

Athletic Scholarships FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Patrick Britz and
Alexandra Powe Allred**



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Alexandra Powe Allred**



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About the Authors

Patrick Britz: Pat Britz began his athletic career at a young age, playing youth league soccer. He continued to play soccer and earned a partial athletic scholarship to attend the University of North Carolina at Asheville. While there, he was a four-year starter and ended his playing career as the second all-time leading scorer in school history and the leading goal scorer since UNC Asheville went to Division I (1986). Britz has worked in the world of intercollegiate athletics for over 14 years, the majority of which he has been involved in NCAA rules and regulations. He began his professional career as the Assistant Commissioner for Championships and Compliance for the Southern Conference and then moved to East Tennessee State University as the Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance and Student Services. Britz spent five years working for the NCAA national office (1996–2001) and was primarily involved in the initial-eligibility and recruiting process. From there he went on to Texas Tech University, where he was the Senior Associate Athletics Director for Compliance and Administration. In August 2005, he followed his heart and never-ending passion for the game of soccer and accepted a position with the National Soccer Coaches Association of America as the Director of Division I Intercollegiate Programs. Although this is his first book, he has seen the need for *Athletic Scholarships For Dummies* throughout his professional career. Today, Britz lives in Lubbock, Texas, with his newlywed wife, Kim, their dog, Josie, and their cat, Shortstop. Even though age and lack of talent forced him to quit playing soccer, Britz is an avid golfer and sports a handicap of 10.

Alexandra Allred: Alex Allred earned two karate black belts and was honored Athlete of the Year by the United States Olympic Committee in 1994 when she was named to the first ever women's bobsled team. She went on to become a sports/adventure writer. Over the years, Allred has had a variety of unusual writing assignments. She test-drove and wrote about Volvo's Gravity Car, played as a professional female football player for *Sports Illustrated*, competed as a fighter (kickboxing), and took a rigorous firefighter physical — all for a good story. But when coaches began talking to Allred about her own daughter's soccer abilities, she began looking into athletic scholarships. As the author of over a dozen how-to and sports books, Allred saw the need for *Athletic Scholarships For Dummies*. Today, Allred lives in Midlothian, Texas, with her husband, Robb, their three children, and a variety of animals. Together, they try to balance soccer practices and games, horseback riding, tennis camps, karate, running, and volleyball.

Dedication

From Pat: I dedicate this book to Kim, who unfortunately learned how to be a book widow too early in our marriage; to my dad, who introduced me to sports and, for some reason, is still a die-hard Cubs fan; and to my co-author, Alex, who guided me through the process and showed tremendous patience while I got married and changed jobs during the writing of this book!

From Alex: I dedicate this book to my family, who endured countless phone calls and late-night sessions on the computer, and especially to Kerri and Katie, for opening my eyes to the book premise and for your amazing ability and agility on the field. You are so much fun to watch!

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Finally, thank you to all the parents and athletes who may read this book. This book was designed for the college-bound athlete and it is our sincerest hope that the information within these pages will help guide you toward a successful future. Thank you and good luck.

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Introduction

When Navy came knocking on Ed Frawley's door to recruit his son, he wasn't at all nervous. He had done his homework. His son, Nick, had done his homework, too. As a nationally ranked pole-vaulter, Nick Frawley had been under the recruiters' microscopes for more than a year, receiving letters and phone calls from all over the nation. But rather than rest on Nick's laurels, the Frawleys went to work, researching schools (both academic and athletic programs) and scholarships; reading everything they could get their hands on; and talking to coaches, trainers, athletes, and parents from all different sports.

Ed Frawley admits that, despite the tremendous research the family has done, he learns something new each time he talks to another parent or attends a recruiting seminar. The world of athletic scholarships is a complicated one, with so many rules and regulations that it very well may seem daunting to you and your family. If so, you're not alone. Many families are so intimidated by the process that they rely on the wisdom of their high school coaches or guidance counselors.

But when Nick Frawley sat alone, talking to the Navy recruiter, his father had no worries. The entire Frawley family was familiar with recruiting terms, rules, and possible violations. Nick was well polished in what he needed to ask, what he was looking for in a college, and how he envisioned his own future.

What a wonderful way to enter one of the most important periods and one of the most important decision-making processes of your life. Yet Nick Frawley was unusual in this regard. Most college-bound student-athletes do not share this pleasant experience, although they could if they just had the knowledge.

You can. In *Athletic Scholarships For Dummies*, we provide you with the information to research your colleges so that you can enjoy this same sense of security and knowledge.

About This Book

This book was designed to be user-friendly. Each chapter should read as a miniature book on the topic at hand, making the information in these pages easy to access.

Athletic Scholarships For Dummies covers everything you, as a college-bound student-athlete, need to know about securing a college athletic scholarship. We fill you in on academic eligibility; combining academic with athletic scholarships; recruiting regulations; recruiting services; understanding the role of the college recruiter; the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA; self-promotion; working with high school coaches and guidance counselors; national signing day; scouting colleges yourself; campus visits; and parent and athlete do's and don'ts.

If you want an athletic scholarship, this book is the reference you need at your side as you try to make your dreams a reality.

Conventions Used in This Book

This book doesn't have many special conventions, but here are three you should be aware of:

- ✔ We introduce new terms in *italics*, with a definition that closely follows.
- ✔ Whenever we give you steps to follow in a particular order, we list them in a numbered list, with each step in **bold**.
- ✔ We put all Web addresses and e-mail addresses in `monofont` so you can spot them easily.

When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type exactly what you see in this book, pretending that the line break doesn't exist.

What You're Not to Read

This book is full of what you need to know and nothing that you don't. But occasionally we do go into more detail on a particular subject than you absolutely need, and when we do, we mark it with

the Technical Stuff icon (see “Icons Used in This Book”). You can safely skip these paragraphs if you just want the bare-bones information.

You can also skip sidebars. Though you’ll find interesting information in those gray boxes, they’re not essential to your understanding of the topic at hand.

Foolish Assumptions

As we were writing this book, we made a few assumptions about our readers. For example, you may be

- ✓ A college-bound student-athlete who wants to know the ins and outs of the recruiting process because you want to attend college on a full or partial athletic scholarship.
- ✓ A college athlete who’s already received an athletic scholarship but who needs help navigating issues like redshirting, dropped programs, and transferring to another college.
- ✓ A parent who believes your kid has a shot at receiving a full or partial college athletic scholarship, and who wants your kid (and you!) to be prepared.
- ✓ A high school guidance counselor or coach who advises students and parents about college athletic scholarships.

Other than that, we make no assumptions about what you do or don’t know about college athletic scholarships.

How This Book Is Organized

This book has six parts, with several chapters in each part. The parts are organized based on how the recruiting process works. Here’s the scoop on what each part contains.

Part 1: The World of College Sports

How can you possibly begin choosing a school you hope to attend if you don’t fully understand what the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse does or what the differences between the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA are? This section of the book explains scholarship offers, how different scholarships may help you, and where scholarship offers come from.

Part II: Getting Recruited

Getting noticed among college recruiters is critical to getting an offer. You'll need to use effective communication strategies when you're dealing with different coaches and recruiters — in fact, communicating well is key to your ultimate success. You don't have to be on a nationally ranked team or break state records to garner attention. This part helps you come up with a strategy to get your talent recognized.

Part III: Making College Visits

Before you accept an offer from a specific college, you have all kinds of issues to consider. Your instinct may be to do back flips when you get an offer from a major university, but you have to know what that offer really entails and what it means for you. You need to know what kind of school is making the offer, what the school is like, where you would live and train, how the coaching staff deals with its athletes, and how your academics will fit in with this recruiting game. This part helps you ask the right questions, narrow down what it is you want for yourself, and create your own set of guidelines to go shopping for the best school for you.

Part IV: Committing to a School

Understanding the National Letter of Intent is only the beginning of your journey into the world of collegiate sports. When and how to make a verbal commitment to a school, what the long-term ramifications of a verbal commitment are, and how to negotiate a better scholarship offer for you and your family are very important steps. Before you go to college, you want to be sure that you're happy with your contract and that you understand what is expected of you. In this part, we show you how.

Part V: When You're in the Big Leagues: For Existing College Students

Not everything goes as planned. Despite your efforts to pick and choose the best coach, school, or degree, things beyond your control can change. This part of the book walks you through each step of the decision-making process. It also shows you how to transfer schools properly and maintain your eligibility status at the same time.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

As its final bow, *Athletic Scholarships For Dummies* offers some top-ten lists of recruiting information and questions you need to ask yourself before making a final decision on your college career. If you want a lot of information, but you don't have a lot of time, this part is for you.

Icons Used in This Book

To help you recognize certain kinds of information, we use different icons to draw your attention. Icons are those little pictures you see sprinkled throughout the margins of this book. Here's what they mean:



When we use this icon, we're flagging helpful morsels of information. These are tidbits that will give you special insights that will make the process easier for you.



We offer warnings for a reason: They can help you avoid anything from losing a scholarship or an opportunity to talk to a recruiter to missing a critical deadline.



This book is chock-full of important information, and some of it bears repeating. We use the Remember icon to remind you of a procedure, ruling, or idea that appeared in earlier chapters or that's important enough that you should never forget it. Think of the "Remember" paragraphs as your coach watching over your shoulder, reminding you of the rules and proper form.



When we get a little technical, providing more detail than you absolutely need, we flag that info with the Technical Stuff icon. You can skip these paragraphs if you want — or you can read them and get even more insight into the topic at hand.

Where to Go from Here

You can dive into this book anywhere you want, using the table of contents and the index to find exactly what you need. Or you can start with Chapter 1 and read straight through to the Part of Tens. How you use this book is up to you.

If you're early in your high school career, and you don't know much about athletic scholarships except that they're out there, Part I will be right up your alley. If you're starting to get recruited,

and you're not sure how to handle the phone calls and letters, Part II is your ticket. And if you're already a college athlete, Part V is where you'll want to begin.

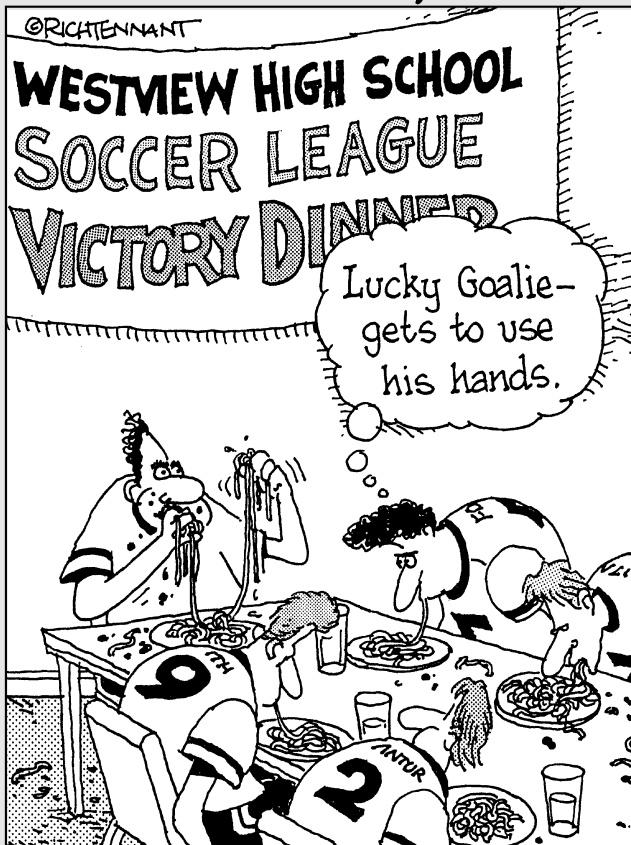
Although you'll never have a guarantee in the world of sports and academics, this book is your guide to making the right decisions. We hope that you and your family will read this book together, take notes, and begin the process today. Good luck!

Part I

The World of College Sports

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

*W*e tell you everything you need to know about the NCAA, NJCAA, and NAIA; how to become eligible for college recruiting; and what you may expect from an athletic scholarship. This is your guide to getting started in the college recruiting game.

Chapter 1

Getting the Basics: Athletic Scholarships 101

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering scholarship opportunities
- ▶ Finding the right school
- ▶ Checking out the clearinghouse
- ▶ Preparing for the recruiting game
- ▶ Making your move into the big time

The world of college athletics — however seemingly vast and organized — is actually a relatively small community filled with confusing information, regulations, and rumors. There are myths — like the one that says billions of dollars of scholarship money are wasted because no one claims them, or the one that says every athlete who gets a scholarship gets a full ride — and there are dizzying real-life rules.

But don't worry. *Athletic Scholarships For Dummies* is designed to answer all your questions, address the persistent rumors, and ease your mind about how you should begin pursuing a scholarship.

In this chapter, we show you how to look at scholarships and how to think about where you want to play.



Don't worry about what other teammates are doing or how your cousin Joey got a full scholarship. We want you to begin thinking about *your* future, considering your assets, and making the moves that are best suited for you.

Sorting Through Scholarship Opportunities

If you know where to look, there is money to be found. The federal government is the largest source of funding, but you also can find all kinds of grants and scholarships available from major corporations and foundations as well as small mom-and-pop companies, all of which are committed to higher education.

Although your goal is to be awarded an athletic scholarship, you can't reach that goal without understanding where the scholarship money is coming from, what you have to do to get it, and what your responsibilities are when you've gotten it.

In an effort to raise the standard of education in this country, Uncle Sam has been a giving uncle, establishing loans, grants, scholarships, even work-study programs for students and student-athletes. State governments also award financial aid. And, of course, both the federal and state governments have vested interests in the money they award.

Colleges and universities are no different from the federal and state agencies in one important way: They expect something in return for the financial aid they offer, whether academic or athletic. Schools' academic or athletic departments will be interested in you only if they believe you have something to offer them in return. College athletic departments want athletes who will lift their programs, make boosters happy, and help ensure championships.



You need to understand what kind of scholarship is being offered to you before you sign anything. Chapter 2 shows you what a scholarship is and what the different types of scholarship are.

Finding the Right Program

Okay, so you're a top-rated soccer or volleyball player, you've broken state records in football or track, or you're a standout swimmer or diver. You show up to all your practices and games, have a great reputation among coaches and competitors, and are widely known and respected among recruiters. You don't need to worry about doing anything except playing the sport you play so well, right?



Wrong. Assuming that all they have to focus on is playing sports and that everything else will fall into place is probably the number-one mistake high school student-athletes make.



Think about approaching scholarship searches as you do the sport you play: In your sport, proper equipment is paramount to your success. Think about the money you and your family have invested in shoes, apparel, balls, and sport-specific gear for your practices and competitions. Think about the time and energy you've invested in practicing, perfecting your technique, and competing. Think about the time and money your parents have invested in getting you to your practices and games, getting you enrolled in club leagues, and allowing you to attend select camps. When you're going for a scholarship, you have to put in the same kind of time and effort.

Your educational choices are as wide and varied as are your choices in sport. But before you can make an informed decision about what school you want to attend, you have to decide what you want to achieve with your degree and what, if anything, you plan to do athletically after you graduate from college. You have to make this decision because different types of schools offer different advantages academically and athletically.

Universities are four-year institutions with a variety of colleges or professional schools (such as colleges of liberal arts, business, law, medicine, and theology) and several kinds of degrees in many areas of study. They offer bachelor's degrees in arts or sciences after four years of study; graduate degrees (master's degrees and doctoral degrees), which require additional years of study; and nursing, dental, and medical degrees, which also require additional years of study after completion of a bachelor's degree. Universities are usually much larger than colleges, carry out research, and offer on-campus housing.

Four-year colleges usually concentrate on one major area of education (such as colleges of liberal arts) and offer bachelor's degrees. Colleges generally do not support research or offer graduate programs, but they do have on-campus housing.

Within the category of four-year schools, there are large and small colleges and universities. Most large institutions participate in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sports. The large, Division I universities and colleges are the schools that send the majority of football, basketball, and baseball players into the major leagues. So, if your dream is to be a professional football or basketball player, you should shoot for attending an NCAA Division I school.

Many small colleges and universities are superior schools with excellent academic reputations and prestigious faculty members. Many student-athletes who are interested in education first and athletics second attend small universities, which often participate

in National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) or NCAA Division II or III athletics. Many student-athletes also attend NCAA Division III schools for the opportunities to play in multiple sports (which is usually not allowed by NCAA Division I schools).

Community colleges or junior colleges offer associate's degrees, which typically take two years to complete, and typically do not have on-campus housing. There are many reasons for attending two-year colleges:

- ✔ Some students are interested in obtaining an associate's degree to pursue specific technical careers.
- ✔ Some students begin at a community or junior college with plans to transfer to larger colleges or universities because they didn't qualify academically for admission into four-year schools. They plan to earn the grade point averages (GPAs) required for admission to four-year schools and then transfer.
- ✔ Some student-athletes start out at junior colleges when they haven't been accepted by the athletic program at the four-year school of their choice. They hope to maintain acceptable GPAs at the junior college, accrue playing time in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), and attract the attention of recruiters from four-year schools.



To understand what the different types of schools mean for you academically and athletically, and what you need to do to be admitted to these different schools, check out Chapter 3.

The most difficult chore, of course, is narrowing down the list of schools in which you're most interested. You don't want to choose a school based on its team mascot, whether your dad went there, or because it's where your best friend is going. Finding the right program requires researching which colleges offer the programs you're most interested in, student graduation rates and transfer rates, academic and athletic success, athletic probation, recruiting methods, the coaching staff, and more.



For help with researching the right school for you, turn to Chapter 11.

Taking the Clearinghouse Seriously

"Nah, I don't have to mess with that. Coach tells me what I need, and he didn't say anything about the clearinghouse."