

Athletics and College Counseling at Thayer

Guide to Athletic Recruitment

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Your Support Team

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 **ACTION: Save these contacts in your phone today!**



Finding Your Perfect Fit



The Critical Question: If you couldn't play your sport, would you still be happy at this school?

Key Considerations Checklist:

- Academic reputation and program strength in your major
- Location and proximity to home
- School's commitment to student-athlete academics
- Campus culture and community fit
- Financial aid and scholarship opportunities

Your Recruitment Timeline

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Meet with counselor if early recruit□ Focus on grades and GPA□ Build athletic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Spring: One-on-one counseling meeting□ Begin initial college research□ Attend showcases/tournaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Spring: College Counseling Seminar begins□ Start contacting coaches□ Take SAT/ACT tests□ Schedule campus visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Submit applications□ Attend college visits at Thayer□ Make final decision□ Sign NLI if applicable

Sophomore Year: Getting Started Checklist

- Schedule spring meeting with college counselor
- Talk to your Thayer coach about recruitment timeline
- Create initial list of 15-20 colleges of interest
- Research academic programs in your intended major
- Start building your athletic resume
- Begin following target schools on social media
- Attend at least 2 college fairs or info sessions
- Create highlight video (if applicable for sport)
- Maintain strong GPA (3.5+ recommended)
- Complete career interests survey and track activities and achievements in Scoir



Cast a wide net and keep your options open!

Understanding NCAA Divisions

Division I

 **Scholarships:**

Full & Partial

 **Time Commitment:**

20+ hrs/week

 **Academic Focus:**

High commitment

 *Most competitive*

Division II

 **Scholarships:**

Partial available

 **Time Commitment:**

15-20 hrs/week

 **Academic Focus:**

Balanced

 *Merit + athletic aid*

Division III

 **Scholarships:**

No athletic \$

 **Time Commitment:**

10-15 hrs/week

 **Academic Focus:**

Highest priority

 *Best academic fit*



TASK: Research which division aligns with your academic and athletic goals

Understand the Terminology

Scholarships

Full ride scholarships are rare in most sports; even half tuition is uncommon

The NCAA has changed the way athletic scholarships are awarded.

The NCAA implemented major changes to Division I athletic scholarships as of July 1, 2025, as part of the House v. NCAA settlement.

Here's what changed:

Instead of limiting the number of scholarships per sport, Division I schools will now set maximum roster sizes and can offer athletic financial aid to every athlete on the roster up to that limit. This eliminates the old "head count" vs. "equivalency" sport distinction.

NLIs vs NILs

NLI (National Letter of Intent)

- *Binding agreement committing you to attend a specific college for one academic year
- *Guarantees your athletic scholarship for that year
- *Ends recruiting by other schools once signed
- *Signed during official signing periods

NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness)

- *Rights allowing athletes to profit from their personal brand
- *Earn money through endorsements, social media, appearances, and merchandise
- *Does not affect eligibility or scholarship status
- *Independent of scholarship agreements and school commitments

The Transfer Portal

Database where athletes notify their school of intent to transfer

Entering the portal doesn't guarantee a new school or scholarship

Other coaches can legally contact you once you're in the portal

Your current scholarship may be cancelled once you enter

One-time transfer exception allows immediate eligibility in most sports

Must enter during specific windows (varies by sport)

Important Caveats

Schools must opt into the settlement and aren't obligated to fund all available scholarships, smaller programs may not maximize rosters due to budget constraints. The actual roster limits vary by sport and are still being finalized. This represents the most significant restructuring of college sports scholarships in decades, potentially adding thousands of new scholarship opportunities across Division I.

Recruiting Process: Your Action Plan

1

Build Your Resume

- Create athletic profile with stats
- Compile academic achievements
- List leadership roles & community service

2

Create Highlight Video

- Film best performances
- Keep under 5 minutes
- Include contact info on video

3

Contact Coaches

- Email personalized introductions
- Include resume and video link
- Follow up every 2-3 weeks

4

Attend Showcases

- Register for relevant tournaments
- Bring business cards
- Network with coaches on-site

5

Schedule Visits

- Take unofficial visits early
- Prepare questions for coaches
- Meet with academic advisors

6

Make Your Decision

- Compare offers carefully
- Consult with parents & counselor
- Trust your instincts

Official Visit Success Checklist

Before Your Visit:

- Research the program and coaches thoroughly
- Prepare 10+ questions to ask
- Review academic programs of interest
- Check weather and pack appropriately
- Bring notepad

During Your Visit:

- Engage with team members authentically
- Attend all practices and classes offered
- Take mental notes on campus culture
- Ask about academic support services
- Observe team dynamics carefully

After Your Visit:

- Send thank-you emails within 24 hours
- Debrief with parents, coach and counselor
- Write down pros and cons while fresh
- Compare visit notes across schools
- Follow up with any additional questions



REMEMBER: They're evaluating you, but you're also evaluating them!

Stories from the Recruiting World



The Critical Question: If you couldn't play your sport, would you still be happy at this school?

Key Considerations Checklist:

- Create an honest relationship with college coaches
- Connect with the admission office in addition to the college coach
- Beware of false promises
- Always feel free to contact your college counselor and/or current coach to follow through for more information in you have concerns

Do's and Don'ts for Success



DO These Things

- Be proactive - start early and stay organized
- Use your Thayer coaches as resources
- Fill out all Prospective Athlete Forms
- Check in at Admissions Office on campus visits
- Follow NCAA eligibility requirements closely
- Maintain strong academic performance
- Communicate regularly with college coaches



DON'T Do These Things

- Wait for sports to 'rescue' you - be active!
- Rely solely on club coaches for recruitment
- See athletics as a pass out of completing applications
- Ignore academic requirements and deadlines
- Accept verbal commitments without research
- Forget to verify NCAA eligibility status
- Make decisions without trusted adults input

NCAA Eligibility Center Registration

 Register Now!

Free Profile Page

Cost: \$0

- Still deciding which division
- Planning to compete Division III only
- Learning about college athletics
- Good account to start with if you are just considering

Academic & Amateurism

~~Certification~~ Domestic | \$160 international

- Planning Division I or II competition
- Taking official college visits
- Signing National Letter of Intent
- Most common account for recruits



ACTION: Register at eligibilitycenter.org this week!

Your Next Steps & Resources



Complete Within 1 Week:

- Talk to your Thayer coach about recruitment timeline
- Register with NCAA Eligibility Center (eligibilitycenter.org)
- Start researching colleges that match your interests



Helpful Resources:

[NCAA Eligibility Center: eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org)

[College Board: collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org)

[Common Application: commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org)

[Questions to College Coaches](#)

[Athletic Recruiting Resources: Ask your Thayer coaches](#)

[Example of College Information Spreadsheet](#)

Questions?

We're here to support you every step of the way!

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