



# ***Division II Shines in Paris***







# Unprecedented Times Call For Unprecedented Action



Happy 2025, everyone!

Here we are, a quarter into this century and with a lot of experience under our belts. We've used the word "unprecedented" quite often in the past five years. The pandemic certainly was unprecedented, at least in our lifetimes. Adopting a new NCAA Constitution was unprecedented, as well. And the litigation affecting the way we conduct college sports is off-the-charts unprecedented.

All along the way we've had to adjust and adapt how we operate our athletics programs and how we do our business. We've spent much of the past five years focusing on the here and now without having much chance to plan ahead.

It's time as a Division II membership to unlock the future. And I'm sensing excitement about it, too.

Division II began building a successor to our current strategic plan in 2021, but just as you on your campuses have had to operate in fits and spurts because of the unprecedented circumstances, so too have we as a division had to pause, restart and pause again.

I think the pausing is over, and people are energized to resume the creativity and innovation for which we as a division are known and admired. We've spent the last year collaborating with governance committees and membership groups to determine our overarching goals for the future. We've reiterated our commitment to a balanced approach to the collegiate experience. We have not wavered from our bedrock principles, but we've realized the opportunity to apply them in new ways moving forward.

To me, planning is not a chore but an opportunity. Time and again I've witnessed firsthand how you as a division take advantage of these opportunities. We have many unique characteristics and attributes that distinguish us as a division, but perhaps the most remarkable is how we rise upon our commonalities rather than sink into our differences. And we are far more alike than apart. What we value is embedded in the educational model. We all want to develop ambitious students into leaders who will shape our future.

We use athletics as our common vehicle to reach our common goal. Yes, we are good at sports. But we want students to learn and develop through their college experience. We want them to achieve their highest goals in the classroom and in competition. We want them to acquire the life skills that position them for success. We want them to graduate and make a difference, both locally and globally.

I believe there's a collective energy within the Division II membership to move boldly ahead. The timing is right, as we are in the home stretch of crafting an operating plan that will serve as a strategic road map through 2032, which coincides with the remainder of the NCAA's current broadcast agreement with Warner Bros. Discovery Sports and ESPN.

Shortly after this Convention you will be receiving a comprehensive membership survey that will help shape our future goals and objectives. The survey represents yet another opportunity for your voices to matter. I encourage you to be thoughtful and work together as an athletics department staff to express what you want us to be in the coming years.

The Division II Executive Board and Strategic Planning and Finance Committee are committed to allocating the necessary dollars to support this plan. While our goals should be fiscally responsible, they don't have to be cost-cutting or cost neutral.

Let's use this collective energy to our advantage. Let's continue collaborating for the good of the whole. Let's be the leaders we want our students to be.

Let's be unprecedented — in a positive way!

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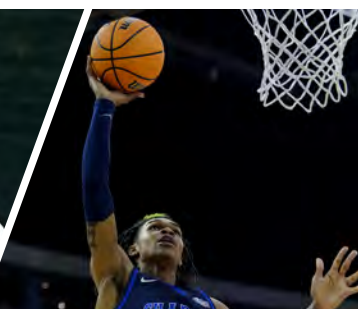
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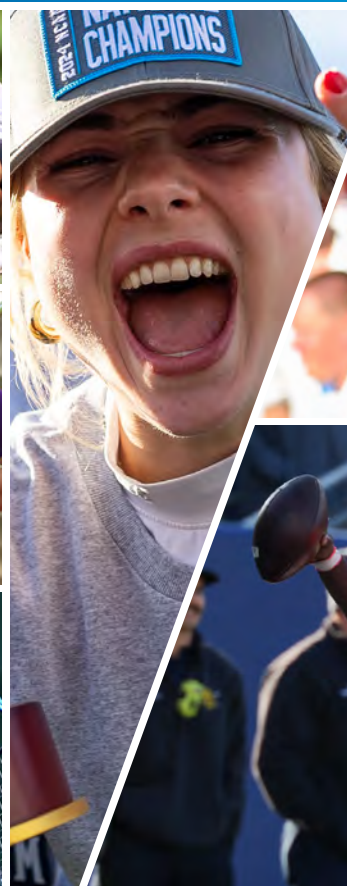
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# Division II Championships









# 2024 Division II National Championships Festival

Division II conducted its 13th National Championships Festival May 19-25 in Orlando, Florida, for the spring sports of men's and women's golf, women's lacrosse, softball, and men's and women's tennis. This was the fifth spring sports festival; the others being in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. This also happened to be the 20th anniversary of the first festival – also held in Orlando – in May 2004. As is customary at the festivals, participants enjoyed opening ceremonies, community engagement activities and the camaraderie that comes with having an Olympic Village-type atmosphere.













The following schools won a 2024 Division II national championship. At each national championship, the Elite 90 Award was given to recognize one student-athlete for achieving the highest GPA of all participants at the finals site.



#### BASEBALL

**University of Tampa**  
**ZACH MILLER**

Junior, Indiana (Pennsylvania)  
Criminology  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S BASKETBALL

**Minnesota State Mankato**  
**COLE VICKERS**

Sophomore, Ferris State  
Business Administration  
3.96 GPA

#### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

**Minnesota State Mankato**  
**AUDREY RAMSEY**

Senior, University of Tampa  
Cybersecurity and Information  
Technology Management  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

**Colorado School of Mines**  
**DILLON LABONTE**

Junior, Southern New Hampshire  
Electrical Engineering and Math  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

**Adams State**  
**JENNIFER CICHRA**

Junior, Slippery Rock  
Mechanical Engineering  
4.0 GPA

#### FIELD HOCKEY

**Saint Anselm**  
**SARAH GATEHOUSE**

Graduate Student, Kutztown  
Sport Management  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S GOLF

**Colorado Christian**  
**ARNAV ARKANATH**

Junior, Western New Mexico  
Business Marketing  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S GOLF

**UIndy**  
**ALLIE BIANCHI**

Senior, Henderson State  
Finance  
4.0 GPA

#### FOOTBALL

**Ferris State**  
**SAM WAHLBERG**

Sophomore, Ferris State  
Construction Management  
3.92 GPA

#### MEN'S LACROSSE

**Adelphi**  
**ZACK SALO**

Sophomore, Lenoir-Rhyne  
Accounting and Finance  
3.97 GPA

#### WOMEN'S LACROSSE

**University of Tampa**  
**MADELINE SCHALLMOSER**

Junior, Regis (Colorado)  
English  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S ROWING

**Western Washington**  
**AUDREY REKEDAL**

Junior, Seattle Pacific  
Economics and Political Science  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S SOCCER

**Lynn**  
**NICOLAI GUNDERSEN**

Senior, Charleston (West Virginia)  
Accounting  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S SOCCER

**Cal Poly Pomona**  
**AVERY WILLIAMS**

Junior, Columbus State  
Biology  
4.0 GPA

#### SOFTBALL

**The University of Texas at Tyler**  
**LAUREN MOSELE**

Senior, UIndy  
Psychology  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING

**University of Tampa**  
**ELIJAH CHRISTENSON**

Junior, Ouachita Baptist  
Biomedical Sciences  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING

**Nova Southeastern**  
**BROOKE DORR**

Senior, West Florida  
Exercise Science  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S TENNIS

**Valdosta State**  
**CAREL WESSEL**

Sophomore, The University of Texas at Tyler  
Finance  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S TENNIS

**Nova Southeastern**  
**KATHERINE NGUYEN**

Junior, Azusa Pacific  
Finance  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

**Pittsburg State**  
**BLAKE MORGAN**

Senior, Northwest Missouri State  
Biology: Biomedical Sciences  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

**Adams State**  
**ZOE BAKER**

Senior, Colorado School of Mines  
Computer Science  
4.0 GPA

#### MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

**Pittsburg State**  
**NICK MELANESE**

Senior, Cal State San Marcos  
Business Administration  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

**Pittsburg State**  
**JOSIE COFFEY**

Senior, Colorado Mesa  
Political Science  
4.0 GPA

#### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

**Lynn**  
**LOGYN GEREN**

Junior, Ferris State  
Accountancy  
4.0 GPA

#### WRESTLING

**Central Oklahoma**  
**JACKSON HOOVER**

Junior, UIndy  
Biology  
4.0 GPA





## 2024 Division II Governance Structure

# Key Highlights

- The Executive Board adopted a recommendation from the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee that expedites the process for a new Division II championship and optimizes student-athlete opportunities. The action comes after the division adopted legislation in January 2024 that established 35 as the number of sponsoring schools required to add or maintain a Division II championship in a men's or women's sport.
- The Executive Board approved emergency legislation to eliminate Division II's year-in-residence requirement for undergraduate student-athletes transferring between four-year schools and implemented new academic standards for immediate eligibility.
- The Executive Board also joined leadership bodies in Divisions I and III to discuss potentially amending the NCAA's sports wagering policies to allow betting on professional sports.
- The Management Council approved Division II's involvement in the 2028 joint Division I, II and III Women's Basketball Championships in Indianapolis. The Championships Committee also approved playing the 2025 Division II Women's Lacrosse Championship game as part of a combined championship with Division III in Salem, Virginia.
- The Management Council approved the Membership Committee's recommendation to establish a two-year expedited provisional membership process.
- The council also adopted noncontroversial legislation to permit schools and third parties to provide assistance and services to student-athletes pursuing name, image and likeness opportunities.
- The Championships Committee began discussions on the division's regionalization philosophy and opportunities to revise selections and bracketing approaches to enhance the championships experience.
- The Legislation Committee completed its review of Division II Bylaw 13 (recruiting) and Division II Bylaw 16 (awards, benefits and expenses for enrolled student-athletes) and recommended noncontroversial legislation that deregulates the respective bylaws and provides Division II schools with more autonomy and discretion.
- The Legislation Committee also completed its review of Division II Bylaw 14 (eligibility) – specifically, reviewing the academic-year-in-residence requirement under the organized competition legislation. Finally, the committee will continue its review of Division II Bylaw 15 (financial aid) and Division II Bylaw 17 (playing and practice seasons).
- The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee completed and distributed institutional and conference SAAC best practice guides and created a civic engagement day resource as part of its continued focus on the three E's – empower student-athletes with resources, empathize with their concerns, and enhance their voice and experience.





## OUTGOING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Division II thanks the following committee members whose terms either ended in 2024 or will end at the conclusion of the 2025 Convention for their outstanding contributions!

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### **Davaris Cheeks**

*Football*  
Concordia-St. Paul

#### **Katie Williamson**

*Basketball*  
Southern Connecticut State

### MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

#### **Marcus Clarke**

*Senior Associate Commissioner*  
Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association

#### **Amy Henkelman**

*Director of Athletics*  
Dominican (California)

#### **Danny McCabe**

*Director of Athletics*  
Adelphi

#### **Courtney Medwin**

*Student-Athlete*  
West Chester

#### **Austin Mondello**

*Student-Athlete*  
Colorado Mesa

### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE

#### **Karen Hjerpe**

*Director of Athletics*  
California (Pennsylvania)

#### **Danny McCabe**

*Director of Athletics*  
Adelphi

### CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE

#### **Kristy Bayer**

*Director of Athletics*  
Rockhurst

#### **Nathan Gibson**

*Director of Athletics*  
Colorado-Colorado Springs

#### **Karen Haag**

*Associate Director of Athletics and Senior Woman Administrator*  
Saint Rose

#### **Courtney Medwin**

*Student-Athlete*  
West Chester

#### **Carol Rivera**

*Associate Commissioner and Senior Woman Administrator*  
California Collegiate Athletic Association

### COMMITTEE FOR LEGISLATIVE RELIEF

#### **Ellen Fagerstrom**

*Faculty Athletics Representative*  
Minnesota State University Moorhead

#### **Marlon Furlongue**

*Associate Director of Athletics for Internal Operations and Compliance*  
St. Mary's (Texas)

#### **Amy Henkelman**

*Director of Athletics*  
Dominican (California)

### COMMITTEE ON INFRACTIONS

#### **Jessica Chapin**

*Director of Athletics*  
American International

### COMMITTEE ON STUDENT-ATHLETE REINSTATEMENT

#### **Jessica Harbison Weaver**

*Commissioner*  
Pacific West Conference

### LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

#### **Kara Amos**

*Student-Athlete*  
Missouri Southern State

#### **Cullen Dore**

*Student-Athlete*  
Francis Marion

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

#### **Keri Becker**

*Director of Athletics*  
Grand Valley State

#### **Will Prewitt**

*Commissioner*  
Great American Conference

#### **Debbie Snell**

*Director of Athletics*  
Hawaii Pacific

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

#### **Molly Belden**

*Senior Associate Commissioner*  
Northeast-10 Conference

#### **Jim Crawley**

*Faculty Athletics Representative*  
Dominican New York

#### **David Haas**

*Senior Associate Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Success*  
West Georgia

#### **Eric Schoh**

*Director of Athletics*  
Winona State

### STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### **Laura Amaya**

*Volleyball*  
Roberts Wesleyan

#### **Kara Amos**

*Softball*  
Missouri Southern State

#### **Davaris Cheeks**

*Football*  
Concordia-St. Paul

#### **Cullen Dore**

*Cross Country and Outdoor Track and Field*  
Francis Marion

#### **Shani Idlette**

*Tennis*  
Clark Atlanta

#### **Dani Mabry**

*Lacrosse*  
Rockhurst

#### **David Mayser**

*Soccer*  
Hawaii Hilo

#### **Courtney Medwin**

*Lacrosse*  
West Chester

#### **Austin Mondello**

*Swimming and Diving*  
Colorado Mesa

#### **Alexis Montalvo**

*Lacrosse*  
Ashland

#### **Katie Williamson**

*Basketball*  
Southern Connecticut State





## ***Division II Plans For Its Future***

As Division II prepares to launch its new six-year strategic plan in January 2026, the membership and governance structure are ramping up efforts to ensure that the division remains in a position of strength despite the uncertainties within the current intercollegiate and higher education landscape.

Primary among those efforts was the Division II Executive Board authorizing the division to host a Think Tank of Division II leaders to discuss the challenges facing intercollegiate athletics and begin developing ideas and solutions where appropriate for Division II.

The Think Tank, which convened Sept. 16-17, included one representative from each of the 23 Division II conferences, five student-athletes from the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and one independent member from the Division II Executive Board.

Division II leaders have navigated several challenges in recent years, including a world pandemic; legal outcomes that affected the NCAA's ability to self-govern; a dramatic reframing of the NCAA Constitution; evolving and challenging environments involving transfer rules and name, image and likeness opportunities; and continuous shifting of membership standards, primarily at the Division I level but impacting all three divisions, regarding what is expected to provide the optimal student-athlete experience.

Additionally, differing and often competing state laws have hampered many schools' abilities to set and achieve goals in diversity, equity and inclusion, and ongoing litigation continues to threaten the status of the NCAA's traditional collegiate model. Even higher education itself is under intense scrutiny from politicians and the general public alike.

"While not all of these external pressures directly impact Division II, the Executive Board considered it prudent to assemble a representative group to deliberate the division's future in these challenging times," Division II Vice President Terri Steeb Gronau said. "Division II has experienced success with this collaborative membership approach in the past, and the Executive Board thought it was particularly useful at this time to assemble such a group given the division's ongoing development of its next strategic plan."



## THINK TANK KEY TAKEAWAYS

After two days of deliberations in small groups, the Think Tank considered the items in the list below as among the division's top priorities. Some of these items are actively being discussed in the governance structure, while others soon will be.

The Think Tank's final report was shared with various committees and affiliate organizations with the goal of including items in a Division II survey to gather broader Division II membership input and feedback in early 2025.

Governance committees will use the results of the survey to finalize the Division II Operating Plan, outline the initiatives to accomplish, including the timing by which to accomplish them, and determine a funding model for implementation. The final 2026-32 Division II Operating Plan will be shared at the January 2026 NCAA Convention.

### **Finances dedicated to championships, including:**

- Allocating new dollars/revenue.
- Review of the current budget line items (championships versus initiatives).
- Review of revenue distribution and championships surplus funds to determine whether any of these funds should be reallocated to championships.
- Gather feedback on potential per diem increases, bracket increases, travel party, enhancement of regional rounds, etc.

### **Increase mental health resources and programming:**

- Consider legislation that requires schools to provide education specific to mental health, similar to Division I's core guarantees related to mental health.
- Provide funding (e.g., seed money) to assist schools in starting services, programs and/or meeting requirements (e.g., mental health first aid, in-person training).
- Collaborate with stakeholders (e.g., Sport Science Institute, Division III, other organizations) to create/distribute a mental health tool kit with resources that assist schools with implementation of the Mental Health Best Practices interassociation consensus document.

### **Modernize Life in the Balance definition and educate/market accordingly:**

- Add mental health/wellness as a primary focus area.
- Expand to include administrators and coaches both as recipients and as "owners/advocates/role models" of the balance philosophy.
- Reevaluate student-athlete time demands (e.g., include community engagement and countable athletically related activities by sport).

### **Bracketing models:**

- Use a metric-based method (e.g., NCAA Power Index, Kevin Pauga Index) for selections.
- Consider revised bracketing model following selections.
- Confirm that the championships regionalization philosophy is met at the time of selections.

### **Increase attendance as a key component of the student-athlete experience:**

- Consider a 16-site/three-weekend format for volleyball and basketball, which may increase attendance.
- Free student tickets to championships.
  - Potentially seek a corporate partner to offset these costs if a revenue issue. Opportunity for additional exposure (e.g., social media, broadcast) for a corporate partner.

### **Reimagine the Division II Festival:**

Explore additional opportunities for Division I, II and III joint championships and whether there are any additional Division II championships that could occur at the same location.

### **Review divisional titles/labels:**

Explore whether naming the divisions something other than "Division I, II or III" is a better way to identify the NCAA structure and the grouping of schools.

Explore a name change for Division II that better reflects its value, philosophy and model of collegiate sports for schools, coaches and student-athletes.

- Engage stakeholders (e.g., administrators, coaches, student-athletes) in the renaming process to ensure broad support.
- Following the divisional review, reassess whether the meaning of "Make It Yours" resonates.





## DIVISION II THINK TANK ROSTER

**Michael Bazemore**

*Director of Athletics*  
Montana State Billings  
Great Northwest  
Athletic Conference

**Nate Burton**

*Director of Athletics*  
West Virginia State  
Mountain East Conference

**Bennett Cherry**

*Faculty Athletics Representative*  
Cal State San Marcos  
California Collegiate  
Athletic Association

**Lorrie Clemo**

*President*  
D'Youville  
East Coast Conference

**Addison Courtney**

*Student-Athlete*  
Fairmont State  
Division II Student-Athlete  
Advisory Committee

**Kelly Daniel**

*Director of Athletics*  
Tiffin  
Great Midwest  
Athletic Conference

**Jerel Drew**

*Director of Athletics*  
Clark Atlanta  
Southern Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

**Montserrat Fuentes**

*President*  
St. Edward's  
Lone Star Conference

**Marty Gilbert**

*Faculty Athletics Representative*  
Mars Hill  
South Atlantic Conference

**DJ Guest Jr.**

*Student-Athlete*  
Cal State Dominguez Hills  
Division II Student-Athlete  
Advisory Committee

**Drew Howard**

*Director of Athletics*  
Florida Southern  
Sunshine State Conference

**Scout Huffman**

*Student-Athlete*  
Texas Woman's University  
Division II Student-Athlete  
Advisory Committee

**Charolette Hunt**

*Associate Director of Athletics  
for Compliance*  
Winston-Salem State  
Central Intercollegiate Athletic  
Association

**Jim Johnson**

*Director of Athletics*  
Pittsburg State  
Mid-America Intercollegiate  
Athletics Association

**Colleen Perry Keith (chair)**

*President*  
Goldey-Beacom  
Central Atlantic  
Collegiate Conference

**Erin Lind**

*Commissioner*  
Northern Sun  
Intercollegiate Conference

**Jim Naumovich**

*Commissioner*  
Great Lakes Valley Conference

**Thomas Newsom**

*President*  
Southeastern Oklahoma State  
Great American Conference

**Roberta Page**

*Director of Athletics*  
Slippery Rock  
Pennsylvania State  
Athletic Conference

**Larry Parkinson**

*NCAA Division II Executive Board  
Independent Member*

**Whitnie Riden**

*Assistant Director of Athletics  
for Compliance and Senior  
Woman Administrator*  
Emmanuel (Georgia)  
Conference Carolinas

**Julie Ruppert**

*Commissioner*  
Northeast-10 Conference

**Alia Scotka**

*Student-Athlete*  
West Florida  
Division II Student-Athlete  
Advisory Committee

**Andre Stephens**

*President*  
Fresno Pacific  
Pacific West Conference

**Hayley Treadway**

*Deputy Director of Athletics and  
Senior Woman Administrator*  
Wisconsin-Parkside  
Great Lakes Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

**Dawn Turner**

*Deputy Director of Athletics and  
Senior Woman Administrator*  
Lander  
Peach Belt Conference

**Haley White**

*Student-Athlete*  
Lincoln Memorial  
Division II Student-Athlete  
Advisory Committee

**Matt Wilson**

*Commissioner*  
Gulf South Conference

**Shawn Worthy**

*Faculty Athletics Representative*  
Metropolitan State University of  
Denver  
Rocky Mountain  
Athletic Conference





## DIVISION II RAISES OVER \$200,000 FOR MAKE-A-WISH

Division II raised more than \$200,000 in the 2023-24 academic year as part of its ongoing partnership with Make-A-Wish.

This contribution included \$153,277 from member school and conference donations and \$47,480 from Division II championships and enforcement fine allocations. Additionally, \$1,319 was raised through other gifts, the majority donated by the NCAA enforcement team from its holiday 2023 charity collection in memory of former NCAA staff member and Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee liaison Mark Strothkamp. He previously oversaw the division's partnership with Make-A-Wish.

As part of their fundraising efforts, 11 schools will experience wish reveals, which is the powerful moment when kids with critical illnesses learn that their wishes will come true.



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Four colleges and universities – Allen, Edward Waters University, Emory & Henry and Westmont – became NCAA Division II members Sept. 1 after successfully completing the provisional membership process. The Division II membership now totals 293 schools.

Additionally, the University of South Carolina Beaufort and Thomas More, both transitioning from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, advanced to year three of the provisional membership process.

Five schools advanced to year two of the provisional membership process: Jessup (NAIA), Menlo (NAIA), Roosevelt (NAIA), Sul Ross State (Division III) and Vanguard (NAIA).

Four schools were accepted into the provisional membership process. Three schools – Point Park; the University of California, Merced; and the University of Jamestown – will transition from the NAIA, while Texas-Dallas will transition from Division III. UC Merced, Jamestown and Texas-Dallas were accepted into the two-year expedited provisional membership process. Point Park is in year one of the three-year provisional membership process.



## FESTIVAL NOMINATED

The 2024 Division II National Championships Festival for spring sports was nominated for a SportsTravel Award for Best Collegiate Event of the Year by the readers of SportsTravel. Two additional NCAA championships were also nominated – the 2023 Division III Football Championship (Stagg Bowl) and the 2024 National Collegiate Women's Gymnastics Championships.



# Future DII Championship Sites Revealed

For the fourth time in its history, the NCAA conducted a comprehensive site selection process, putting most of its championships up for bid simultaneously.

The Association chose over 240 host sites for preliminary and final rounds of predetermined championships across Divisions I, II and III, primarily for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 seasons. This cycle marked a shift from a four-year to a two-year site selection process.

The NCAA received more than 1,200 bids from member schools, conferences, cities and sports commissions across 47 states and Washington, D.C., all competing to host predetermined rounds for 87 of the NCAA's 90 championships. The respective NCAA sports committees selected the sites, with final approval from the divisional competition oversight and championships committees.

The Division II Championships Committee approved the following sites and hosts for championships from fall 2026 through spring 2028.

## BASEBALL

**2027 and 2028**

### GARY, NORTH CAROLINA

*USA Baseball National Training Complex*

Hosts: University of Mount Olive and Cary, North Carolina

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

**2027 and 2028**

### FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

*Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Arena*

Hosts: Great Midwest Athletic Conference and Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Arena

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

**2027 and 2028**

### FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

*Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Arena*

Hosts: Great Midwest Athletic Conference and Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Arena

**Note:** In 2028, the Divisions II and III championship games will take place in Indianapolis during the Women's Final Four.

## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

**2026**

**(Division II Championships Festival)**

### LAWRENCE, KANSAS

*Rim Rock*

Hosts: Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association and Kansas City Sports Commission

**2027**

### HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

*John Hunt Park - Cross Country Course*

Hosts: University of Alabama in Huntsville and Huntsville Sports Commission

## FIELD HOCKEY

**2026**

**(Division II Championships Festival)**

### KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

*The Pembroke Hill School*

Hosts: Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association and Kansas City Sports Commission

**2027**

### WINGATE, NORTH CAROLINA

*Irwin Belk Stadium*

Host: Wingate University

## FOOTBALL

**2026 and 2027**

### MCKINNEY, TEXAS

*McKinney ISD Stadium*

Hosts: Lone Star Conference and McKinney ISD

## MEN'S GOLF

**2027**

### PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA

*PGA National Resort*

Hosts: Palm Beach Atlantic University and Palm Beach County Sports Commission

**2028**

*The 2028 Division II finals are part of the Division II National Championships Festival that will be awarded at a later date.*

## WOMEN'S GOLF

**2027**

### HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA

*Mission Resort + Club*

Hosts: Rollins College and Greater Orlando Sports Commission

**2028**

*The 2028 Division II finals are part of the Division II National Championships Festival that will be awarded at a later date.*

## MEN'S LACROSSE

**2027**

### PHILADELPHIA

*Lincoln Financial Field*

Host: Drexel University

**2028**

### FOXBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

*Gillette Stadium*

Hosts: Harvard University and Gillette Stadium

## WOMEN'S LACROSSE

**2027**

### TAMPA, FLORIDA

*UT Naimoli Family Athletic and Intramural Complex*

Hosts: University of Tampa and Tampa Bay Sports Commission

**2028**

*The 2028 Division II finals are part of the Division II National Championships Festival that will be awarded at a later date.*



## **WOMEN'S ROWING**

**2027 and 2028**

### **SARASOTA, FLORIDA**

*Nathan Benderson Park*

Hosts: University of Central Florida  
and Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy Inc.

## **MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER**

**2026**

**(Division II Championships Festival)**

### **KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

*CPKC Stadium*

Hosts: Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics  
Association and Kansas City Sports Commission

**2027**

### **HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA**

*Joe Davis Stadium*

Hosts: University of Alabama in Huntsville  
and Huntsville Sports Commission

## **SOFTBALL**

**2027 and 2028**

### **CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE**

*Frost Stadium at Warner Park*

Hosts: Lee University, University of North  
Georgia and Chattanooga Sports

## **MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING**

**2027 and 2028**

### **INDIANAPOLIS**

*IU Natatorium*

Hosts: Great Lakes Valley Conference  
and Indiana Sports Corp

## **MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TENNIS**

**2027**

### **SURPRISE, ARIZONA**

*Surprise Tennis and Racquet Complex*

Hosts: Pacific West Conference  
and the city of Surprise

**2028**

*The 2028 Division II finals are part of the  
Division II National Championships Festival  
that will be awarded at a later date.*

## **MEN'S AND WOMEN'S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD**

**2027**

### **BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**

*Birmingham CrossPlex*

Hosts: University of Montevallo  
and Birmingham CrossPlex

**2028**

### **SPOKANE, WASHINGTON**

*The Podium*

Hosts: Great Northwest Athletic Conference  
and Spokane Sports Commission

## **MEN'S AND WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD**

**2027**

### **WALNUT, CALIFORNIA**

*Hilmer Lodge Stadium*

Host: California State Polytechnic  
University, Pomona

**2028**

### **JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

*Hodges Stadium*

Hosts: Edward Waters University  
and Visit Jacksonville

## **WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL**

**2026**

**(Division II Championships Festival)**

### **KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

*Municipal Auditorium*

Hosts: Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics  
Association and Kansas City Sports Commission

**2027**

### **JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

*University of North Florida Arena*

Hosts: Edward Waters University  
and Visit Jacksonville

## **WRESTLING**

**2027**

### **CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

*Alliant Energy PowerHouse*

Host: Upper Iowa University

**2028**

### **PITTSBURGH**

*Petersen Events Center*

Hosts: University of Pittsburgh,  
Johnstown, and SportsPITTSBURGH





## 2024 Award of Excellence Recipient

# Roberts Wesleyan

Roberts Wesleyan was announced as the 2024 Division II Award of Excellence winner during the division's business session at the NCAA Convention in Phoenix.

The Redhawks, among 27 Division II Award of Excellence finalists, became the first two-time winner in the award's 11-year history. Roberts Wesleyan was recognized for its Ugandan Water Project, a yearlong initiative to build three water wells in Uganda to provide fresh water to communities in need. The Redhawks participated in multiple service opportunities throughout the year to bring awareness to the project and raise more than \$13,000 for it. The Ugandan Water Project stemmed from Roberts Wesleyan's broader community engagement initiative, Redhawks Reachout, which aims to find ways to impact local and global communities in need.

As part of the water project, student-athletes put together hundreds of kits to restore water pumps in Uganda and Morocco. Student-athletes, coaches and staff also ran in and volunteered at a local 5K race to raise money for the project. Other activations included a one-week water challenge to bring awareness to the challenges many Ugandans face finding access to clean water and a 60-minute fundraising blitz.

"I am deeply proud of our student-athletes who answered the call so many times this year for various projects, including the Ugandan Water Project," Roberts Wesleyan Executive Director of Athletics Bob Segave said. "The fact that the wells were constructed and are currently benefiting three school communities is so rewarding and fulfilling for them. It's an honor to have now been recognized for the second time in the history of this award."

The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee annually selects the Award of Excellence winner based on actions over the past year that exemplify the Division II philosophy, community engagement and student-athlete leadership. As the winner of the award, Roberts Wesleyan received \$2,500 to use toward future community engagement efforts.

Hawaii Pacific garnered second place for community engagement efforts by its men's basketball team. The Sharks offered assistance after the devastating wildfires in Lahaina. They donated profits from a T-shirt and wristband fundraiser to local victims, hosted a youth clinic in Maui, donated more than 300 youth bicycle helmets, and helped pack and ship containers of clothing and supplies for Lahaina families. The Sharks also partnered with two local elementary schools to create a mentorship program, hosted a local youth clinic and participated in several other community engagement projects in Oahu. The school received \$1,250 to use toward future community engagement efforts.

Virginia at Wise earned third place for its Kids Day Basketball Game, a community engagement tradition that started about 10 years ago in which local schoolchildren attend a midday basketball game as a field trip before winter break. More than 2,200 children attended the December 2022 game. It was the first Kids Day game since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the atmosphere was celebratory. The school received \$1,000 for its community engagement efforts.

Roberts Wesleyan was recognized as the 2024 Division II Award of Excellence winner for its Ugandan Water Project, a yearlong initiative to build three water wells in Uganda to provide fresh water to communities in need.





# 50th Anniversary Scholarship Recipients Named



Division II announced the 46 student-athletes who each received the 50th Anniversary Scholarship, worth over \$1,000. The recipients were recognized during the opening ceremonies of the Division II Festival in Orlando, Florida.

Division II schools submitted 196 nominations for the commemorative scholarship. Conference offices reviewed their member schools' nominations and selected up to four finalists for review by the Division II Management Council

Identity Subcommittee. The subcommittee reviewed all finalist submissions and determined the recipients, awarding one male student-athlete and one female student-athlete from each of the 23 Division II conferences.

Recipients have exemplified the division's Life in the Balance philosophy through high-level athletics competition, academic achievement, campus involvement and community engagement.

## Division II 50th Anniversary Scholarship Recipients

### ARLEY ANDERSON

Central Missouri

Mid-America Intercollegiate  
Athletics Association

### BETHANY ARABE

Point Loma

Pacific West Conference

### TEDERIA ASHLEY

Miles

Southern Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

### JERRIS BAKER

Miles

Southern Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

### ELIZABETH BALENT

Montevallo

Gulf South Conference

### JOSEPHINE BORELLE

Fairmont State

Mountain East Conference

### TYLER BOWERS

Johnson C. Smith

Central Intercollegiate  
Athletic Association

### ALAYSIA BROOKS

Ursuline

Great Midwest Athletic Conference

### REESE BURNSIDE

West Liberty

Mountain East Conference

### MASON COOK

Hawaii Hilo

Pacific West Conference

### CALE CORMANEY

Fort Hays State

Mid-America Intercollegiate  
Athletics Association

### GABE CROOM

Lincoln Memorial

South Atlantic Conference

### JOEY DATTA

Caldwell

Central Atlantic Collegiate  
Conference

### KENAN DEAN

University of Tampa

Sunshine State Conference

### KIMBERLY DEBOER

San Francisco State

California Collegiate  
Athletic Association

### KAYTE DELONG

Southern Arkansas

Great American Conference

### HANNAH DUNN

Catawba

South Atlantic Conference

### MAX GARNETT

North Georgia

Peach Belt Conference

### HANNAH HAIR

Seattle Pacific

Great Northwest  
Athletic Conference

### CATHERINE HENDERSHOTT

Belmont Abbey

Conference Carolinas

### ANNA IGIMS

Slippery Rock

Pennsylvania State  
Athletic Conference

### ASHLEY INGRAM

Texas Woman's University

Lone Star Conference

### NATALIE JENS

Minnesota State University

Moorhead

Northern Sun  
Intercollegiate Conference

### KIERAN KEENAN

St. Thomas Aquinas

East Coast Conference

### TRISTAN KELLY

Union (Tennessee)

Gulf South Conference

### BRODY KEMBLE

Northwest Nazarene

Great Northwest  
Athletic Conference

### BRAYDEN LONG

Slippery Rock

Pennsylvania State  
Athletic Conference

### DONALD MEDLEY

Converse

Conference Carolinas

### NICK MELANESE

Cal State San Marcos

California Collegiate  
Athletic Association

### ALESSANDRA MEONI

South Dakota Mines

Rocky Mountain  
Athletic Conference

### AMESHA MILLER

Virginia State

Central Intercollegiate  
Athletic Association

### CLAIRE MILLS

North Georgia

Peach Belt Conference

### SEBASTIAN O'FARRELL

Black Hills State

Rocky Mountain  
Athletic Conference

### JALIN PITCHFORD

Northwood

Great Midwest Athletic Conference

### BRANDON POTTS

Saint Anselm

Northeast-10 Conference

### SALMA RASLAN

Purdue Northwest

Great Lakes Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

### MYLES RHODES

Grand Valley State

Great Lakes Intercollegiate  
Athletic Conference

### SOPHIA RIDOLFO

Georgian Court

Central Atlantic  
Collegiate Conference

### KIARRA ROTH

Molloy

East Coast Conference

### MOLLY SHAPIRO

University of Tampa

Sunshine State Conference

### BRIANNA SHEA

Pace

Northeast-10 Conference

### JACK STRAND

Minnesota State University

Moorhead

Northern Sun Intercollegiate  
Conference

### EMMA THOMPSON

Truman State

Great Lakes Valley Conference

### LOGAN TURNER

Southwest Baptist

Great Lakes Valley Conference

### COLE WILLIAMS

Southern Arkansas

Great American Conference

### TYRIQ WILSON

St. Edward's

Lone Star Conference



# Division II's Today's Top 10 Awardees

Ten former student-athletes were selected as recipients of the NCAA Today's Top 10 Award and will be honored at the 2025 NCAA Convention.

The award recognizes former student-athletes for their exceptional athletic and academic achievements, as well as their contributions to their campuses and communities.

The Today's Top 10 awardees were selected by the NCAA Honors Committee, composed of representatives from NCAA member schools and conferences, as well as nationally distinguished citizens, including past awardees.

The awardees will be celebrated Tuesday, Jan. 14, at the NCAA Convention Welcome and Awards Presentation in Nashville, Tennessee.



*Shelby Robb*

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF DENVER



*Daisy Woodring*

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY



# Division II Strong Showing in NCAA Woman of the Year

Established in 1991 and now in its 34th year, the NCAA Woman of the Year award recognizes female student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility and distinguished themselves in their community, in athletics and in academics throughout their college careers.

A record 627 nominations were received from all NCAA schools. The Woman of the Year Selection Committee selected 10 student-athletes from each division to determine the Top 30 honorees, from which nine finalists were named (three from each division). (Note: The overall winner will be revealed at the annual NCAA Convention, which is after the Division II Yearbook is published.)



## WOMAN OF THE YEAR

### FINALISTS



*Anna Grossheim*

**UNC PEMROKE**  
Sociology



*Samantha Pirosko*

**GANNON**  
Health Sciences; Physician Assistant



*Shelby Robb*

**METROPOLITAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**  
Sports Management



## Woman of the Year - Top 30 Honoree -



### CAMI BELIN

Lees-McRae  
Conference Carolinas  
**Soccer**  
Criminal justice and psychology

### LINDSAY CUNNINGHAM

Winona State  
Northern Sun Intercollegiate  
Conference  
**Cross country, indoor and  
outdoor track and field**  
Exercise science;  
movement science

### LONDON FULLER

Clarion  
Pennsylvania State Athletic  
Conference  
**Volleyball**  
Interdisciplinary studies

### SARAH MIZEL

Azusa Pacific  
Independent  
**Acrobatics and tumbling**  
Public relations

### NANETTE NIKOLAJSEN

Lenoir-Rhyne  
South Atlantic Conference  
**Triathlon, indoor and outdoor  
track and field, cross country**  
Entrepreneurship;  
business management

### MORGAN SALMON

Adelphi  
Northeast-10 Conference  
**Soccer**  
Nursing

### MADELEINE SCHNEIDER

Minnesota-Crookston  
Northern Sun Intercollegiate  
Conference  
**Tennis**  
Information technology  
management;  
software engineering



## ASHLEY HARKINS COURAGEOUSLY SAVES A LIFE, WINS VALOR AWARD

Sgt. Ashley Harkins, a former Saint Michael's softball student-athlete now working as a Connecticut state trooper, risked her life to save a woman from falling 100 feet off a bridge.

For her bravery, she is receiving the NCAA Valor Award, which is presented to a coach, administrator or current or former NCAA student-athlete who, when confronted with a situation involving personal danger, averted or minimized potential disaster by courageous action or noteworthy bravery. She will receive the award at the NCAA Convention in January.

In November 2023, Harkins was just ending a shift. She stayed at work later than usual when a call came in reporting a suicidal woman on a bridge.

When she arrived on the scene, she saw a woman in her mid-60s sitting on a 5-inch ledge.

Harkins looked up at the 10-foot safety fence separating her from the woman. Past the fence, Harkins saw the drop to the water was around 100 feet. If Harkins made it over the fence, her entire foot would not even fit on the concrete edge. She had no safety ropes or equipment.

"I didn't think about being scared," Harkins told the local news after the incident. "I just thought about what we need to do and how we (could) accomplish it."

There weren't many situations in life that could have prepared Harkins for that emergency response, yet she said her sport-first mentality since childhood played a role.

"I would say my athleticism and my drive to constantly stay fit, which I would say goes all the way back to my entire life, in every sport I ever played, definitely helped me that day," she said.

## CATAWBA PROFESSOR HONORED WITH DIVISION II FACULTY AWARD



The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee selected Suzanne Bowser from Catawba as the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award.

The faculty mentor award is named after a Bellarmine physical therapy professor who died in 2013 and recognizes faculty members at Division II schools for their dedication to supporting and mentoring student-athletes, as well as their commitment to student-athletes' lifelong learning, competition and well-being.

Bowser, an assistant professor of exercise science and nutrition, will be honored at the 2025 NCAA Convention.

Bowser works with Catawba's teams as a sports performance dietitian. She also is a co-advisor for the Tri-Alpha organization, which promotes academic excellence and provides opportunities for first-generation college students. She is a part of the school's Equity, Diversity, Justice and Inclusion Task Force. She also collaborates with entities in the community to help address the food insecurity problem in Rowan County, North Carolina.

Bowser's research included a study regarding the effects of healthy meals on residents who struggled to afford food. She noticed that both physical and mental aspects of health improved, so she helped raise money to keep this food program going.

"It is my honor to support student-athletes at Catawba," she said. "This award is a testament to them and their selfless recognition of the small efforts I make to encourage and offer support as they achieve their best in their collegiate experiences – and most importantly lifelong achievements. I am humbled and honored that they would take the time to recognize me in this way."

## TINA SLOAN GREEN HONORED WITH 2025 NCAA THEODORE ROOSEVELT AWARD



When Tina Sloan Green reflects on her storied career, it's not the victories that stand out, but the lives she's touched.

Her dedication to advancing opportunities in athletics has earned her the NCAA's highest honor: the Theodore Roosevelt Award. The award will be presented at the 2025 NCAA Convention.

She has been recognized for her unparalleled contributions as an athlete, coach, educator and advocate. Known for her groundbreaking work with the Black Women in Sport Foundation and her barrier-breaking role as the first African American athlete to make the U.S. national field hockey team and the first to make the national women's lacrosse team, she has had an impact on sports and society that is immeasurable.

Despite being one of only a handful of Black students at her high school, she thrived. Her talent brought her to West Chester, where she became a four-year letter winner in field hockey, lacrosse and badminton.

At Temple, she became one of the most successful women's lacrosse coaches of all time, leading the program to an Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women title and two NCAA national championships.

Her most profound legacy lies in her advocacy work. In 1992, she co-founded the Black Women in Sport Foundation to address the lack of representation of Black women in sports. The foundation has provided opportunities for thousands of young athletes through grassroots programs in Philadelphia and beyond.

Now, at age 80, Sloan Green remains dedicated to her mission. "I'm still here, and I want to keep helping people," she said. "Sport has given me so much, and I want others to experience its power to bring people together."





## **SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE WINS 2025 NCAA/MOAA AWARD**

The Southern Connecticut State athletics department has been awarded the 2025 NCAA and Minority Opportunities Athletic Association Award for Diversity and Inclusion, recognizing their outstanding commitment to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment.

The Award for Diversity and Inclusion celebrates one school or conference office per division for initiatives, policies and practices that embrace diversity and inclusion across the intercollegiate athletics community. This year's recipients will be honored at the 2025 NCAA Convention.

Southern Connecticut State's department of athletics and recreation has demonstrated a proactive approach in implementing innovative initiatives that promote diverse hiring practices and enhance opportunities for student-athletes from various backgrounds. Through comprehensive programming and community engagement efforts, the department has created an inclusive environment that empowers individuals to thrive.

Southern Connecticut State employs various evaluations and assessments, including comprehensive equity audits, regular anonymous climate surveys and focus groups. Performance metrics track key indicators such as retention rates and participation in diversity training programs. Annual reviews assess diversity and inclusion goals, and exit interviews provide feedback from departing student-athletes and staff to identify areas for growth.

The school offers a wide range of programming and training aimed at increasing cultural and practical competencies, including implicit bias training and diversity and inclusion training. The athletics department implemented Safe Zone training to help staff and student leaders support LGBTQ+ individuals.

The athletics department engages with diverse alumni in mentorship programs and panels, conducting research on DEI in athletics and collaborating with campus partners through the Owl Wellness Program to address the challenges faced by diverse student-athletes.

## **Strategic Alliance Matching Grants**

This is a program through which the NCAA funds recipients at 75 percent of the proposed salary and benefits for the first year, 50 percent for the second year and 25 percent for the third year to help create full-time senior-level administrative positions or enhance current positions. The NCAA also provides recipients with \$12,500 of professional development and technology funding during the first three years. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2024:

- Central State (Ohio), director of student-athlete success.
- Fairmont State, assistant director of athletics for external affairs and resource development.
- Fort Lewis, assistant director of athletics of marketing, promotions and community relations.
- Fort Valley State, executive director of athletic association.
- Lenoir-Rhyne, assistant director of athletics for academic success.
- Roberts Wesleyan, assistant director of athletics for compliance and student development.
- Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference, director or assistant commissioner of championships and marketing.
- Wayne State (Michigan), special assistant to director of athletics.

## **Ethnic Minorities and Women's Internship Grants**

These are one-year grants that provide funding for full-time, entry-level administrative positions. The NCAA provides \$22,500 to support the salary of the hired intern and \$3,000 in professional development funding. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2024-25:

- Albany State (Georgia), coordinator of football operations.
- Central Washington, digital media and in-game presentation assistant.
- Kentucky Wesleyan, athletics operations and compliance coordinator.
- Northeastern State, facilities, events and operations coordinator.
- Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, marketing and communications intern.
- Union (Tennessee), assistant director of athletics, event operation and fan engagement.

## **Coaching Enhancement Grants**

These grants help member schools create full-time assistant coaching positions in any of the 25 Division II sports. The NCAA provides \$25,000 in funding in the first year, \$15,000 in the second year and \$8,000 in the third year. The school is required to supplement the funding, as well as commit to funding the position in full for the fourth and fifth years. Additionally, the NCAA provides \$1,200 during each of the first three years of the grant toward professional development opportunities for the hired coach. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2024:

- Albany State (Georgia), assistant softball coach/academic coordinator.
- Bloomsburg, assistant cross country/track and field coach.
- Central State (Ohio), director of strength and conditioning.
- D'Youville, assistant volleyball coach.
- Fort Lewis, assistant sports performance and nutrition coach.
- Fort Valley State, assistant men's and women's cross country/track and field coach.

# Presidents' Award Honors 44 Schools

The Presidents' Award for Academic Excellence has been awarded to 44 Division II schools that have achieved an Academic Success Rate of 90% or higher.

Hillsdale was the top performer, earning an ASR of 99%, followed by Bentley with an ASR of 98%. Saint Michael's and Thomas Jefferson University had an ASR of 97%, and Rollins rounded out the top five with an ASR of 96%.

The Northeast-10 Conference led the division with seven athletics programs achieving scores of 90% or more, followed by the Sunshine State Conference with six programs and Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference with five programs.

"It takes a village to support student-athletes and create the balanced environment for them to thrive academically and athletically," said Jason Jones, associate athletics director for compliance at Catawba and chair of the Division II Academic Requirements Committee. "This prestigious honor recognizes 44 schools that have achieved academic excellence, and I'm thrilled to congratulate them."

The Division II ASR includes transfers into a school in the calculation and removes those who transferred out of the school while academically eligible. The ASR also includes over 30,000 nonscholarship student-athletes in the division who were enrolled in the four years covered in the most recent data.

Even when using the less-inclusive federal graduation rate, student-athletes are outperforming their peers in the general student population by 6 percentage points. For Division II student-athletes, the federal rate is 59%, while the general student body federal rate is 53%.

This is the 14th year the award has been given. Seven schools have earned the award every year: Assumption, Bentley, Eckerd, Hillsdale, Rockhurst, Rollins and Saint Michael's.

## CENTRAL ATLANTIC COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Caldwell                    | 91% |
| Chestnut Hill               | 91% |
| Goldey-Beacom               | 92% |
| Holy Family                 | 92% |
| Thomas Jefferson University | 97% |

## CONFERENCE CAROLINAS

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Emmanuel (Georgia) | 91% |
|--------------------|-----|

## EAST COAST CONFERENCE

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| D'Youville | 92% |
| Mercy      | 92% |
| Molloy     | 90% |

## GREAT LAKES INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONF.

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| Michigan Tech | 92% |
|---------------|-----|

## GREAT LAKES VALLEY CONFERENCE

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Illinois Springfield | 91% |
| Lewis                | 90% |
| Maryville (Missouri) | 90% |
| Rockhurst            | 92% |

## GREAT MIDWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Cedarville | 93% |
| Hillsdale  | 99% |

## GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Western Washington | 90% |
|--------------------|-----|

## GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Trevecca Nazarene | 93% |
|-------------------|-----|

## LONE STAR CONFERENCE

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Oklahoma Christian | 92% |
| Texas-Dallas       | 92% |

## NORTHEAST-10 CONFERENCE

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Adelphi                | 91% |
| Assumption             | 92% |
| Bentley                | 98% |
| Pace                   | 91% |
| Saint Anselm           | 91% |
| Saint Michael's        | 97% |
| Southern New Hampshire | 92% |

## NORTHERN SUN INTERCOLLEGIATE CONFERENCE

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Augustana (South Dakota) | 94% |
| Concordia-St. Paul       | 93% |
| Minnesota-Crookston      | 90% |

## PACIFIC WEST CONFERENCE

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Biola                  | 95% |
| Dominican (California) | 95% |
| Point Loma             | 92% |
| Westmont               | 92% |

## PEACH BELT CONFERENCE

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Flagler                            | 91% |
| Georgia College & State University | 92% |

## PENNSYLVANIA STATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Seton Hill | 92% |
|------------|-----|

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Colorado School of Mines | 90% |
|--------------------------|-----|

## SUNSHINE STATE CONFERENCE

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Barry            | 90% |
| Eckerd           | 91% |
| Florida Southern | 92% |
| Florida Tech     | 92% |
| Lynn             | 90% |
| Rollins          | 96% |



## POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The NCAA awards \$7,500 postgraduate scholarships annually to student-athletes who excel academically and athletically and who are at least in their final year of intercollegiate athletics competition. Each sports season, there are 29 scholarships available for men and 29 scholarships available for women for use in an accredited graduate program. The following includes Division II awardees for winter and spring sports in 2024, and for fall sports in 2023, since awardees for fall sports in 2023 had yet to be announced by press time.

### MEN'S FALL SPORTS 2023

**Colten Brand**, Augustana (South Dakota), cross country

**Trevor Grant**, Wingate, football

**Maxton Hyson**, Fort Lewis, football

**Bastian Mrochen**, Wingate, cross country

### MEN'S WINTER SPORTS 2024

**Jack Watson**, Emporia State, indoor track and field

### MEN'S SPRING SPORTS 2024

**Clark Morgan**, Illinois Springfield, baseball

**Brandon Wirth**, Ferris State, outdoor track and field

**Clayton Zimmerman**, Belmont Abbey, volleyball

### WOMEN'S FALL SPORTS 2023

**Avery Congleton**, Mount Olive, field hockey

**Kyra Palmbush**, Azusa Pacific, volleyball

### WOMEN'S WINTER SPORTS 2024

**Hannah Frey**, Azusa Pacific, swimming and diving

### WOMEN'S SPRING SPORTS 2024

**Dani Mabry**, Rockhurst, lacrosse

**Gia Martin**, Auburn Montgomery, softball

## DEGREE COMPLETION AWARD RECIPIENTS

The NCAA Division II Degree Completion Award Committee selected the following recipients for the 2024-25 academic year:

**Teaghen Amwoza**, Winona State

**Natalie Andreas**, Montana State Billings

**Londyn Bakeris**, Mississippi College

**Phoebe Barnes**, Hawaii Hilo

**Chandler Barnett**, North Greenville

**Taya Beller**, Wayne State (Nebraska)

**Kaleigh Bernard**, Lee

**Alexis Biery**, Ursuline

**Asaya Bulgin**, Elizabeth City State

**Callie Burns**, Regis (Colorado)

**Lydia Carroll**, Florida Tech

**Abby Daniels**, Texas Woman's University

**Londyn Dorsey**, Mississippi College

**Morgan Draheim**, St. Cloud State

**Albert Espinosa**, Barry

**Camille Evans**, Missouri Western State

**Julia Fraile-Raton**, Lake Superior State

**Ashley Frye**, Sonoma State

**Haley Gilbert**, Augusta University

**Destiny Griffin**, Winston-Salem State

**Callen Hein**, Biola

**Tricia Hemann**, Wayne State (Nebraska)

**Alexis Henrikson**, Truman State

**Thom Hermans**, Lincoln Memorial

**Jovanna Herrera**, Ursuline

**Halie Jamir**, Biola

**William Jonsson**, Lincoln Memorial

**Dominic Kaiser**, Edinboro

**Sarah Kingland**, Minnesota State Moorhead

**Shannon Lake**, Kutztown

**Kayleigh Lenner**, Bloomsburg

**Derek Lilledahl**, Minnesota State Mankato

**Emily Marple**, Fairmont State

**Addison Mathis**, Truman State

**Arianna Millan**, Wilmington (Delaware)

**Jaonna Miller**, Fairmont State

**Jolie Miracle**, Florida Tech

**Emma Montoya**, Fort Hays State

**Jillian Noel**, Southwest Minnesota State

**Kaylee Olson**, Winona State

**Noah Pappas**, Winona State

**Jake Paxton**, San Francisco State

**Anais Peralta**, Missouri Western

**David Polanco**, Barry

**Elizabeth Quaethem**, McKendree

**Abigail Rieff**, Minnesota State Mankato

**Mateo Rivera**, Lincoln Memorial

**Jonah Roth**, San Francisco State

**Isaac Ruder**, Saginaw Valley State

**Kaia Saylor**, Texas Woman's University

**Savannah Sebek**, Auburn Montgomery

**Didac Silva Alcoba**, St. Cloud State

**Hayley Sims**, Edinboro

**Makayla Snow**, Minnesota State Mankato

**Christian Souza**, Hawaii Hilo

**Kyra Sparks**, New Haven

**Jeremiah Tarver**, Elizabeth City State

**Jane Taylor**, Northern Michigan

**Nicholas Toms**, Barry

**Felix Tonne**, Florida Southern

**Tery Towah**, Johnson C. Smith

**Tom Vorkastner**, Hawaii Hilo

**Natalee Weber**, Missouri Western

**Lexi Williams**, Texas Woman's University

**Brinkley Yevak**, Auburn Montgomery



# ***Division II at the 2024 Summer Games***

Division II prides itself on offering student-athletes ample opportunities to achieve all their goals – from finding success in their chosen academic curricula to making an impact on their campus and in their community to acquiring the life skills and health and wellness attributes necessary for success in life after college to attaining their highest athletics aspirations – including being an Olympic or Paralympic athlete.

At the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, Division II was well represented, as 72 student-athletes affiliated with Division II schools participated in the sports they love for countries around the world.

In all, more than 1,300 NCAA student-athletes competed in Paris – an astonishing number, to be sure. When Division II offers student-athletes the chance to make their college experience their own, this includes being an Olympic or Paralympic athlete. The student-athletes in the following stories made it happen!





# Olympian Cedric Buessing Embraces Life in the Balance

**C**edric Buessing will never forget his first college swim meet. “It was kind of incredible,” said Buessing, a swimming student-athlete at UIndy and a 2024 Olympian for Germany. “It was so loud. There was so much cheering.”

Originally from Grevenbroich, Germany, Buessing was unsure of what to expect when he came to the United States and began his college career during the 2021-22 season. The team-oriented approach he found upon arrival was very different than what he had experienced as a swimmer in his native country.

“It’s a lot more of a team sport in the U.S. than it is in Germany,” he said. “In Germany, we don’t really spend time together after practice. Here, we live together, we eat together, go to school together. ... It’s like a family.”

For Buessing, this is true in more ways than one. His younger brother, Silas, is also a member of the men’s swimming and diving team at UIndy.

While this familial connection has been valuable, he benefitted as one of 28 international student-athletes representing 19 countries on the 2023-24 men’s swimming and diving roster. Buessing said that deepened a sense of community and allowed him to make connections with other competitors and members of the swimming community around the world.

“It’s just a bond,” he said. “It’s a cool thing to help establish the culture and familiarity.”

Although Buessing and his teammates come from a variety of backgrounds, they all share a passion for the sport that brought them to Indianapolis. However, Buessing’s reason for choosing UIndy extends far beyond his love of swimming.

The “Life in the Balance” philosophy of Division II is important to Buessing, who values being engaged with and focused on multiple things at once. With academic aspirations and passions outside of swimming, he chose UIndy hoping that it would challenge him both in and out of the

pool. Now reflecting on his experience, he thinks the environment has done just that.

“I felt like this was the perfect mixture,” he said of his decision to attend a Division II school. “I don’t like to just concentrate on sport, I like to have something else going on.”

Buessing has found that his teammates share a similar sentiment. While they spend countless hours training and pushing one another in the pool, they also have fun outside the pool, often cooking together or recreationally playing other sports such as Ultimate Frisbee or volleyball.

Qualifying to represent Germany at the 2024 Paris Games in the 400-meter individual medley, Buessing credits his professors, coaches and teammates with allowing him to continue to succeed in the classroom while working to make his Olympic dream a reality.

After all the support received and hard work put in, Buessing says the moment he qualified still felt surreal.

“It was just like slow motion,” he said. “It was incredible. I almost started sobbing. ... I just couldn’t believe it.”

Valuing the teamwork and community he has found



Cedric Buessing, a two-time Division II champion, qualified for the 400 IM Olympic final in Paris, finishing in eighth place at 4:17.16. (Photo by Maddie Meyer/Getty Images)

This balance has served Buessing well. He has put together a dominant athletic career during his first three years on the team, highlighted by two Division II individual titles, six national runner-up finishes, 16 All-America honors, 13 Great Lakes Valley Conference titles and three GLVC Swimmer of the Year honors.

Buessing has also excelled in the classroom, boasting a 3.85 cumulative GPA while majoring in business administration and management. He earned 2023 College Sports Communicators Academic All-American second-team honors and is a two-time College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America Scholar All-American.

at the collegiate level, Buessing has returned to UIndy to earn his degree and compete for one final season. He is eager to close out what has been a highly successful career and memorable part of his journey, all while keeping the team at the center of his focus.

“It’s just so much fun to compete with my friends who became like brothers to me during this last three years,” he said.

“I want to have fun, make an impact, have a great season again,” he added of his goals. “Maybe win the team (conference) championship again ... swim some fast times and have an unforgettable year.”



Nicky Nieves and Steve Serio, flag bearers of Team USA, hold their national flag as they parade during the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games at Place de la Concorde. (Photo by Elsa/Getty Images)

# Bearing Her Leadership Role

## Nicky Nieves' Impact Goes Far Beyond Volleyball Court

**V**olleyball should be for all. It is a mantra Nicky Nieves has lived the majority of her life.

Nieves has been playing volleyball since the 6th grade and now spends her time paying back the sport she loves by providing opportunities for others to enjoy it.

Nieves was afforded an opportunity that she will remember for the rest of her life, representing Team USA as an Opening Ceremony flag bearer for the Paralympic Games in Paris.

The honor stemmed from a vote by fellow Team USA athletes, including nominating teammate Katie Holloway Bridge.

"We nominated Nicky because she's spent countless hours on boards, in training and working to improve Paralympic sport for the next generation of athletes," Holloway Bridge said in a United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee press release. "Nicky's energy is electric on the court, but her impact reaches so far beyond that. Her work as an advocate has advanced not only the sport of sitting volleyball but the entire Paralympic Movement."

A former Division II standout at Queens (New York), Nieves competed in her second Paralympic Games, winning gold with Team USA's sitting volleyball squad in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and in Paris in 2024.

As noted by her teammates, Nieves has been one of the sport's strongest advocates in the mental health and disability space.

In 2018, she founded a nonprofit called Limitless People, which provides sitting and standing volleyball opportunities to all, without limits to age, gender, race or physical ability.

"We've tried to go out and spread (our love for the sport)," Nieves said. "It's literally doing volleyball camps and clinics, both sitting and standing, because maybe you need more touches, maybe you need to learn how to play volleyball, or maybe you need to be seen by somebody. It's just giving



more opportunity back and paying it forward, really.”

Nieves also spends summers teaching volleyball at NubAbility Athletics, a camp for kids 5 to 18 with limb differences.

According to her Team USA bio, Nieves was born without a left hand and has never found out exactly why, but doctors have said her umbilical cord might have wrapped around her hand.

While competing in standing volleyball at Queens, Nieves says she met some of her best friends, but she was often uncomfortable with both her identity and times when media outlets were simply looking to speak to the “one-handed volleyball player.”

“I didn’t like showing my hands,” she recalls. “It wasn’t something that I was just outward about.”

Nieves even went as far as declining some interviews, citing how overwhelming and exhausting it was to be asked the same questions over again. But by saying yes to some, Nieves now has perspective that her participation helped fuel her professional career of representing the underrepresented.

“If (reporters) came, I didn’t want to talk to them. I just want to be seen as an athlete and not the one-handed girl that happens to play volleyball,” she said. “But now, I’m super thankful for it because it pushed me out there and started that, ‘Hey, if you want to be the

representation, if you’re thinking that you want to be this person that people can look forward to, this is what’s going to start it.”

It was also during her time at Queens that Nieves learned about sitting volleyball after her athletic director was contacted by USA Volleyball. As it turned out, entering parasport proved to be an

with a sports psychologist, noting that even during her highest of highs, she was experiencing lows.

“Initially, it was really scary telling her stuff,” Nieves said. “But when I was in Rio, we won the gold medal and I was so happy, but just mentally and body image wise, I was not in a good place. Once I got with (my therapist) and worked with

her for a few years, I thought, ‘Wow, people care about your journey and about you getting better. So since then, I was like, ‘I really like this, and I like helping people, so why not just go into therapy, too?’”

Nieves later earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology at Florida International University. She is committed to pursuing a master’s degree in clinical mental health at Southern New Hampshire and serving others and the sport that has given her everything.

“I know that I was super fortunate to have parents that were able to provide for me financially to play club, and they

paid a pretty penny for it. And right now, there’s some families that can’t even afford to do that,” she said. “But I know that I’m where I’m at because of the resources that I have. So in my brain, I’m like, ‘What would somebody else become if they have like 1-2% of the resources I had?’”

But for Nieves, sometimes it’s as simple as someone showing interest in learning more about the sport she loves dearly for yet another opportunity to arise.

“If I can provide it, I will.”



***“I just want to be seen as an athlete and not the one-handed girl that happens to play volleyball.”***

**-Nicky Nieves**

opportunity for Nieves to continue her growth on and off the court.

“I finally found a group of people that were like me, that had some of the same struggles as me, that could relate in terms of lifestyle, and things like dating as a one-handed girl or being stared at,” she said. “I was like, ‘Oh my God, I can find my people when I’m having bad days ... and they were just so unashamed, unabashed of prosthetics and their arms.”

Nieves also found comfort in working

# More Than a Medal

## Olympic Gold Secures Sarah Hildebrandt's Legacy as Women's Wrestling Trailblazer

As the final seconds ticked away on her gold-medal victory, Sarah Hildebrandt started a victory lap that was years in the making.

Her 3-0 victory over Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez in the 50-kilogram weight class secured, the former King University wrestler began circling the Champ-de-Mars Arena mat with an amazed expression, then shouted into the crowd. "I think I said, 'I just won the Olympics,'" she later recalled, laughing about her uncertainty over the emotional moment. "I don't know, gibberish comes."

Hildebrandt pulled an American flag behind her neck like a cape and embraced her coach, Izzy Izboinikov, in a body-lock worthy hug, wrapping the flag around them. But the biggest hugs were saved for the "Hilde Squad," as Sarah described them – the kinetically charged, American-flag waving crowd of friends and family in the northeast stands.

"It's everybody who's been with me from the very beginning, believing in this all along," said Hildebrandt, who struggled to articulate how this long-awaited moment felt. "It's like I've dreamed of this moment for so long, and then I feel like my mind and body are just like not computing everything."

Hildebrandt's journey has captivated people in and out of the wrestling world not just for what she's accomplished, but because of what was needed to accomplish it.

Women's wrestling was a fresh Olympics sport when she was first introduced to it in middle school, debuting at the 2004 Athens Games. Hildebrandt developed her skills by wrestling with the Penn High School boys wrestling team in Mishawaka, Indiana, because there were no girls programs and Sarah knew of only two other girls wrestlers in her home state.

But in college, she found her community.

King, a Division II school in Bristol, Tennessee, with more than 1,000 students, had started a women's wrestling program just a year before Hildebrandt arrived in 2011. Yet despite being so new, there were already 28 other young women just like herself. They traveled to Appalachia from every corner of the U.S. – Florida, New York, California, Texas and Kansas – for the chance to wrestle.

In that group of trailblazers, Hildebrandt found a path to greatness.

During Hildebrandt's junior year, the Tornado wrestlers won their first Women's Collegiate Wrestling

Association national championship and first National Wrestling Coaches Association National Duals championship while Hildebrandt went 16-0 and yielded just a single point to an opponent all season. She capped her King career with a 18-0 record as a senior, helping the school repeat as WCWA champion and NWCA National Duals champion.

That was the launching pad that took Hildebrandt to two bronze and two silver-medal finishes in the World Wrestling Championships and a bronze medal at the Tokyo Games.



Sarah Hildebrandt of Team USA (red) competes with Otgonjargal Dolgorjav of Team Mongolia (blue) during the Women's Freestyle 50kg Semifinal on day 11 of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Champs-de-Mars Arena. (Photo by David Ramos/Getty Images)

"It was so cool wrestling at King," Hildebrandt said. "It was just a room filled with rock stars, a group of people who aren't just there to wrestle for college. They had Olympic aspirations. And obviously that was mine, as well, and that helped kind of create that environment for me and really reach for the stars there."

The only thing missing from Hildebrandt's legacy was a gold medal – an achievement that was within reach in Tokyo before a heartbreaking finish in the semifinal. She needed just 45 minutes of real time to defeat Turkey's Evin Demirhan and Bulgaria's Miglena Selishka by technical superiority – wrestling's equivalent of a mercy rule – and was up 7-0 in the semifinal over China's Yanan Sun. But Sun stormed back and claimed the match in the final five seconds, sending Hildebrandt to the bronze-medal match.

But that moment wouldn't be repeated.

As Hildebrandt waited in a Champ-de-Mars Arena tunnel to be introduced, she bounced on her feet and gave a broad, relaxed smile of joy while Guzman Lopez – competing in the final because the original finalist, Vinesh Phogat of India, had been disqualified that morning for failing to make weight – stood mostly still, looking forward, mouth flat.





# Trevor Bassitt Hurdles His Way From Division II to the Olympics

**T**revor Bassitt's route to the Olympics was unlike that of many of his U.S. teammates.

He didn't compete for a big Division I school, and he didn't jump straight from high school to elite competition. The 400-meter hurdler competed at Ashland, a Division II university in Ohio with around 5,000 undergraduate students.

Simply put, Bassitt dominated during his time as an Eagle, winning 10 NCAA national championships in individual and relay events on the track, 21 All-America honors, and four U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Division II Track Athlete of the Year awards.

In the summer of 2019, Bassitt competed in the U.S. outdoor championships, thinking he would be outmatched in competition. To his surprise, he made it to the 400 hurdles semifinals and placed 13th.

"That's when I really started to think, like, 'OK, if we put in the work and really commit to this, we could end up at this level,'" he said.

After graduating in 2022, he began his professional career, taking bronze in the 2022 world championships in the 400 hurdles. He also won gold with the U.S. 4x400-meter relay teams at the 2022 and 2023 world championships.

In July 2024, he punched his ticket to the Olympics in the 400 hurdles, placing third at the U.S. trials.

"You don't have to go to an SEC or Big Ten school to get to this level. If you just go to a situation that works for you and you just put in the work and everything, there's a chance you end up at this level," the Bluffton, Ohio, native said.

Bassitt spoke to the high level of training he received at Ashland that prepared him for the Olympic stage.

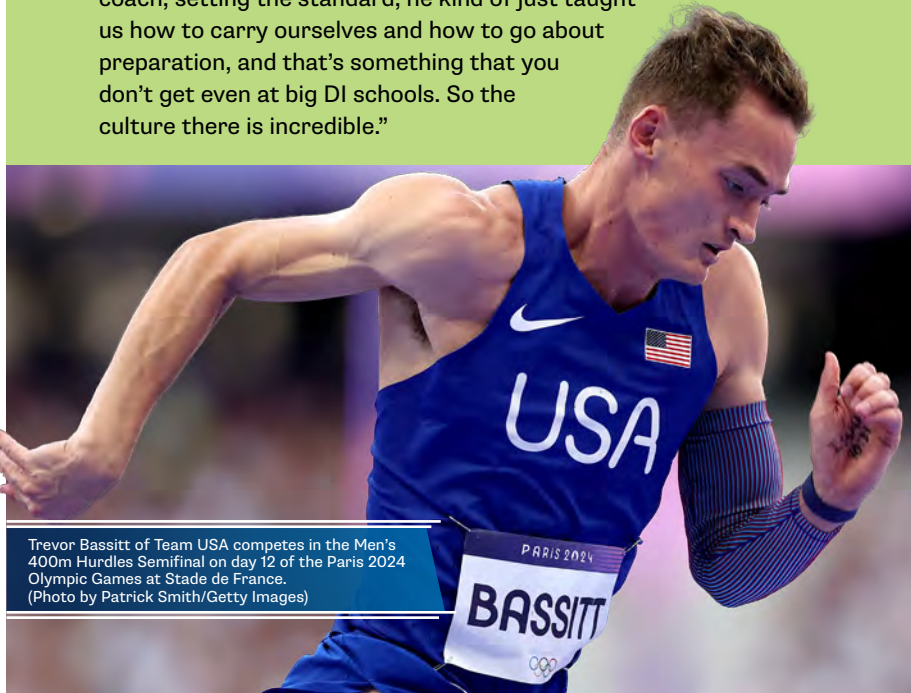
"I mean, having a four-time Olympian in Jud Logan there as the head coach, setting the standard, he kind of just taught us how to carry ourselves and how to go about preparation, and that's something that you don't get even at big DI schools. So the culture there is incredible."

As their match began, Hildebrandt managed her moves patiently. She avoided aggressive maneuvers that could open opportunities for the defensive-minded Guzman Lopez, and patiently waited to take her shots. A takedown in the first period gave her an early 2-0 advantage. A penalty on Guzman Lopez for inactivity added another point in the second period.

As the final couple seconds ticked off, Hildebrandt turned from Guzman Lopez and took relaxed, confident steps toward the edge of the ring, her gold-medal moment finally secure. After circling the mat, taking in the moment, she raised her arms to the sky and looked up, releasing a victorious roar.

And as Hildebrandt cried out in victory, celebrations from her supporters erupted, from the stands of Champ-de-Mars all the way to Bristol, Tennessee, where the King coaches toasted the most successful of their original pioneers.

"It's just hard to put into words how happy and excited I am for Sarah and her family," said Hildebrandt's coach at King, Jason Moorman, who still heads the program. "She's reached the pinnacle of her sport, and it's something that everyone dreams of when they get started, and she's done it. I'm just ecstatic for her."



Trevor Bassitt of Team USA competes in the Men's 400m Hurdles Semifinal on day 12 of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Stade de France.  
(Photo by Patrick Smith/Getty Images)

# From DII Soccer Star To Two-Time U.S. Paralympian and Advocate

## Courtney Ryan's Journey to Adaptive Sports



Wheelchair basketball player Courtney Ryan poses for a portrait during the 2024 Team USA Media Summit in New York City. (Photo by Mike Coppola/Getty Images)

**C**ourtney Ryan's athletic journey is a rare and remarkable one.

She has competed at the highest levels in two very different settings and sports – first as a Division II All-American soccer player at Metropolitan State University of Denver and later in front of March Madness crowds as a standout for Team USA's wheelchair basketball squad. In Paris, Ryan competed in her second Paralympics as Team USA built off winning a bronze medal at the Tokyo Paralympics with a silver medal.

Ryan's path from the soccer field to the Paralympic court underscores a resilience and passion that extends far beyond personal achievement, fueling her drive to expand resources for adaptive sports and advocate for the disabled community.

Her life took an unexpected turn during her junior year at MSU Denver. As a star defender for the Roadrunners, an injury during a game in 2010 altered her course

forever. A burst blood clot caused nerves to detach from her spinal cord, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down. But what might have ended her athletic career instead became the start of a new one. Drawn to wheelchair basketball, Ryan quickly found her way in a sport that would become her new passion and platform.

"I remember going into the gym for the first time and seeing wheelchair basketball, and instantly I was hooked. I loved the aggressiveness. I loved the passion coming from the players," Ryan said. "I knew instantly. 'This is me. Sign me up.'"

Ryan's first wheelchair basketball tournament is stamped with a memory athletes dream of: making a game-winning shot.

"There's three seconds left. We were down by 1 point, and one of my teammates threw the ball up, missed the shot," she recalled. "It landed in my lap. I put it up, had the game-winning bucket my first game ever."

Soon after, Ryan got an offer to attend the University of Arizona, which offers the largest collegiate-based adaptive athletics program in the country, to compete on its wheelchair basketball team. This, in many ways, brought her athletics career full circle in terms of the opportunities it presented.

"I was back at that collegiate student-athlete mindset and that identity again," Ryan, now an assistant coach for Arizona's wheelchair basketball team, said. "From there, it's just opened so many doors. Now I get the privilege of not only getting a degree at the University of Arizona, but also giving back to the younger generation of athletes that inevitably will be up on this stage one day, as well."

Ryan still holds strong affection and appreciation for her time at MSU Denver, which laid the foundation in many ways for her second athletics career.

"Despite how it ended, it gave me the work ethic that I needed to be able to continue to compete at an elite level," Ryan said. "It provided me an incredible idea of how important family is when it comes to team sports. And it's given me the confidence that I have today to excel at an elite level. Without those experiences, without the coaching that I had and without that family bond that I created, I don't think that would have converted into where I'm at."

"So, despite the ending of that story, I'm incredibly grateful for that opportunity, and I'm still a Roadrunner."

Her accomplishments in soccer and later in wheelchair basketball led to her induction into the MSU Denver Athletics Hall of Fame in 2022, an honor she never expected.

"To have my name on that wall for life now is an emotional thing," she said.

Ryan's quick and successful transition to wheelchair basketball not only propelled her to the highest levels of the sport, but it also ignited a passion for advocacy



and the need for greater resources and recognition for adaptive athletes.

One of the most significant disparities Ryan observed between non-disabled and adaptive athletics is the financial support available to athletes. At MSU Denver, she received a scholarship as a soccer player, but in the world of adaptive sports, such opportunities are scarce.

“Unfortunately, with adaptive athletics, we cannot provide (as many) full scholarships because we just don’t have the funding to be able to do so,” Ryan said.

Ryan’s experiences have driven her to advocate for change. She co-founded the Team PossAbilities Shield Maidens, a women’s wheelchair basketball team in Los Angeles that she helps write grants for to provide more women in the area the opportunity to compete in the sport. She now also works with the Direct Advocacy and Resource Center in Tucson, Arizona, where she helps advocate for and provide resources toward home modifications for people with disabilities to allow them to age longer in their houses.

“To make just those little impacts in these people’s lives is an incredible thing, and it provides me so much gratitude,” Ryan said. “The gratitude that they give to us is something that money can’t buy.”

Despite the challenges, Ryan remains hopeful about the future of adaptive athletics. She acknowledges the progress made in recent years, particularly the increased visibility and recognition of wheelchair basketball. This personally included opportunities to compete twice during the halftime of NCAA women’s basketball championship games as part of Team USA. She played during halftime exhibitions at the 2023 joint NCAA women’s basketball championship in Dallas and during the 2024 Division I championship in Cleveland.

Both opportunities stemmed from the Para-College Inclusion Project, which was

launched in 2021 by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee and the NCAA office of inclusion to engage schools offering adaptive sport to collectively increase Paralympic sport

understanding, awareness and connection across the collegiate landscape.

“To see us develop and get more recognition and more partnerships with the NCAA is an incredible thing to experience and to witness,” Ryan said. “To experience that energy, to experience that full house is exactly what we need. We need more visibility. If we get more visibility, that’s going to provide more resources for these upcoming athletes.”

***“I remember going into the gym for the first time and seeing wheelchair basketball ... I knew instantly. ‘This is me. Sign me up.’”***

***– Courtney Ryan***

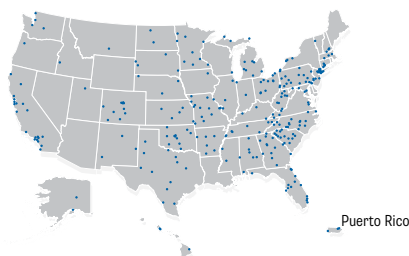


Courtney Ryan of Team USA rebounds over Robyn Love of Team Great Britain during the Wheelchair Basketball Women’s Quarterfinal on day seven of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games at Bercy Arena. (Photo by Steph Chambers/Getty Images)

# 2024-25 Division II Facts and Figures

## Life in the Balance

Division II supports the educational mission of college athletics by fostering a balanced and inclusive approach in which student-athletes learn and develop through their desired academic pursuits, in civic engagement with their communities and in athletics competition. Division II gives student-athletes the unique opportunity to compete in the classroom, on the field, in their career, for their causes and on their terms.



## 11 Schools in the Membership Process

Three-year membership process

2 schools in year three

5 schools in year two

1 school in year one

Two-year expedited membership process

0 schools in year two

3 schools in year one

Source: 2024-25 NCAA membership status.

**23**  
conferences  
**293**  
active members

## Type of School

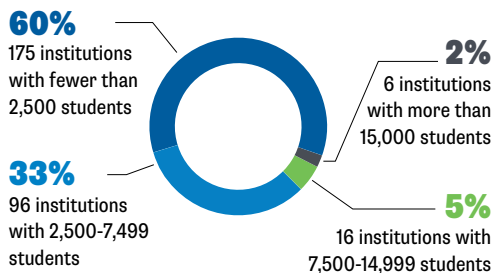
Percentage of active and provisional members

**50%** private

**50%** public

Source: 2024 NCAA sports sponsorship and demographic data for Division II active members.

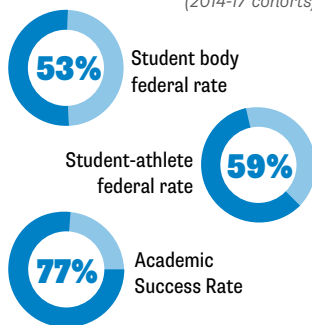
## Enrollment at Division II Active Members



Source: Based on 2022-23 IPEDS enrollment data on full-time undergraduate enrollment.

## Graduation Rates

(2014-17 cohorts)



Source: NCAA Graduation Rates Report released in 2024.

## Championships

Division II's access ratio to championships is the best of any division: **1:9.20**

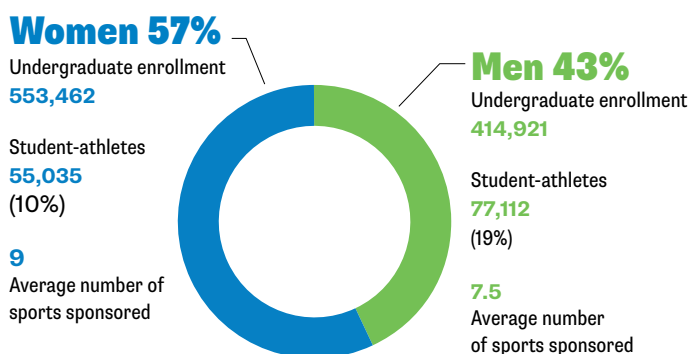
**12** Men's championships  
**7,456 participants total**

**13** Women's championships  
**7,170 participants total**

**14,626** participants total  
**134,511** student-athletes participating in DII championship sports

Source: 2023-24 Division II championships.

## Composition of Enrollment



Source: 2024 NCAA sports sponsorship and demographic data.

## Median Total Expenses

By quartile (in millions). Overall median expenses: \$7.7 million

| 1st quartile of schools |                    | 3rd quartile of schools |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| (with football)         | (without football) | (with football)         | (without football) |
| <b>\$13.3</b>           | <b>\$10.1</b>      | <b>\$7.4</b>            | <b>\$6.0</b>       |
| 2nd quartile of schools |                    | 4th quartile of schools |                    |
| (with football)         | (without football) | (with football)         | (without football) |
| <b>\$9.5</b>            | <b>\$8.3</b>       | <b>\$5.0</b>            | <b>\$4.0</b>       |

Source: 2022-23 NCAA Membership Financial Reporting System data.

## Average Number of Student-Athletes

| Schools with football           | Schools without football        |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>533</b> 331 men<br>202 women | <b>355</b> 183 men<br>172 women |

Source: 2024 NCAA sports sponsorship and participation data.

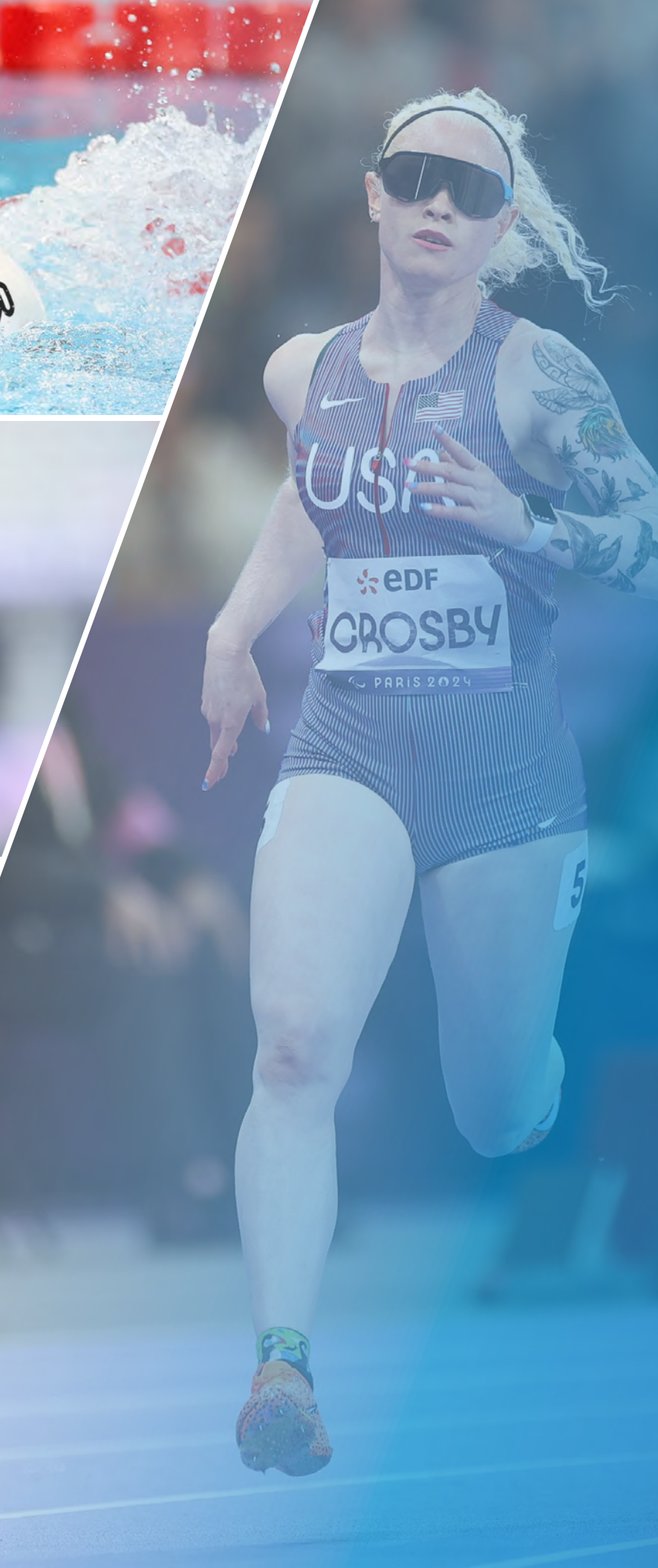
## Conferences



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