

NCAA Division 1 Wrestling Recruiting Rules

It is important for potential prospects to know the NCAA Division 1 Wrestling Recruiting Rules. Athletes and coaches have certain restrictions when it comes to college wrestling recruiting. Ensure your eligibility by following the NCAA recruiting rules.

Recruiting Resources	<i>As a Freshman</i>
Recruiting Material	<i>You may receive brochures about campus</i>
Telephone calls	<i>You can call at your own expense, COACH CANNOT CALL YOU</i>
Off-Campus Contact	<i>NOT ALLOWED</i>
Official Visits	<i>NOT ALLOWED</i>
Unofficial visits	<i>Unlimited, CANNOT have any recruiting conversation with coaches</i>
Recruiting Resources	<i>As a Sophomore</i>
Recruiting Material	<i>You may receive brochures for campus and questionnaires</i>
Telephone calls	<i>You can call at your own expense, COACH CANNOT CALL YOU</i>
Off-Campus Contact	<i>NOT ALLOWED</i>
Official Visits	<i>NOT ALLOWED</i>
Unofficial visits	<i>Unlimited, CANNOT have any recruiting conversation with coaches</i>
Recruiting Resources	<i>As a Junior</i>
Recruiting Material	<i>You can begin to receive recruiting material and information from the coach on September 1st</i>
Telephone Calls	<i>You can call the coach at your own expense. Coach can call you starting September 1st of your junior year.</i>
Electronic Correspondence (i.e. texts, IM, email.)	<i>All forms of electronic correspondence are allowed starting September 1st of your junior year. Correspondence must be private between athlete & coach.</i>
Off-Campus Contact	<i>Allowed September 1st of your Junior year at your high school or residence only</i>
Official Visits	<i>Not Permitted</i>
Unofficial Visits	<i>Unlimited</i>
Recruiting Resources	<i>As a Senior</i>
Recruiting Material	<i>You can receive material and information from the coach.</i>
Telephone Calls	<i>You can call the coach at your own expense. coach can call you.</i>
Electronic Correspondence (i.e. texts, IM, email.)	<i>All forms of electronic correspondence are allowed starting September 1st of your junior year. Correspondence must be private between athlete & coach.</i>
Off-Campus Contact	<i>Allowed but no more than three times.</i>
Official Visits	<i>You can start official visits on the opening day of your classes. You get one per college and a maximum of five visits to DI, and unlimited visits to DII, DIII and NAIA schools.</i>
Unofficial visits	<i>Unlimited</i>

Other important information

- *As a freshman in high school, take this first year to adjust to the learning process, focus on your grades as well as wrestling. Attend summer camps of colleges of interest.*
 - College coaches can evaluate and/or contact you no more than seven times during your senior year.
 - During your senior year, a college coach cannot contact you more than three times.
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- **Athletic Scholarships:** Earning a full-ride athletic scholarship is every high school athlete's dream. However, the challenge that most athletes face is trying to get to the point of receiving offers. There are several factors that athletes should consider when trying to get noticed. Here are some recruiting tips that will help you during the recruiting process:
 - DI schools are allowed 9.9 scholarships per year per team.
 - Look at all the available scholarships within the college and your specific field of study.
 - Look outside the college for association/club scholarships as well as various charity scholarship opportunities. Every year, many of these scholarships go unapplied. They might be small but there are several available and can add up quickly.

Most wrestlers think that to get into college all they must do is perform well on the mat. Performance is only a small fraction of the recruiting process. Sure, you must be a good athlete to wrestle in college; however, there are a lot of other items athletes must consider to land that coveted scholarship offer. Your very top priority is GRADES. Other things to consider: be of good character (NOT A CHARACTER), volunteer for community service, keep your social media clean, be conscientious of your lifestyle and habits and stay out of trouble. There are thousands of wrestlers competing for scholarships and roster spots. Your work ethic will be your best quality.

- **Wrestler Marketing:** Student-athletes/wrestlers need to proactively market their ability and future growth plans in order to be seen by college coaches at any level. All athletes should have tangible growth progressions to be able to show coaches at all levels. Document your achievements. Be confident but not cocky. Have realistic targets and goals plan for your college wrestling days. Do not overlook the different divisions within college wrestling. You may think that the big school is the ideal program for you; but in reality, you may be a better fit or have more success in another division/conference. Be open minded and flexible. Do not get caught up in trying to build yourself as a "brand." Work hard at the important things: making good grades, being a good leader and being a better wrestler.

- **Social Media:** Social media is an important topic in college recruiting and one that student-athletes and parents must know about. Yes, it is true there have been many cases of athletes/wrestlers losing not only their scholarships but even roster spots over social media. Parents and athletes should pay very close attention to ALL posts, likes, comments, pictures, etc. Watch the items that are posted about you as well. (If your name is in it, on it, or about it, you need to control it and make it positive.) There are pros and cons to using social media with college recruiting. A blocked or secured account isn't always as secure as you may think. Rule of thumb, IF you need to block/lock/secure your accounts so people can't see them, you probably shouldn't have them. Colleges are going to monitor your actions within the social media world.

Official/ Unofficial Visits, Verbal Offers, Walk-on, Preferred Walk-on, National Letter of Intent

As a high school student-athlete looking for a college scholarship you must be aware of official and unofficial visits to college campuses, as well as what it means to walk-on and what is entailed with a National Letter of Intent. It is important as you become a college prospect that you take visits to see what each college has to offer. Things you can check out on your visit are the athletic facilities, the layout of the campus, the atmosphere of the school on game day and meeting the coaching staff.

- **Official Visit:** If you are taking official visits to colleges, you are on a coach's recruiting list. This is a great sign if you are the recruit. What are official visits? What should you expect on your visit?
 - Any visit to a college that is fully or partially funded by the university is considered an official visit. You and your parents/legal guardians will have your transportation to and from the college paid for. Also paid for by the college, will be your room, meals (three per day), and entertainment expenses. You may receive up to three free passes to that colleges home football game the weekend you are in town. Typically, before you take a visit, you must send your transcripts to the college (Division I) as well as SAT or ACT score and register with the eligibility center. The college must be the one to invite you on an official visit. There are ways as a recruit to figure out if the coaching staff is interested in offering you a visit. The easiest way is to email or call the coaching staff and express your interest in their program. If you are getting offers to visit schools on official visits, then that school is probably interested in you as a possible recruit. This is when you need to sell yourself as a student-athlete/wrestler.
 - ✓ You can start taking official visits opening day of classes your senior year.
 - ✓ You are allowed only one official visit per college and no more than five official visits to division I schools.
 - ✓ For division II and III schools, you can take one official visit per college.
 - ✓ Your official visits can't exceed 48 hours starting when the recruit arrives on campus.

- ✓ Test score, high school transcript and NCAA eligibility center verification are required before your visit.

- **Unofficial Visit:** Unofficial visits are a great opportunity to learn more about schools you are wanting to possibly attend. Recruits should take unofficial visits throughout high school. How can recruits use an unofficial visit to their recruiting advantage?
 - Anytime you and or your parents/legal guardians visit a college campus that is funded by you, it is an unofficial visit. **You may take as many unofficial visits as you would like.** During dead periods, you cannot speak to any of the coaches while visiting the campus. Three free tickets to a home game is the only thing a coach can give you during an unofficial visit. You can start taking unofficial visits your sophomore year. If a coach is interested in you, then they'll likely invite you to visit their campus. This is a good opportunity for you to see what the college is all about. Unofficial visits can get expensive since they are funded by you and not the college. It is a good idea to map out a few colleges along the way to visit to keep the cost down.
- **Verbal Offer:** A verbal offer is a commitment to a school before the student-athlete signs a National Letter of Intent. The commitment is NOT binding on either the high school athlete or the college. What does that mean?
 - Verbal offers have become very popular, as media is starting to cover high school athletes/wrestlers' commitments closely. A verbal offer is a commitment to a school before the student-athlete/wrestler signs a National Letter of Intent. The commitment is NOT binding on either the high school athlete/wrestler or the college. Only the signing of the National Letter of Intent accompanied with financial aid agreements is binding on both parties. Usually offers are made during or after a visit, (could be official or unofficial visit). It is very exciting to receive an offer to attend college as a student-athlete/wrestler. It is also smart to take some time to talk things over with your family. If a college coach wants you bad enough, they'll be a little willing to let you take some time to think things over. However, be time sensitive. Coaches are looking at a lot of student-athletes/wrestlers and are looking to fill rosters.
- **Walk-on:** Walking-on to wrestle is very common. Athletes/wrestlers may have the opportunity to walk-on and it be a better option than wrestling at a school that isn't a good fit. What does it mean to be a college walk-on?
 - Not every student-athlete/wrestler is going to be awarded an athletic scholarship, and in some cases, athletes/wrestlers decide to turn down a scholarship to a smaller school to walk-on at a bigger university (that is your own financial decision to make.) Making the team as a walk-on can be difficult, but if you are successful then there may be opportunities for you to earn scholarship money or financial aid down the road. If you make the team as a walk-on, you won't earn any scholarship money in your first year (unless you are getting academic scholarship money through the college or elsewhere). Not every high school wrestler gets invited to colleges on official visits; therefore, it's imperative to take unofficial visits to schools and build relationships with coaches. This will make it easier on you to make the team as a walk-on. Coaches invite recruits to walk-on all the time, but just getting

the invite doesn't guarantee you'll make the roster. A walk-on may still need to make the team.

- **Preferred Walk-on:** Preferred walk-on is a term that is being used much more by college coaching staffs. A preferred walk-on is typically someone that is recruited by a college coach but not offered athletic scholarship money. Preferred walk-ons typically have a lot of communication with the coaching staff and are usually offered a roster spot, which is the main difference between a walk-on and a preferred walk-on.

Questions you should be asking about walk-ons;

1. Am I a preferred or recruited walk-on? (ask this because there is a big difference)
2. How many athletes are you inviting this year to walk-on?
3. How many walk-ons do you plan on taking this year?
4. Do walk-ons ever have a chance to make the starting lineup? (Don't be cocky but do be direct and ask the questions. Coaches want to know where you see yourself fitting in.)
5. Is there a guarantee that I will earn a roster spot?
6. Can I potentially earn a scholarship in the future? (If they say yes, try to get it in writing. Having this in writing is good, but it still lacks the binding nature of an NLI – it's just the coach's word.)
7. Will I have access to the academic support systems available for scholarship athletes, such as tutors, preferential course registration, etc.?
8. Will I receive the same equipment, clothing and access to the training table as scholarship athletes?
9. Is there anything else that I need to know about being a walk-on versus being a scholarship athlete?

- **National Letter of Intent (NLI);** By signing a National Letter of Intent, a prospective student-athlete agrees to attend the designated college or university. The National Letter of Intent has many advantages to both prospective student-athletes and participating educational institutions. Find out what they are.
 - By signing a National Letter of Intent, a prospective student-athlete agrees to attend the designated college or university for one academic year. In exchange, that institution agrees to provide athletics financial aid to the student-athlete, provided he/she is admitted to the institution and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules.

The National Letter of Intent has many advantages to both prospective student-athletes and participating educational institutions:

- ✓ Once a National Letter of Intent is signed, prospective student-athletes are no longer subject to further recruiting contacts and calls.
- ✓ Student-athletes are assured of an athletic scholarship for a minimum of one full academic year.
- ✓ By emphasizing a commitment to an educational institution, not particular coaches or teams, the program focuses on a prospective student-athlete's educational objectives.

FAQ'S About NLI

1. Are you required to sign a National Letter of Intent?

ANSWER: No. You are not required but many student-athletes sign because it gives them certainty in the recruiting process. They are legally committed to a university for one academic year, and they no longer have to worry about getting a scholarship.

2. Do I need to sign a NLI each year?

Answer: No. However, under NCAA rules you must be notified annually regarding whether your athletics aid has been renewed.

3. When Can I sign my NLI?

Answer: You can sign your National Letter of Intent during the designated signing period only. If you sign outside the NLI signing period, the NLI shall be considered invalid.

4. What makes my NLI valid?

Answer: A valid NLI must be accompanied by an athletics financial aid agreement (aid from an athletics source). The NLI must include the NCAA ID. The NCAA ID will be available to the prospective student-athlete once registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center and will be available to the institution once the prospective student-athlete is placed on the Institutional Request List (IRL). All junior college prospective student-athletes must also have an NCAA ID included on the NLI.

5. How is my NLI declared null and void?

Answer: Denied admission.

- ✓ *Does not meet NCAA, institutional or conference eligibility requirements.*

- ✓ *One-Year Absence.*

- *– Signee does not enroll (two-year or four-year institution) for at least one academic year and the scholarship (in its same amount) is no longer available. Also applies to a signee who serves in the U.S. Armed Forces or church mission for one year. NLI remains binding if the scholarship (in its same amount) is available.*

- ✓ *Discontinued Sport.*

- *– Sport is no longer offered, includes student-athletes who are already enrolled.*

6. Do I need a Parent or Legal Guardian to also sign the NLI?

Answer: Yes. If you are under the age of 21 then you must have a legal guardian or parent sign the NLI for it to be valid. If your parent or legal guardian is not available (e.g. incarcerated, death) you can have another individual sign your NLI. That person must be pre-approved by the NLI Office before you and they sign the NLI.

7. What if the head coach or the coach that recruited me leaves? Is the NLI still valid?

Answer: Yes. When you sign an NLI, you sign with an institution and not with a coach or team.

8. What is the penalty for backing out of NLI?

Answer: If you sign an NLI with an institution and want a release to go somewhere else you must face a penalty if the initial institution doesn't grant you a complete release. The NLI basic penalty is that you lose one year of competition in all sports and must serve one year in residence at your next NLI institution.

9. Does the school have to grant a full release if requested?

Answer: No. Granting a complete release is voluntary. If an institution denies your request for a complete release, you may petition the NLI Policy and Review Committee for Division I and NLI Review Committee for Division II for such a release.

10. What is an invalid versus a null and void NLI?

Answer: If NLI is declared null and void or a complete release is granted, a prospective student-athlete is not permitted to sign another NLI until the next signing year.

If NLI is declared invalid, a prospective student-athlete is permitted to sign another NLI during the same signing year.