Division II is a collection of more than 300 NCAA colleges and universities that provide thousands of student-athletes the opportunity to earn athletics scholarships and compete at a high level while excelling in the classroom and fully engaging in the broader campus experience.

This booklet is designed to help coaches tout the benefits of Division II to prospects, parents, campus personnel and community stakeholders.

For more information about Division II, visit www.NCAA.org/D2.
In a recent survey of current Division II athletes, 95 percent of them said they would recommend a Division II experience to a prospective student. A similar percentage (93 percent) of athletes 10 years removed from their DII athletics experience said they would recommend Division II to a prospect. That represents an ongoing and lasting impact!
Division II offers high-level athletics competition

- Coaches have found success with prospective athletes by touting the plentiful opportunities in Division II of becoming an All-American and competing for a national title.

- Division II's partial scholarship model allows coaches to offer athletics-based aid like Division I schools do, while also granting the prospective athlete access to all the academic and need-based aid prospects would find at Division III colleges.

- Coaches also gain traction pointing out the fact that Division II athletics are a more affordable entertainment option. The games are played in a more intimate setting; the fans are right there, and after the game, the families come down to the field or onto the court. One coach described it this way: “The Division II atmosphere is not such a business, but more of a community environment.”

- Division II athletes receive ample national exposure, including 22 regular-season and postseason football games, 36 regular-season men’s and women’s basketball games, six nationally televised postseason basketball games and 10 regular-season games in other sports. Nearly all other championships are streamed live on NCAA.com.

“People often underestimate the quality of Division II competition, but they change their minds quickly when they watch us play. Our stadiums might not be as large as some other schools, but our talent is.”

Joe Reich, Head Football Coach, Wingate University
Division II means access to NCAA championships

- Division II sponsors and fully funds 25 national championships – 12 in men’s sports and 13 in women’s sports – that annually give the nearly 14,000 student-athletes who participate in them the experience of a lifetime.

- Of the three divisions, Division II provides its athletes with the most access to championships competition (one championships opportunity for every 8.3 athletes in highly sponsored sports such as basketball, volleyball and track – the ratio is even higher in sports like lacrosse and field hockey).

- Most Division II championships have large brackets, which provides several berths for each of the division’s eight competition regions.

- Division II is the only NCAA division that conducts “National Championships Festivals,” Olympic-style events in which a number of national championships are held at a single site over a period of several days.

“The ability to say to our recruits that the opportunity to compete for an NCAA championship is a legitimate option has enabled us to sway them toward our program.”

Barbara Stevens, Head Women’s Basketball Coach, Bentley University
Division II means academic excellence

Division II’s academic philosophy calls for a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. Graduation rates indicate the model’s success, as student-athletes graduate at rates about 6 percentage points higher than their student body counterparts. Also, Division II established an “Academic Success Rate” in 2006, which, unlike the federal graduation rate, measures graduation outcomes for athletes who are not receiving athletically related financial aid (it also includes transfers and mid-year enrollees).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Student body Federal rate</th>
<th>Student-athlete Federal rate</th>
<th>ASR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division II overall</td>
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<td>55%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division II men</td>
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<td>48%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division II women</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We have a lot of outstanding student-athletes who care about academics. That’s why we recruited them. We’re going to do whatever we can to get them all together for practice without sacrificing class time. We want to win games, but the focus is always on academics first.”

Lane Lord, Head Women’s Basketball Coach, Pittsburg State University

Division II colleges and universities accommodate more first-generation students than any other division. Among a recent sample of approximately 20,000 college athletes, 16 percent of Divisions I and III reported being first-generation college students, while 24 percent of Division II student-athletes reported first-generation status.
Division II means achieving balance

- Division II shapes student-athletes who graduate with the skills and knowledge to be productive citizens.
- Division II students are able to play sports, be integrated in campus life, do well in the classroom and graduate with distinction. They are able to have a much more well-rounded experience, because their seasons don’t last all year long.
- Division II students have an excellent opportunity to be highly skilled and highly decorated athletes, but the balanced approach allows them to become marketable in their career because they’ll have time to focus on their academic pursuits, their grades, their internships, and whatever else it takes to prepare themselves for life after graduation.
- Division II athletics programs actively engage with their communities, which helps drive attendance at athletics contests, fosters relationships between student-athletes and community members, and develops more of a shared civic experience. Community engagement also strengthens the bond among teammates and fosters individual and personal growth.

“Not one thing in what we do focuses on winning or championships – it all focuses on the players, their experiences on and off the field – and their journeys to be selfless together. That fabric of who we are and what makes us what we are is the reason why and how we win championships.”

Shelley Behrens, Head Field Hockey Coach, Millersville University of Pennsylvania
Division II student-athletes have a stronger voice than ever before. They serve on NCAA committees within the governance structure, and the national Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee votes on legislation at the annual NCAA Convention.

The new “Make It Yours” brand enhancement offers Division II student-athletes a rallying cry to celebrate their unique athletics experiences.

In a recent survey of current Division II athletes, 95 percent of them said they would recommend a Division II experience to a prospective student. A similar percentage (93 percent) of athletes 10 years removed from their DII athletics experience said they would recommend Division II to a prospect. That represents an ongoing and lasting impact!

“I coach in Division II – not somewhere else – because I live for that one kid who comes back and says I made a difference to him or her as an individual instead of expressing thanks for winning a championship or some other athletics-related accomplishment. I don’t coach for the wins – I don’t think any of us do – of course we all want to win, but winning in and of itself is not what drives our desire to coach. We certainly don’t do it in Division II to earn accolades from thousands and thousands of fans, or to earn big monetary bonuses from our bosses. What matters is to realize the difference we make in young people’s lives.”

Chris Catanach, Head Women’s Volleyball Coach, University of Tampa

Division II’s commitment: Make It Yours

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WHAT IS IT THAT WE’RE MAKING OURS?

- It’s making graduation a priority.
- It’s about earning scholarship dollars for your athletic ability and competing for national championships.
- It’s making athletics participation truly part of the college experience rather than just one aspect of it.
- It’s making lifelong friends at a campus whose size affords a more intimate setting.
- It’s the university president seeing students on campus and being able to call them by name and ask how things are going.
- It’s making the academic experience more personal.
- It’s about professors, coaches and staff caring for you as a student.
- It’s about an experience in which you can be an active participant.
- It’s about a campus that is tight-knit enough to respond to individual student needs.
- It’s about having coaches who help athletes develop their resumes as much as their athletics skills.
- It’s about a custom-fit approach to athletics and education rather than a one-size-fits-all.
What coaches are saying about Division II

We in Division II work to overcome the perception that because we are so focused on balance that we’re somehow not as competitive or accomplished athletically as other schools. Even as coaches, there can be a misperception from our peers in other divisions that we’re in Division II because we have to be and not because we choose to be. It’s the people that make Division II special, and the values we live by and the words we use to describe those values could and should be applied in all of college sports, not just in Division II. I love the competition in Division II, and we should never sell ourselves short in that regard.

A selling point not only to prospects but also to their parents is that Division II student-athletes graduate with a resume in hand. Because our life in the balance approach affords such a breadth of experiences in addition to participating in championship-level athletics, our kids graduate as leaders who are that much further along in acclimating to the workforce and being highly valued by prospective employers.

One of the advantages in Division II is that it’s under the radar enough to actually help your ability to make good decisions. I haven’t met a high-level coach in my sport yet who hasn’t said, ‘Man, I wish I had your job.’ Being under the radar may be a bad thing if you have a big ego, but in Division II, you’re not basing your decisions in how you coach or how you can improve your chances of winning. You usually make better decisions accordingly.

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As coaches, we need to learn how to promote what Division II has to offer. There are a lot of prospective student-athletes who would attract interest from the top Division I schools but who are not looking for that kind of experience. They want the benefits of a small college atmosphere. Learn the Division II attributes and how to use them to your advantage.

The power to choose is an awesome thing, and our student-athletes made the conscious decision to select our institutions. What a tribute that is, and what an advantage that gives us as coaches. In the high-stakes world of recruiting, you often see the entitlement attitude emerge from some of the big-time schools that might react to that choice as, ‘How dare you not choose us – how could you possibly choose a Division II school?’ And you see the response in that student-athlete’s eyes – ‘Why? Let me show you why.’