



DIFFERENT TYPES OF OFFERS

What are the Different Types of Offers I Could Get?

Impact of Coronavirus on College Recruiting: The NCAA recruiting rules are now different for each division level. **NCAA DI has suspended all in-person recruiting through April 15, 2021.** As of September 1, 2020, NCAA D2 and D3 have resumed the **regular recruiting rules.** Stay on top of the latest news involving the **extra year of eligibility for college athletes and how it impacts recruiting.** The NCAA has **removed the SAT/ACT requirement from their initial academic eligibility requirements.** Schools might still require you take the SAT/ACT.

One of the first surprises for many student-athletes and their families is the disappointingly low number of full-athletic scholarships available. What may be just as surprising are the many different types of offers athletes can actually receive from a school.

To better understand the basics of athletic scholarship offers, here are a few key facts you should know:

- Most offers are typically one-year agreements. Although multi-year offers are becoming more popular, they are still rare.
- Verbal offers from a coach are not binding agreements.
- The **National Letter of Intent (NLI)** is a legal binding contract between an athlete and the school. Since it is a contract, it is important that you fully understand the agreement.

Hopefully, knowing these terms will give you a better understanding of the offers you may receive. Let's take a quick look at the most common offers a student-athlete may receive from college and universities.



Full-ride scholarship offer

Full-ride athletic scholarships are only available in six college sports:

- Football
- Men's Basketball
- Women's Basketball
- Women's Gymnastics
- Tennis
- Volleyball

These are known as head count sports that create revenue for the school. A full ride covers the major costs of attending college like tuition, room and board, books, and some course fees. The term "full ride" doesn't mean for the "full four years." Full ride scholarships, like all offers, are one-year agreements that may or may not be renewed.

Partial scholarship offer

The remaining sports or "equivalency sports" in NCAA Division I and Division II are where coaches essentially have a pool of scholarship money that they can divide up amongst their team. While not a full ride, a partial scholarship offer can still cover a significant portion of college costs.

As a response to COVID-19, NCAA Division I Council adopted legislation that loosened regulation regarding **need-based aid and academic scholarships that are not tied to athletic ability**. Starting August 1, 2020, teams in equivalency sports will not have any athletes' need- and academic-based aid count against the maximum athletic scholarship limit. Prior to this update, athletes had to meet certain criteria for their additional aid to not be counted against a team's athletic scholarship limit.

Teams will still have a maximum athletic scholarship cap, but student-athletes can seek to stack as much need-based aid and academic scholarships on top of their athletic scholarship as they qualify for. With school and family budgets being impacted by the coronavirus, this rule change should allow sports



programs that have available funds to extend more money to families and athletes that need it—especially at pricier private colleges.

Preferred walk-on offer

Not all offers come with a monetary reward. Sometimes, the reward is simply a spot on the roster. A preferred walk-on offer means the coach would like you on the team but cannot (or won't) offer any financial assistance at least for the first year. Preferred walk-ons can earn a scholarship going into their second season, but nothing is guaranteed. Some student-athletes will turn down scholarship offers at smaller schools to play for a bigger program as a preferred walk-on.

Do preferred walk-ons sign on signing day?

Technically, preferred walk-ons don't have anything to sign on Signing Day, as they aren't receiving an athletic scholarship. Walk-ons are an essential part of a successful team, and college coaches want to celebrate their signing, as well. Ask your future coach about having something to sign, especially if your school is throwing a Signing day party. Don't forget to rep your new school with some gear!

Recruited walk-on offer

A recruited walk-on offer means there is interest from the coach but no financial assistance and you must still earn a spot on the team through additional tryouts or summer training camp. Although there is no financial assistance or even a guarantee of making the team, some student-athletes still view a recruited walk-on offer as a great opportunity to be play at the highest level of competition.

Unrecruited walk-on offer

This is when a student-athlete qualifies for admission to the school and plans to join the team through an open tryout. In this scenario, there is usually a



conversation with the college coach prior to enrollment to confirm the student-athlete will be able to try out for the team.

There is a lot to consider with any type of walk-on offer. This is especially true if you have scholarship offers from other schools.

The multi-colored shirts of college sports

While “redshirt” may be a familiar term to many student-athletes and their families, there are actually a number of different shirt color terms that designate a student-athlete’s eligibility status. The color also shows how a coach sees a recruit contributing to the program in both the short-term and long-term.

STATUS	ON SCHOLARSHIP?	ALLOWED TO PLAY?	ALLOWED TO PRACTICE?	WHAT IT MEANS
Redshirt	Yes	No	Yes	Athlete will have a scholarship but cannot compete for one year. They will get an opportunity to play four seasons in five years.
Grayshirt	No	No	No	Athlete postpones enrolling full-time and participating with the team for one semester.
Greenshirt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Athletes enrolls a semester early and participates with the team.
Blueshirt	Yes	No	Yes	Like a redshirt, athlete will practice with the team but won’t be allowed to play for a year. Unlike a redshirt, athlete must be unrecruited.

Redshirt scholarship offer

Typically, a redshirt athlete will have a scholarship but cannot compete for one year. They will participate in all team activities like practice, training, and receive benefits such as academic tutoring, but they will not see any playing time.

However, they will get an opportunity to play four seasons in five years.

Reasons for being redshirted include a coach wanting a year to physically prepare an athlete for college competition, or a chance for a student-athlete to recover from an injury. An “academic” redshirt would be a freshman who may not meet the academic eligibility requirements coming out of high school.



Grayshirt scholarship offer

This is one of the more challenging offers from a college coach. A grayshirt is an incoming college freshman who postpones enrollment for a semester. Instead of enrolling right away in the fall, a grayshirt freshman enrolls in classes for the second term (winter) of freshman year. During their first semester of college, a grayshirt does not enroll as a full-time student. Instead, they only take part-time classes. A grayshirt also does not join the team, practice with the team or receive a scholarship during their first, part-time semester.

The NCAA allows student-athletes five years to complete four years of sports eligibility after enrolling, so this means a grayshirt NCAA athlete officially starts their athletic eligibility once they enroll full-time. Most coaches try to be clear about extending grayshirt offers, but some committed student-athletes have been surprised to learn they have been grayshirted as National Signing Day nears.

What is grayshirting in college football? A grayshirt college football player can play in the season a full year after they graduate high school, instead of starting practice competing in games right away. This is most often done at college programs that over-sign, meaning that they sign more student-athletes than they have room for on the roster. Grayshirting helps college programs sign athletes early, with the intention of having them actually join the team in the next season.

Sometimes, injuries and roster changes can mean grayshirt status can be rescinded and an athlete will be offered a roster spot earlier than expected. But it's important to have clear and open communication with college coaches about your role on the roster and the possibility of being grayshirted.

Blueshirt scholarship offer

Blueshirting is becoming a more popular (but hardly common) way to creatively manage the number of athletic scholarships. Blue shirt rules allow for unrecruited players to be awarded a scholarship at the start of freshman practice. Like a redshirt, they will practice with the team but won't be allowed to



play for a year. This allows a team that may have too many commits to essentially borrow against their next year's scholarship total. The rules are rather strict in regard to what is defined as being "unrecruited."

That means there was

- No official visit
- No in-home coach visit
- No signed National Letter of Intent
- No form of athletic aid

Given the recruiting restrictions, it is still a pretty rare occurrence for a student-athlete to be considered for a blueshirt scholarship offer.

Greenshirt scholarship offer

More and more fall sport athletes are getting a jump on their college careers by graduating in December and enrolling a semester early. The benefits to greenshirting include the chance to get ahead on classes, attend spring training and practice with your new team while on scholarship before the new fall season. Student-athletes who greenshirt are allowed to play their first year but they can also redshirt and have five years to play four seasons.

Beyond NCAA DI and DII

Statistics will tell you that only two percent of high school athletes receive athletic scholarships. Student-athletes and their families who may have had their heart set on playing for a Division I or Division II program should take a closer look at Division III, NAIA, and even junior colleges for financial incentives.

While NCAA Division III schools cannot offer athletic scholarships, 80 percent of Division III athletes receive some type of financial aid. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) reports that its athletes receive on average \$7,000 in financial aid. And in the often-overlooked world of junior college athletics, the National Junior College Athletic Association offers full and partial scholarships at more than 500 colleges.

