

FINANCES OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS: 10-Year (2011-2020) Division II Summary November 2021

This summary provides an overview of 10-year trends (2011 to 2020)¹ in Division II finances, including median revenues, expenses and net calculations.² In summary, median athletics expenses and generated revenues tended to increase at Division II schools between 2011 and 2019. However, expenses consistently outpaced generated revenue for all Division II colleges, requiring schools to subsidize athletics programs with student fees and institutional contributions. Analysis of 2020 data suggests there are initial departures from previous trends, with declines in total revenue and expenses primarily for schools that sponsor football and drops in generated revenue across the board. Median deficit increases continued for schools with and without football.

Revenue Sources

- Total revenue, defined as generated (e.g., ticket sales) plus allocated (e.g., student fees), steadily increased at a rate of about 5% in Division II between 2011 and 2019. In 2020, Division II football schools typically declined in median total revenue while schools without football tended to experience increases (Table 1).

Table 1. Changes in median total revenue by football sponsorship³

	2011-2019 FY Typical Yearly Change	2020 FY Change
Institutions With Football	5.2%	(1.1%)
Institutions Without Football	5.6%	3.9%

- Median generated revenue (e.g., ticket sales, advertising, alumni contributions) tended to increase until 2020, where there was a large drop observed, even though pandemic adjustments likely occurred after the sports of football and men's and women's basketball finished their seasons (Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in median generated revenue by football sponsorship

	2011-2019 FY Typical Yearly Change	2020 FY Change
Institutions With Football	4.8%	(13.7%)
Institutions Without Football	5.1%	(22.8%)

Athletics Expenses

- Total athletics expenses steadily increased in Division II between 2011 and 2019. In 2020, athletics expenses were typically similar to their 2019 values (Table 3).

Table 3. Changes in median total athletics expense by football sponsorship

	2011-2019 FY Typical Yearly Change	2020 FY Change
Institutions With Football	4.7%	(1.8%)
Institutions Without Football	5.8%	1.8%

¹ The 2019-2020 fiscal year is referred to as the 2020 FY in this report. The 2018-2019 fiscal year is labeled 2019 FY, and so on.

² See the [NCAA Financial Database Glossary](#) for general methods and definitions used in NCAA financial reports.

³ Typical yearly change is the average of change across 2011-2019 FY. Numbers in (red) represent a percentage decrease.

- Salaries and benefits, student scholarships, and facility expenses accounted for approximately 80% of costs for Division II athletics programs, and each saw dollar increases from 2011 to 2019. In 2020, these expenses rose in comparison to 2019, with compensation seeing the highest percentage increases (Table 4).

Table 4. Major expense categories by subdivision (medians rounded)

	Institutions With Football			Institutions Without Football		
	2019	2020	Change	2019	2020	Change
Direct Facilities	\$121,000	\$123,000	0.9%	\$77,000	\$81,000	4.4%
Student Aid	\$2,242,000	\$2,278,000	1.6%	\$2,033,000	\$2,167,000	6.6%
Coach Compensation	\$1,556,000	\$1,637,000	5.3%	\$988,000	\$1,057,000	6.9%
Administrative Compensation	\$816,000	\$839,000	2.7%	\$672,000	\$724,000	7.7%

Net Generated Revenue

- All Division II athletics programs operated in a deficit between 2011 and 2020, meaning schools required student fees and institutional support to close the gap between generated revenue and total athletic expenses. In 2020, net generated revenue continued to decline at schools with and without football (Table 5).

Table 5. Changes in median net generated revenue by football sponsorship

	2011-2019 FY Typical Yearly Change	2020 FY Change
Institutions With Football	(4.9%)	(1.8%)
Institutions Without Football	(6.2%)	(1.4%)

The full-scale financial implications of pandemic response are still unknown as schools and athletics programs continue to address concerns related to COVID-19. And although initial disruption occurred late in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, a review of Division II financial data provides initial insights into the impact of the pandemic on intercollegiate athletics economic trends: Total revenues and expenses declined primarily for football schools, and generated revenue and net generated revenue dropped across the board. Greater deviations in financial trends than those identified in 2020 are likely to be observed in 2021 as colleges enrolled fewer students and modified athletics operations — both likely to influence institutional and athletics finances.