

NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
Early Recruiting Survey
October 2017

Methods

- Survey examining student-athletes' recruiting experiences was designed by the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) in collaboration with the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Experience Committee and NCAA research staff.
- Five-minute survey administered online through QuestionPro survey software. Designed to be taken via cell phone, tablet or computer.
- A snowball sampling technique was used. National SAAC representatives forwarded the link through conference and campus SAACs to student-athletes. Directors of athletics, senior woman administrators, faculty athletics representatives and conference SAAC liaisons were made aware of the survey and asked to encourage student-athletes to participate.
- Survey was open from September 5-25, 2017.

Response rate for preliminary findings

- Responses were received from 15,454 recruited NCAA Division I student-athletes.
- Preliminary data restricted to Division I student-athletes who attended high school in the United States and indicated being recruited prior to enrolling in college (N=14,057).
- Approximately 1,400 recruited international student-athletes took the survey, but their responses were not included in the preliminary analysis.
- Two-thirds of the survey respondents competed in women's sports.
- Freshmen responded at higher rates than other student-athletes, but all classes were adequately represented.
- Response rates varied widely by sport and conference.

Findings

Timing of the recruitment experience

- The recruiting experience tends to begin later for men than women. It also tends to be later for those in individual sports, while team sports recruit earlier.
- A strong majority of student-athletes view their recruiting experience as having been a positive one. However, we find that in many sports the later recruiting began, the more positive student-athletes in that sport felt about the recruiting experience.

Official visits

- On average, student-athletes report taking fewer than two official visits. Taking fewer than is permissible may be related to the timing of verbal commitment.
- Most participants indicated that they verbally committed prior to signing their National Letter of Intent (NLI) and the average timing of such verbal commitment was ahead of the official visit window in nearly all sports.
- Three-quarters of student-athletes in each sport indicated that the current rules regarding the timing of official visits are appropriate. For those who would prefer an earlier window, timing varies by sport.

Unofficial visits

- Most student-athletes, particularly those in team sports, reported taking unofficial visits. A majority reporting taking one to three unofficial visits. However, more than a third of student-athletes in five men's sports and eight women's sports made four to eight visits.
- Women generally take unofficial visits earlier than men.
- Student-athletes who receive Pell Grants (used as an indicator of family socioeconomic status) are 60 percent more likely to report that cost limited their ability to take unofficial visits than those not eligible for Pell Grants.

Verbal offers

- Most recruited Division I student-athletes reported receiving a verbal offer during recruitment. The timing of these offers varies by sport. However among team sports generally, and women's sports overall, the timing trended earlier.
- As noted above, most participants verbally committed prior to signing the NLI. The timing of the commitment varies by sport. Commitment to autonomy programs happens about half a year earlier in many team sports.
- Student-athletes who commit prior to grade 11 are less likely to be enrolled where they committed and to have known what they wanted to major in at the time of commitment. Those who commit prior to grade 11 are also more likely to have had a coach leave prior to their enrollment and to have experienced a change in their scholarship offer.
- While students who commit in grade 11 or later are more likely to report that their role on the team is true to what was discussed during recruitment, a student-athlete's perception of the clarity of his or her scholarship offer does not appear to be tied to timing.