semester/108 quarter institutional credit hours (including 48 semester/72 quarter hours in general education or your major field of study)



Who's considered a professional in the NAIA?

In the NAIA, only amateur students-athletes 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.

The following will cause a student to lose amateur standing:

- Signing a contract with any professional team or entering into an agreement to compete in professional athletics, with either a professional sports organization or with any individual or group of individuals authorized to represent the athlete with a professional sports organization
- Participating in any athletics contest as a professional or as a team member where you receive reimbursement, directly or indirectly, exceeding the actual expenses of travel, meals and lodging
- Exploiting for remuneration your athletic ability or fame through an exhibition or radio or TV appearance, using your athletic fame to write for the news media for pay beyond actual expenses or receiving payment for the use of your name or picture to promote any commercial product or enterprise

How long can I compete?

In the NAIA, a "season of competition" is counted when you participate in one or more intercollegiate contests whether at the varsity, junior varsity or freshman level. Student-athletes can compete during four seasons of competition within the first 10 semesters (15 quarters) they are in college. For transfers, seasons of competition at the previous institution(s) are determined under the rules of the association (such as the NCAA, NJCAA, etc.) under which you competed previously.

What happens if I suffer an injury during college?

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 the medical doctor who treated you. The injury cannot have occurred in last regular season contest or during postseason, and you cannot have competed in more than a specified number of contests. If granted, hardships restore a season of competition but do not restore any terms toward the maximum 10 semesters/15 quarters.

What if I've competed in my sport outside of college?

Athletes who compete outside the traditional college setting can gain an unfair advantage, and the NAIA addresses this issue with its "competitive experience rule." To ensure that students are competing against those with similar levels of training and experience, the NAIA evaluates a student's competition outside of college. Participation in some leagues or levels of competition can result in a reduction of the student's available seasons of competition.

Students are permitted to participate in non-collegiate competition during the 12-month period after high school graduation. However, starting on the first day of the 13th month following high school graduation, the "competitive experience rule" applies. The rule applies to students in three main situations:

- Students who take more than one year off between high school and college
- Students who go to college but don't play college sports for one or more years while enrolled
- Students who leave college for one or more semesters after first enrolling

A student can be charged one season of competition for each year of outside competition after the first day of the 13th month following high school graduation. A student will also be charged a season of competition for each year of intercollegiate competition regardless of the date of high school graduation. The NAIA Eligibility Center, supported by ongoing research into both domestic and international competition, determines which leagues or levels of competition in a particular sport are considered countable.

How do I remain eligible during college?

NAIA student-athletes have to be enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours at all times and be making progress toward a degree. When you reach junior year (either athletically or academically), you have to maintain a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Your eligibility is reviewed at the end of every term you are in school.

Once in college, your best resource for eligibility questions will be your campus faculty athletics representative. The **NAIA Official Handbook** outlines all association rules governing eligibility and it's available online at NAIA.org

Check out your resources

- **PlayNAIA.org**, the NAIA Eligibility Center — information for prospective students, parents, high school and club coaches about NAIA schools, sports and eligibility determination.
- **Search for NAIA schools** by sports offered, location or conference.
- Explore **NAIA Conferences**.
- NAIA Legislative Services provides resources on **NAIA rules and eligibility**.
- **National Junior College Athletic Association**
- **National Federation of State High School Associations**

Join us on **Facebook**.

Learn more about the NAIA student-athlete experience on our **Twitter**

Visit the **NAIA on YouTube**.

