



## PLAYING AT THE NEXT LEVEL:

Many high school athletes have a goal to someday play basketball in college, or to even become a professional. The following are some facts:

1. When compared with the overall number of high school basketball players around the country, the percentage of those actually receiving a chance to play beyond high school is very low.
2. An individual's skill level, actual performance, potential, dedication, grades and standardized test scores all play a part.
3. Exposure also plays a part. Playing in a highly regarded, winning program is a boost.
4. Receiving mail from a college does not really constitute recruitment. **It means you are on a mailing list.**
5. Hard work, persistence and sacrifice are incredibly important in earning an opportunity to play collegiate basketball.

The following information is offered as a resource regarding the many different levels of collegiate basketball:

### NCAA

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

The National Collegiate Athletic Association offers three levels of NCAA Men's Basketball. Each has its own merit, depending on the type of college the student athlete and his family are interested in and what level of play his skill and athleticism dictate.

### NCAA Division I

[www.ncaasports.com/basketball/mens](http://www.ncaasports.com/basketball/mens)

The 334 schools that compete at this level are for the most part more nationally known. This is thought of as the most elite level of amateur basketball in the world. Schools at the Division I level have 13 full scholarships that may not be split. In other words, they can only offer "full" scholarships. Within Division I basketball, there are also informal divisions:

1. "High-Majors" are usually considered schools that play in a conference that on a given year will usually have multiple teams participate in the NCAA Division I Tournament. Teams competing in the Big 12, ACC, Big Ten, and Big East Conferences would be considered "High Majors." Often "High Majors" play on television, therefore the average person is most familiar with these schools. Texas, Duke, North Carolina, & Connecticut would be examples of "High-Majors."
2. "Mid-Majors" are teams that often compete very well against a "High Major," but may not be as nationally known or may compete in a conference that often struggles to receive "at large" bids to the NCAA Division I Tournament. Often a team considered a "Mid-Major" can seem for a time to have broken into the "High-Major" ranks because of recent, prolonged success. The program that most recently fits this description is Gonzaga. North Texas and TCU are examples of Texas universities that are "Mid-Majors."
3. "Low-Majors" are teams that play in conferences that will only receive a bid to the NCAA Division I Tournament if they win their conference tournament. A "Low-Major" often competes well versus a "Mid-Major," but if it were to beat a "High-Major," it would be considered a major upset. The Southland Conference in Texas is considered a "Low-Major" conference.

## **NCAA Division II**

<http://sports.umar.edu/sports/d2hoops.html>

[www.siue.edu/ATHLETIC/d2/mbb.html](http://www.siue.edu/ATHLETIC/d2/mbb.html)

[www.d2basketball.com](http://www.d2basketball.com)

NCAA Division II schools are usually regional universities. NCAA Division II schools are often very good opportunities for student athletes. Because NCAA Division II schools do not play on television, the average person is often uninformed about a few important things:

1. Schools at the Division II level may offer full scholarships, but may also offer partial scholarships. This sometimes allows them to offer some form of financial assistance to more players.
2. NCAA Division II schools play in their own NCAA Tournament.
3. The best NCAA Division II schools are very similar to a "Low-Major" NCAA Division I school.
4. One of the top NCAA Division II athletic conferences in the country is the Lone Star Conference in Texas.

## **NCAA Division III**

[www.d3hoops.com](http://www.d3hoops.com)

NCAA Division III schools are schools that offer collegiate basketball at a completely non-scholarship level. Many, but not all of these are small, private universities. Mary-Hardin Baylor, Southwestern, and Concordia are examples of schools in central Texas that compete in at the NCAA Division III level that fall into this category. On the other hand, University of Texas at Dallas and University of Texas at Tyler are examples of state schools competing in NCAA Division III. Here are some other interesting facts:

1. Non-scholarship does not mean non-competitive. There are very good Division III basketball programs available.
2. Often NCAA Division III schools offer a very well-rounded collegiate experience.
3. NCAA Division III schools play in their own NCAA Tournament.

## **NAIA**

[www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is another confederation of four year institutions. In the early 1990s, many NAIA schools joined the NCAA as either NCAA Division II or NCAA Division III schools. Despite this, there are still many NAIA schools throughout the country that can be excellent opportunities for student athletes. There are quite a few NAIA programs in Texas. Texas Wesleyan University won the 2006 National Championship. Here are a few facts about NAIA schools:

1. NAIA schools can offer scholarships.
2. NAIA schools compete in their own National Tournament.
3. The best NAIA programs are very similar to NCAA Division II programs.

## **NJCAA**

[www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)

The National Junior College Athletic Association is composed of two year institutions. "Juco" Athletics are sometimes reported on in an unfavorable light; in reality, they too can be outstanding opportunities for some student athletes. Paris Junior College won the NJCAA National Championship in 2006. Some important facts about NJCAA institutions:

1. Texas has a national reputation for the quality of its "Juco" basketball programs.
2. Players at the NJCAA level often are recruited to play at all of the other levels of collegiate basketball after playing "juco."
3. The recruiting process begins anew after playing at a NJCAA school.
4. Not qualifying academically for NCAA Division I is not the only reason for going to an NJCAA school. Some student athletes go to NJCAA schools because they feel they were under-recruited at a level they wish to compete at.
5. An associate's degree can be earned at a NJCAA school. The classes that make up the requirements of this degree transfer to four year schools.
6. NJCAA programs compete in their own National Tournament.

## **FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS & NON-SPORT RELATED SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

[www.studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student\\_guide/2004\\_2005/english/types.htm](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/2004_2005/english/types.htm)

It is very important to be aware of all federal financial aid programs which may be available. The two web-sites listed give detailed information on Federal Pell Grants. This federal financial aid is based on need. The counseling department is an important source for further information concerning federal financial aid programs as well as other non-sport related scholarship opportunities that may be available.

## **NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE**

[www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

All athletes with collegiate playing aspirations should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the end of their junior year of high school. The clearinghouse evaluates high school student academic courses, grades and test scores, to determine whether students meet minimum NCAA academic requirements. The web-site listed above contains other vital information. The counseling department is also an important source for additional information regarding the clearinghouse.