

What's the difference between the NCAA and NAIA?

Every year students applying for a sports scholarship ask one question: Which association is better?

The NCAA (The National Collegiate Athletic Association) and NAIA (The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) have a few key differences setting them apart. Which association is better for you depends on your goals as a student athlete.

NCAA

The NCAA was formed in 1906 and is a larger association representing bigger schools and universities. NCAA schools are organised into three divisions, D1, D2, and D3.

Division 1 schools are typically the largest universities, and compete in a minimum of 14 sports for both males and females. These schools often have world-class facilities, attract the top athletes in the country, and receive the most media attention.

Division 2 schools are smaller than D1 schools, and student athletes usually finance their education with a combination of athletic and educational scholarships.

Division 3 schools are the smallest of the NCAA institutions. D3 schools are not allowed to offer athletic scholarships.

NAIA

The NAIA was established in 1937 and is a smaller association. It is made up of smaller 4-year colleges throughout the United States, and competitive levels are comparable to NCAA D2 schools.

There are equally talented players in the NAIA and NCAA D2 schools, and both have excellent opportunities for education and athletic achievement.