**Alton High School Athletes**

The athletic department at Alton High in conjunction with the counseling department encourages you to do your best in your high school coursework. It is as important as practicing the skills of your sport in order to continue playing after high school. Please use this as your guide and do your homework utilizing the additional websites provided here.

 The following questions should be answered here:

* What is the NCAA and the clearinghouse?
* Can I get a Scholarship to play sports in college?
* What is the difference between NCAA I, II, III, NJCAA and NAIA schools?
* How do I register? Is there a fee?
* How do coaches find out about my talent?
* When can I be recruited?
* How do I know if I am in the right classes to be eligible?
* If I am recruited, do I still have to apply to the college?
* Do I have to take the ACT or SAT test?
* How do I send my ACT scores to the university?
* What are my academic goals?
* What is the difference between a qualifier and a non-qualifier for DI schools?
* What is an amateur student athlete and what are the amateurism rules?
* What is the NCAA?

The NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It was established in 1906 and is the athletic governing body for colleges and universities. There are three divisions and they evaluate the rules and guidelines for eligibility for each.

* Active division I members = 346
* Active division II members= 291
* Active division III members= 439

 NCAA Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes.

* Can I get a Scholarship to play sports in college?

 If this is your goal, please visit the websites at the end of this informational bulletin. Know all the rules.

 In order to be certified to eligible for a scholarship, the student-athlete must follow approved coursework and maintain the minimum allowed GPA in these courses. The courses that are allowed are included here in this information under “how do I know if I am in the right courses?”.

 Practice your sport! Be respectful of your coach at all times, the college coach will ask.

* What is the difference between NCAA I, II, III, NJCAA and NAIA schools?

College athletes are governed by one of three organizations:

* NCAA- [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)
* NJCAA- [www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)
* NAIA- [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)

NCAA I universities are the largest universities. There are many scholarship opportunities and the competition is cut-throat. This division is seen as the first step towards professional sport.

Division schools tend to be smaller universities and colleges. There is no age limit at D II schools. There are also scholarship opportunities at these colleges.

Division III member colleges are required to sponsor a minimum of five sports for women and five for men. There are no athletic scholarships offered by DIII institutions. Student-athletes receive no financial aid related to their athletic ability. The benefit of these institutions is the conference and regional competitions.

NJACC is the National Junior College Athletic Association. An athletic grant-in-aid may be awarded to any student-athlete in recognition of his/her athletic ability provided the student-athlete is admitted to the institution. It shall be limited to a maximum of tuition, fees, room, board, books and course related material. Additionally, transportation costs are offered one time per academic year to and from the college by direct route. It is best to speak directly with each institution regarding eligibility. The student-athlete must have graduated or obtained a GED. The continuing eligibility is contingent upon academic performance while enrolled at that junior college.

NAIA student-athletes must register with the NAIA eligibility center, since 2010. The athlete must achieve a minimum score of 18 on the ACT (860 SAT), finish in the top half of his/her graduating class, and maintain a GPA of 2.0. The NAIA governs over more than 60,000 athletes in 23 sports with many scholarships available.

There are some key differences to the eligibility centers for the NCAA and the NAIA. The biggest is the evaluation of the ACT or SAT score.

* The NCAA no longer requires an ACT or SAT score. Up to the individual NCAA school on what ACT or SAT score they will accept for college admission as a student.
* How do I register? Is there a fee?

To register, the student-athlete and parent/guardian must go to the eligibility website of each. There if a fee associated with registering once requirements have been met through the high school. The fee is typically between $60 and $75. Please see section “am I in the right classes to be eligible”. There are exceptions if the student has received a waiver for the SAT, see counselor if student meets requirements for free or reduced lunch program.

* How do coaches find out about my talent?

While almost all student-athletes believe the skills they have in their sport are unsurpassed by any other athlete, which is usually not the case. Collegiate coaches do not attend every game/match of every high school looking to recruit their entire team. Scouts are looking for athleticism, intelligence and attitude. It may be necessary to contact the coach of the school the student-athlete is interested in attending. It may require a highlight reel and submitting a transcript with a coach’s letter of the hard work and ethics of the player. It is important to show the dedication to both school and the sport to encourage interest in YOU. Do not wait; be ambitious.

* When can I be recruited?

Recruitment periods are the student-athletes responsibility to know. The recruiting rules are very important.

* Any face-to-face conversation that is more that “hello” is a contact. The dates as to when these conversations can occur vary for each sport.
* An evaluation is *off-campus* activity in which a coach assesses your academic or athletic qualifications. (not at high school)
* There is a dead period when coaches cannot contact the student-athlete at all.
* The student athlete must know what is determined to be an expense paid trip and when that can occur. (The college must have the official transcript of potential recruit prior to trip)
* The student-athlete must know the National Letter of Intent signing dates for the specific sport.

**The re-occurring theme here is it is the student –athlete’s responsibility to know the rules. Visit the websites provided.**

* How do I know if I am in the right classes to be eligible?

The NCAA is very specific in the core classes allowed to be factored in to compute the GPA. Each of the courses offered by Alton High has been submitted to the clearinghouse for review. Based upon college-readiness through each class, a list of classes deemed “core” have been selected and allowed.

For Division I:

* Graduate from high school
* Complete these 16 core courses
* 4 years of English
* 2 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
* 2 years of natural or physical science
* 1 extra year of English, math, or science
* 2 years of social science
* 4 years of extra core courses
* Earn a minimum required grade-point average in your core classes (2.3 GPA) (in core courses).
* You must complete the 16 core-course requirement within four consecutive academic years
* Prior to full time collegiate enrollment, you may use one additional core-course unit completed within one year form the date of on-time graduation, which may be at a location other than the high school from which you graduated.

For Division II:

* Graduate from high school
* 3 years of English (4 are needed for graduation)
* 2 years of natural/physical science
* 3 additional years of English, math, or science
* 2 years of social science
* 4 years of additional courses
* Earn a minimum required grade-point average in your core classes (2.2 GPA) (in core courses).

For Division III:

Division III college-bound student athletes are not certified by the NCAA eligibility Center because these colleges and universities each set their own admission standards. They minimize potential conflicts between athletics and academics through a prohibition on athletics-based financial aid, shorter playing and practicing seasons, a ban on redshirting and out-of season organized activities, and a focus on regional in-season and conference play.

The core classes allowed by the NCAA clearinghouse for Alton High School can be found on the NCAA website, the Alton High School website and in the guidance office.

NAIA Eligibility standards are the lowest of all divisions except Junior Colleges.:

* Finish in the top half of your graduating class
* Achieve a minimum GPA of 2.0
* Score 860 on the SAT or 18 on the ACT

For NJCAA:

* Graduate from high school or GED
* All other eligibility requirements are met while attending the junior college.
* If I am recruited, do I still have to apply to the college?

YES. A potential student-athlete must meet all requirements of the college or university he/she would like to attend. It is imperative the student know the requirements for admittance. Most colleges require 3 years of social science, whereas NCAA and Alton High School only require 2. It is the student’s responsibility to know all requirements.

* Do I have to take the ACT? How do I send my ACT scores to the university?

It is currently a requirement in the state of Illinois that students take a state SAT test in April of their Junior year with their graduating class in order to graduate. As previously noted, the SAT score is no longer required in NCAA division I or II schools.

Scores must be sent directly from ACT to NCAA Clearinghouse. The student may enter the code 9999 on the ACT when taking or go to ACT.org to have the scores sent. The ACT scores are on the high school transcript and are accepted by colleges and universities directly from Alton High School.

* What are my academic goals?

While athletic scholarship offerings are a powerful justification for college selection, student’s aspirations of careers must also be considered. The goal of education at the collegiate level is to prepare the student for his or her chosen career. Most athletes are not recruited to professional sport teams. The ultimate goal of academia is to ascertain a degree in a field the student-athlete has chosen.

* What is the difference between a qualifier and a non-qualifier for DI schools?

Division I:

* Qualifier- may receive athletic aid (scholarship), practice and compete in the first year of enrollment at the college or university. Must complete 16 core courses, ten of which must be completed before the start of the seventh semester of high school. Have a minimum GPA of 2.3 (in core courses).
* Academic redshirt- may receive athletic aid (scholarship) in the first year of enrollment and may practice in the first regular academic term, but may not compete in the first year of enrollment. Must complete the 16 core course requirement. Have a minimum GPA of 2.0 (in core courses).
* An Nonqualifier-cannot receive athletic aid (scholarship), practice or compete in the first year of enrollment.

Division II:

* Qualifier- Meet all before mentioned criteria under “how do I know if I am in the right classes” for core course requirements. Have a core course GPA of 2.0.
* What is an amateur student athlete and what are the amateurism rules?

If a student-athlete desires to be a part of Division I or II athletics, he/she must also be certified as an amateur student-athlete. This certification is completed by the NCAA clearinghouse. Division III schools will complete certification process. Amateur athlete means an athlete who meets the eligibility standards established by the national governing body or Paralympic sports organization for the sport in which the athlete competes.

When the student-athlete registers with the NCAA Eligibility Center, he/she will be asked questions about athletic participation. This will be evaluated and a determination will be made as to whether your amateurism status should be certified or if a penalty should be assessed before certification. Information will be gathered concerning whether the student-athlete has had contacts with a professional team, been contacted by an agent, have ascertained prize money for the sport, along with other information. Please see the website for further information.

Alton High School has guided many student-athletes through this process. It is ultimately; however, the student’s (along with parent and guardian) to familiarize themselves with the rules of eligibility for any college or university he/she is interested in. Recruiting practices and rules differ for each sport and the student-athlete needs to familiarize themselves with these. Please visit the websites included in this informational packet to learn more. All information provided here was taken from the websites. The rules are ever changing and the student-athlete must be responsible for knowing the requirements.