

THE TRUTH ABOUT SPORTS SCHOLARSHIPS

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Many parents dream of their children landing college athletic scholarships by specializing in a sport year-round outside of their schools. While not every child will earn an athletic scholarship, there are many benefits to high school athletics that students can realize.

In education-based high school sports, student-athletes are taught, as the term implies, that grades come first. The real-life lessons that students experientially learn offer insights into leadership, overcoming adversity and mutual respect.

Playing multiple high school sports also may help students get noticed by college coaches: many Division I football and basketball coaches have recently stated that they are committed to recruiting students who have played multiple sports within the high school setting. For example, of the 106 players who were on the active roster for Super Bowl LII, 102 [96%] played more than one sport during their high school careers. With 37 [35%] of them playing 3 or more sports in high school.

The act of balancing quality schoolwork and a sports schedule is difficult, but manageable, and can help students become well-rounded, versatile members of our community as they grow older. While many of our students enjoy sports and, actually, excel in them, in reality, the odds of a sports scholarship paying for even a portion of a student's college education are miniscule.

The College Board, a not-for-profit organization comprised of 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions, reports that the moderate cost for college students who attend a public university in their state of residence is \$25,290 per year. The annual cost at a private college averages \$50,900.

Meanwhile, the most recent data from the NCAA reveals that the average Division I athletic scholarship is worth only \$10,400. More significantly, the same study shows that fewer than two percent of all high school athletes (1 in 54) ever wear the uniform of an NCAA Division I school.

Even if the dream is realized, parents likely will spend more money for club sports than they ever regain through college athletic scholarships.

By focusing on academics while playing sports within the school setting, students can earn scholarships for academics and other talents—skillsets oftentimes nurtured while participating in high school activities. These scholarships are more accessible and worth more money than athletic scholarships. While \$3 billion per year is available for athletic scholarships, more than \$11 billion is awarded for academic scholarships and other financial assistance.

Without a doubt, your sons and daughters will have fun, make friends and be prepared for life beyond sports by participating in multiple sports and activities offered by the high school in your community.