

## You can always go first

You can contact a college coach any time. Any age. Any period. Any division.

Nothing on this page restricts you. Every rule here restricts coaches, and only when they can reach out to you first.

## When your door opens

### DIVISION I.

| YOUR SPORT                                                                                                                                 | COACHES CAN CALL, TEXT, EMAIL | UNOFFICIAL VISITS        | OFFICIAL VISITS       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Basketball, soccer, volleyball, swimming, track, cross country, wrestling, tennis, golf, field hockey, gymnastics, rowing, and most others | June 15 after sophomore year  | Aug. 1                   | Aug. 1                |
| Lacrosse, men's and women's, and softball                                                                                                  | Sept. 1 of junior year        | Sept. 1                  | Sept. 1               |
| Football                                                                                                                                   | Sept. 1 of junior year        | Any time                 | Apr. 1 of junior year |
| Baseball                                                                                                                                   | Aug. 1 before junior year     | Sept. 1                  | Sept. 1               |
| Men's ice hockey                                                                                                                           | Jan. 1 of sophomore year      | Jan. 1 of sophomore year | Aug. 1                |

Men's ice hockey opens earliest of any sport in college athletics. A year and a half before football.

Air Force, Army, and Navy run their own calendar. Their coaches can start July 1 before your junior year, whatever your sport. Federal law makes the academies put every applicant through the same admissions process, and that does not fit the standard NCAA rules.

## Not every level has a calendar

| LEVEL | WHEN COACHES CAN REACH OUT FIRST                                                                               | SCHOLARSHIPS                          |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| D1    | The dates above                                                                                                | Yes                                   |
| D2    | Calls, texts, emails, and mail at any age, any time. In-person contact waits for June 15 after sophomore year. | Yes                                   |
| D3    | No restriction on communication. Any grade, any time. Visits work differently, so ask the coach.               | No. Academic and need-based aid only. |
| NAIA  | No recruiting calendar exists.                                                                                 | Yes                                   |
| JUCO  | No recruiting calendar exists.                                                                                 | Yes                                   |

Only D1 and D2 have recruiting calendars. That is why you will not find one for D3, NAIA, or JUCO. It is not missing. It does not exist. At those levels your window opens earlier and stays open longer.

## The five gates

| GATE                       | COACH CAN MEET YOU IN PERSON | COACH CAN WATCH YOU PLAY | COACH CAN CALL, TEXT, EMAIL |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Contact</b>             | Yes, anywhere                | Yes                      | Yes                         |
| <b>Evaluation</b>          | No                           | Yes                      | Yes                         |
| <b>Quiet</b>               | Only on their campus         | Only on their campus     | Yes                         |
| <b>Dead</b>                | No                           | No                       | Yes                         |
| <b>Recruiting shutdown</b> | No                           | No                       | No                          |

## What you do in each

| GATE              | YOUR MOVE                                                                                             |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contact</b>    | Everything is live. Take the calls, take the visits, go see the campus.                               |
| <b>Evaluation</b> | They are watching and they cannot talk to you. Compete like it. Do not go looking for a conversation. |
| <b>Quiet</b>      | Off-campus is closed. Campus is open. This is your window for unofficial visits and on-campus camps.  |
| <b>Dead</b>       | The best email weeks of the year. Coaches are at their desks with nowhere to travel. Send film.       |
| <b>Shutdown</b>   | Nothing lands. Build instead. New film, updated numbers, research the next batch of schools.          |

# A dead period is not a dead recruiting month.



## When dead periods usually hit

The dates move every year. The reasons do not.

1. Signing week. The days around each signing date go dead in almost every sport.
2. Thanksgiving and the Christmas stretch.
3. Your sport's national championship. Coaches are there, not recruiting.
4. Your sport's coaches convention. Every sport has one.

Quiet periods do not work like that. They are tied to each sport's own season and they differ a lot from sport to sport. Look yours up.

## What a signature means now

The National Letter of Intent is gone. It ran for sixty years and the NCAA killed it in October 2024. What you sign now is a binding athletics financial aid agreement, straight from the school. Once you sign it, every other scholarship program has to stop recruiting you and stop calling your family and your club coach.

**D3** has nothing to sign. Some programs offer a celebratory form that binds nobody.

**NAIA** has no letter of intent at the association level. Individual schools have their own, but the national office does not enforce them. You can sign with more than one NAIA school and decide later.

**JUCO** is the opposite, and this one catches people. A JUCO letter of intent binds you to that college for a full academic year, and it can be handed to you with no scholarship money attached. Sign it and you are listed publicly as committed, and you cannot talk to another JUCO program. Read it before you sign it.

## Your clock

Five years. It runs continuously. It starts at whichever comes first:

- The term you first enroll full time at any college anywhere, including a two-year college.
- The year after you turn 19. Turn 19 before Sept. 1 and it starts the next academic year. Turn 19 on or after Sept. 1 and it starts the year after that, unless you enroll full time sooner.

Once it starts, it does not stop. Not for sitting out, not for transferring, not for stepping away. Redshirts are gone. So are medical hardship waivers and most other waivers. Narrow exceptions survive for active-duty military service, official religious missions, and pregnancy.

These rules changed in 2026 and are being challenged in court. If you are thinking about a gap year, a post-grad year, or reclassifying, check the current rules before you decide anything.

## Look up your own dates

### YOUR RECRUITING CALENDAR AND SIGNING DATES

- 1 Go to [ncaa.org/eligibility-center/recruiting](https://ncaa.org/eligibility-center/recruiting)
- 2 Click "View Recruiting Calendars" on the right. It drops you to the bottom of the page.
- 3 Pick D1 or D2, then find your sport.

### YOUR ELIGIBILITY RULES

- 1 Search "NCAA age-based eligibility." Scroll the page. Nothing to click.

If a link has moved, search "NCAA recruiting calendar" or "NCAA eligibility center."