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NCAA Division I

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Division I (D-I) is the highest level of intercollegiate athletics sanctioned by the **National Collegiate Athletic Association** (NCAA) in the **United States** . D-I schools include the major collegiate athletic powers, with larger budgets, more elaborate facilities, and more **athletic scholarships** than Divisions II and III as well as many smaller schools committed to the highest level of intercollegiate competition.

This level was once called the University Division of the NCAA, in contrast to the lower level College Division; this terminology was replaced with numeric divisions in 1973. The University Division was renamed Division I, while the College Division was split in two; the College Division members that offered scholarships or wanted to compete against those who did became **Division II**, while those who did not want to offer scholarships became **Division III**.^[1]

For **football** only, Division I was further subdivided in 1978 into **Division I-A** (the principal football schools) and **Division I-AA**; those schools not sponsoring football remained as simply **Division I**.^{[2][3]} In 2006, Division I-A and I-AA were renamed "**Football Bowl Subdivision**" (FBS) and "**Football Championship Subdivision**" (FCS), respectively. FBS teams are allowed a maximum of 85 players receiving athletically-based aid per year, with each player allowed to receive up to a full scholarship; FCS teams have the same 85-player limit as FBS teams, but are only allowed to give aid equivalent to 63 full scholarships. FCS teams are allowed to award partial scholarships, a practice technically allowed but essentially never used at the FBS level. FBS teams also have to meet minimum attendance requirements (average 15,000 people in actual or paid attendance per home game), while FCS teams do not need to meet minimum attendance requirements.

Another difference is post season play. Since 1978, FCS teams have played in a college football playoff system to determine a NCAA-sanctioned national champion; the FBS teams play in bowl games where various polls rank the number one team after the conclusion of the bowl games. Starting with the 2014 postseason, a four-team playoff called the **College Football Playoff** , replaced the previous one game championship format. Even so, Division I FBS football is still the only NCAA sport in which a yearly champion is not determined by an NCAA-sanctioned championship event.

For the 2014-15 school year, Division I contained 345 of the NCAA's 1,066 member institutions, with 125 in FBS, 125 in FCS, and 95 non-football schools with six additional schools in transition from Division II to Division I.^{[4][5]} There was a moratorium on any additional movement up to D-I until 2012, after which any school that wants to move to D-I must be accepted for membership by a conference and show the NCAA it has the financial ability to support a D-I program.

All D-I schools must field teams in at least seven sports for men and seven for women or six for men and eight for women, with at least two team sports for each gender.^[6] Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed. Several other NCAA sanctioned minimums and differences that distinguish Division I from Divisions II and III.^[6] Each playing season has to be represented by each gender as well. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball, Division I schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents—anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50 percent Division I. Men's and women's basketball teams have to play all but two games against Division I teams; for men, they must play one-third of all their contests in the home **arena** .^[7]

In addition to the schools that compete fully as D-I institutions, the NCAA allows D-II and D-III schools to classify one men's and one women's sport (other than football or basketball) as a D-I sport, as long as they sponsored those sports before the latest rules change in 2011.^[8] Also, Division II schools are eligible to compete for Division I national championships in sports that do not have a Division II national championship, and in those sports may also operate under D-I rules and scholarship



Main logo used by the NCAA in Divisions I, II, and III.

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limits.^[9]

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Scholarship limits by sport [edit]

The NCAA has limits on the total financial aid each Division I member may award in each sport that the school sponsors. It divides sports that are sponsored into two types for purposes of scholarship limitations:

- "Head-count" sports, in which the NCAA limits the total number of individuals that can receive athletic scholarships, but allows each player to receive up to a full scholarship.
- "Equivalency" sports, in which the NCAA limits the total financial aid that a school can offer in a given sport to the equivalent of a set number of full scholarships. Roster limitations may or may not apply, depending on the sport.

The term "counter" is also key to this concept. The NCAA defines a "counter" as "an individual who is receiving institutional financial aid that is countable against the aid limitations in a sport."^[10]

The number of scholarships that Division I members may award in each sport is listed below. In this table, scholarship numbers for head-count sports are indicated *without a decimal point*; for equivalency sports, they are listed with a decimal point, with a trailing zero if required.

Sport	Men's	Women's
Baseball	11.7 ^[11] ^[nb 1]	–
Basketball	13 ^[15]	15 ^[16]
Beach volleyball	–	6.0 ^[nb 2]
Bowling	–	5.0 ^[19]
Cross-country /track & field	12.6 ^[20] ^[nb 3]	18.0 ^[19] ^[nb 4]
Equestrian	–	15.0 ^[19]
Fencing	4.5 ^[20]	5.0 ^[19]
Field hockey	–	12.0 ^[19]
Football	85 (FBS) ^[22] ^[nb 5] 63.0 (FCS) ^[23] ^[nb 6]	–
Golf	4.5 ^[20]	6.0 ^[19]

Gymnastics	6.3 ^[20]	12 ^[24]
Ice hockey	18.0 ^[25] ^[nb 7]	18.0 ^[nb 8]
Lacrosse	12.6 ^[20]	12.0 ^[19]
Rifle	3.6 ^[20] ^[nb 9]	–
Rowing	–	20.0 ^[19]
Rugby	–	12.0 ^[19]
Skiing	6.3 ^[20]	7.0 ^[19]
Soccer	9.9 ^[20]	14.0 ^[19]
Softball	–	12.0 ^[19]
Swimming and diving	9.9 ^[20]	14.0 ^[19]
Tennis	4.5 ^[20]	8 ^[24]
Triathlon	–	5.5 ^[nb 10]
Volleyball	4.5 ^[20]	12 ^[24]
Water polo	4.5 ^[20]	8.0 ^[19]
Wrestling	9.9 ^[20]	–

- [^] This total is also subject to the following restrictions:
 - The number of total counters is limited to 27. ^[11]
 - Each counter must receive athletic aid equal to at least 25% of a full scholarship.^[12] The 25% rule does not apply to baseball schools that offer only need-based aid (such as *Ivy League* members). ^[13] A second exception to the 25% rule, added in 2012, is for players in their final year of athletic eligibility who have not previously received athletically related aid in baseball at any college.^[14]
- [^] This total is for schools that also sponsor women's indoor volleyball.^[17] If a school does not sponsor women's indoor volleyball, it is allowed 8.0 equivalents for beach volleyball.^[18] For all schools, the maximum number of counters in beach volleyball is 14.^[17]^[18]
- [^] If a school sponsors men's cross-country but does not sponsor either indoor or outdoor track and field for men, it is allowed 5.0 scholarship equivalents for that sport.^[21]
- [^] If a school sponsors women's cross-country but does not sponsor either indoor or outdoor track and field for women, it is allowed 6.0 scholarship equivalents for that sport.^[21]
- [^] FBS programs are also limited to 25 new counters per school year.^[22]
- [^] FCS programs are also limited to 85 total counters and 30 new counters per school year.^[23]
- [^] The number of total counters is limited to 30. ^[25]
- [^] The NCAA Division I Manual does not include any scholarship limitations for women's ice hockey. These limitations are instead found in the Division II Manual.^[26] Note also that the Division II Manual does not include any limit on total counters for any sport, including women's ice hockey.
- [^] The NCAA classifies rifle as a men's sport, despite the fact that competitions are fully coeducational. Of the 33 NCAA *rifle schools* (23 in Division I, 4 in Division II, and 6 in Division III), 22 field a single coed/mixed team. Six schools (five in Division I and one in Division III) field women-only teams. Schools are also allowed to field any combination of men's, women's, and mixed teams. Currently, one D-I school and one D-III school field separate men's and women's teams; one D-I school and one D-II school field a women-only team plus a mixed team; and one D-I school (*VMI*) fields all three types of teams. The scholarship limits are per school, not per team.
- [^] The NCAA adopted triathlon as its newest "emerging sport" for women effective with the 2014–15 school year, with an initial limit of 3.5 scholarship equivalents. The total number of equivalents will reach its final value of 6.5 in 2017–18.^[19]

Rules for multi-sport athletes [edit]

The NCAA also has rules specifying the sport in which multi-sport athletes are to be counted, with the basic rules being:^[27]

- Anyone who participates in football is counted in that sport, even if he does not receive financial aid from the football program. An exception exists for players at non-scholarship FCS programs who receive aid in another sport.^[28]
- Participants in basketball are counted in that sport, unless they also play football.
- Participants in men's ice hockey are counted in that sport, unless they also play football or basketball.
- Participants in both men's swimming and diving and men's water polo are counted in swimming and diving, unless they

count in football or basketball.

- Participants in women's (indoor) volleyball are counted in that sport unless they also play basketball.
- All other multi-sport athletes are counted in whichever sport the school chooses.

Finances [edit]

Division I athletic programs generated \$8.7 billion in revenue in the 2009–2010 academic year. Men's teams provided 55%, women's teams 15%, and 30% was not categorized by sex or sport. Football and men's basketball are usually a university's only profitable sports,^[29] and are called "revenue sports".^[30] The **BYU Cougars** , for example, in 2009 had revenue of \$41 million and expenses of \$35 million, resulting in a profit of \$5.5 million or about 16% margin. Football (60% of revenue, 53% profit margin) and men's basketball (15% of revenue, 8% profit margin) were profitable; women's basketball (less than 3% of revenue) and all other sports were unprofitable.^[31] From 2008 to 2012, 205 varsity teams were dropped in NCAA Division I – 72 for women and 133 for men, with men's tennis, gymnastics and wrestling hit particularly hard.^[32]

In the Football Bowl Subdivision (125 schools in 2013), between 50 and 60 percent of football and men's basketball programs generated positive revenues (above program expenses).^[33] However, in the Football Championship Subdivision (124 schools in 2013), only four percent of football and five percent of men's basketball programs generated positive revenues.^[34]

In 2012, 2% of athletic budgets were spent on equipment, uniforms and supplies for male athletes at NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision school, with the median spending per-school at \$742,000.^[35]

In 2014, the NCAA and the student athletes debated whether student athletes should be paid. Student athletes felt their hard work, hours spent on their sport, and the money their sport brings in justify their payment.^[citation needed] In April, the NCAA approved students-athletes getting free unlimited meals and snacks. The NCAA stated "The adoption of the meals legislation finished a conversation that began in the Awards, Benefits, Expenses and Financial Aid Cabinet. Members have worked to find appropriate ways to ensure student-athletes get the nutrition they need without jeopardizing Pell Grants or other federal aid received by the neediest student-athletes. With their vote, members of the council said they believe loosening NCAA rules on what and when food can be provided from athletics departments is the best way to address the issue."^[36]

Overview [edit]

Men's team sports [edit]

Number	Sport	Teams ^[37]	Conferences	Scholarships per team	Season
1	Football	252 (128 FBS, 124 FCS)	23 (10 FBS, 13 FCS)	85 (FBS) 63.0 (FCS)	Fall
2	Basketball	351	32	13	Winter
3	Baseball	298	31	11.7	Spring
4	Soccer	204	23	9.9	Fall
5	Wrestling	75	7	9.9	Winter
6	Ice Hockey	60	6	18.0	Winter
7	Lacrosse	68	10	12.6	Spring
8	Volleyball	22	4	4.5	Spring
9	Water Polo	22	4	4.5	Fall

Sports are ranked according to total possible scholarships (number of teams x number of scholarships per team). Scholarship numbers for head-count sports are indicated without a decimal point. Numbers for equivalency sports are indicated with a decimal point, with a trailing zero if needed.

Notes:

- Football — D-I football programs are divided into FBS and FCS. The 128 FBS programs can award financial aid to as

many as 85 players, with each player able to receive up to a full scholarship. The 124 FCS programs can award up to the equivalent of 63 full scholarships, divided among no more than 85 individuals. Some FCS conferences restrict scholarships to a lower level or prohibit scholarships altogether.

- Soccer — The Big 12 and the SEC are the only two major traditional D-I conferences that do not sponsor soccer. Several other D-I conferences also do not sponsor the sport—the Big Sky, MEAC, Mountain West, Ohio Valley, Southland, and SWAC.
- Ice Hockey — Almost all D-I ice hockey programs are in the [Northeast](#) , the [Upper Midwest](#) , or the [Colorado Front Range](#). Only one D-I all-sports conference, the [Big Ten](#) , sponsors a men's hockey league. All other conferences operate as hockey-specific leagues. Of the 59 D-I hockey schools, 22 are otherwise classified as either D-II or D-III; D-II has an insufficient number of schools to sponsor a separate divisional championship, and the D-III schools were "grandfathered" in to D-I through their having sponsored hockey prior to the creation of D-III.
- Lacrosse — The vast majority of D-I lacrosse programs are from the Northeast and [Mid-Atlantic](#). There are only two D-I programs west of the Mississippi, both on the Colorado Front Range ([Air Force](#) and [Denver](#)).
- Volleyball — None of the traditional D-I conferences sponsor men's volleyball, although the [Big West](#) has announced it will begin sponsoring the sport in the 2017–18 school year. Two of the current three major volleyball conferences are volleyball-specific conferences. In addition to the D-I schools, 26 D-II schools compete in D-I volleyball; 11 of these are members of [Conference Carolinas](#) , the only all-sports league outside Division III to sponsor the sport.
- Water Polo — The number of D-I schools sponsoring men's water polo has declined from 35 in 1987/88 to 22 in 2010/11.^[38] No school outside of California has ever made the finals of the championship, and all champions since 1998 have come from one of the four California based Pac-12 schools.

Women's team sports [edit]

Number	Sport	Teams ^[39]	Conferences	Scholarships per team	Season
1	Basketball	349	32	15	Winter
2	Soccer	327	32	14.0	Fall
3	Volleyball	332	32	12*	Fall
4	Softball	291	32	12.0	Spring
5	Rowing	88	12	20.0	Spring
6	Lacrosse	103	13	12.0	Spring
7	Field Hockey	79	11	12.0	Fall
8	Ice Hockey	36	4	18.0	Winter
9	Beach Volleyball	47	5	6.0*	Spring
10	Water Polo	34	6	8.0	Spring
11	Rugby †	12	--	12.0	

Notes:

- As in the men's table above, sports are ranked in order of total possible scholarships. Numbers for head-count sports are indicated without a decimal point; those for equivalency sports are indicated with a decimal point, with a trailing zero if needed.
- Women's soccer is the fastest growing NCAA D-I women's team sport over a prolonged period, increasing from 22 teams in 1981/82 to 315 teams in 2010/11.^[40] However, in recent years, the fastest-growing has been beach volleyball, which went from 14 teams in 2011–12 to 47 in 2015–16.
- † = In the 2015–16 school year, rugby is classified by the NCAA as an "emerging sport" for women. Beach volleyball, which had previously been an "emerging sport" under the name of "sand volleyball",^[41] became an official NCAA championship sport in 2015–16.^[42]
- * = The number of scholarships are partially linked for (indoor) volleyball and beach volleyball. Schools that field both indoor and beach volleyball teams are allowed 6.0 full scholarship equivalents specifically for beach volleyball as of 2015–16, with the further limitations that (1) no player receiving aid for beach volleyball can be on the indoor volleyball

roster and (2) a maximum of 14 individuals can receive aid in beach volleyball. If a school fields only a beach volleyball team, it is allowed 8.0 full scholarship equivalents for that sport, also distributed among no more than 14 individuals.

Football subdivisions [edit]

Subdivisions in Division I exist only in [football](#).^{[43][44]} In all other sports, all Division I conferences are equivalent. The subdivisions were recently given names to reflect the differing levels of football play in them.

The method by which the NCAA determines whether a school is Bowl or Championship subdivision is first by attendance numbers and then by scholarships.^[45] For attendance reporting methods, the NCAA allows schools to report either total tickets sold or the number of persons in attendance at the games. They require a minimum average of 15,000 people in attendance every other year.^[45] These numbers get posted to the NCAA statistics website for football each year. With the new rules starting in the 2006 season, the number of Bowl Subdivision schools could drop in the future if those schools are not able to pull in enough fans into the games. Additionally, 14 FCS schools had enough attendance to be moved up in 2012.^[46] Under current NCAA rules, these schools must have an invitation from an FBS conference in order to move to FBS. Three of them —[Appalachian State](#) , [Georgia Southern](#) , and [Old Dominion](#) —began FBS transitions in 2013. All had the required FBS conference invitations, with Old Dominion joining Conference USA in 2013, and Appalachian State and Georgia Southern set to join the Sun Belt Conference in 2014. The difference in the postseasons in each of the subdivisions grant the FCS an advantage to have the best record in college football history, 17-0, while the FBS only allows a 15-0 record.

Football Bowl Subdivision [edit]

Main article: [NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision](#)

See also: [College football national championships in NCAA Division I FBS](#) and [List of NCAA Division I FBS football bowl records](#)

Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), formerly known as **Division I-A**, is the top level of [college football](#) . Schools in Division I FBS compete in post-season [bowl games](#) , with the champions of five conferences, along with the highest-ranked champion of the other five conferences, receiving [automatic bids](#) to the [access bowls](#).

FBS schools are limited to a total of 85 football players receiving financial assistance.^[47] For competitive reasons, a student receiving partial scholarship counts fully against the total of 85. Nearly all FBS schools that are not on NCAA probation give 85 full scholarships.

As of 2014, there are 128 full members of Division I FBS. Four schools are in a transition period and will not be bowl eligible until the 2015 season:

- [Old Dominion University](#) , a former full member of the CAA (which sponsors FCS football) announced its departure for C-USA, effective in 2013. ODU began its FBS transition in 2013; this means that the [2012 Monarchs](#) were full CAA members and eligible for the FCS playoffs.^[48]
- Two members of the [Southern Conference](#) , [Appalachian State University](#) and [Georgia Southern University](#) , were officially announced on March 27, 2013 as future members of the [Sun Belt Conference](#). Both schools began FBS transitions in 2013 in advance of their 2014 entry into the Sun Belt. They will be counted as FBS members for scheduling purposes in 2014, and will be eligible for the Sun Belt football championship.^{[49][50]} Georgia Southern began preparations for its FBS move in September 2012, when it announced that its students had approved increases in student fees to fund FBS-related expenses (such as additional scholarships, coaching positions, and facilities) and an expansion of [its football stadium](#) .^[51] With GSU's invitation to the Sun Belt secured, both fees will go into effect in 2013–14.
- The [University of North Carolina at Charlotte](#) (Charlotte) began its FBS transition in 2013, the same year it started its football program and rejoined C-USA. It played as an FCS independent in 2013 and will be an FBS independent without bowl eligibility in 2014 before joining the C-USA football league in 2015.^[52]

Any conference with at least 12 football teams may split its teams into two divisions and conduct a championship game between the division winners.^{[53][54]} The prize is normally a specific bowl game bid for which the conference has a tie-in.

Some conferences have numbers in their names but this often has no relation to the number of member institutions in the conference. The Big Ten Conference did not formally adopt the "Big Ten" name until 1987, but unofficially used that name when it had 10 members from 1917 to 1946, and again from 1949 forward. However, it has continued to use the name even after it expanded to 11 members with the addition of Penn State in 1990, 12 with the addition of Nebraska in [2011](#) , and 14 with the arrival of Maryland and Rutgers in [2014](#) . The Big 12 Conference was established in 1996 with 12 members, but

continues to use that name even after a [number of departures and a few replacements](#) left the conference with 10 members. On the other hand, the Pac-12 Conference has used names (official or unofficial) that have reflected the number of members since its current charter was established in 1959. The conference unofficially used "Big Five" (1959–62), "Big Six" (1962–64), and "Pacific-8" (1964–68) before officially adopting the "Pacific-8" name. The name duly changed to "Pacific-10" in 1978 with the addition of Arizona and Arizona State, and "Pac-12" (instead of "Pacific-12") in 2011 when [Colorado and Utah joined](#) . Conferences also tend to ignore their regional names when adding new schools. For example, the Pac-8/10/12 retained its "Pacific" moniker even though its four newest members (Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado, Utah) are located in the inland West, and the [original Big East](#) kept its name even after adding schools (either in all sports or for football only) located in areas traditionally considered to be in the Midwest (Cincinnati, DePaul, Marquette, Notre Dame), Upper South (Louisville, Memphis) and Southwest (Houston, SMU). The non-football conference that [assumed the Big East name](#) when the original Big East [split in 2013](#) is another example of this phenomenon, as half of its 10 inaugural schools (Butler, Creighton, DePaul, Marquette, Xavier) are traditionally regarded as being Midwestern.

Conferences [[edit](#)]

Conference	Nickname	Founded	Members	Sports	Headquarters
American Athletic Conference	The American	1979 [[] FBS 1 []]	11 [[] FBS 2 []]	21	Providence, Rhode Island
Atlantic Coast Conference **	ACC	1953	15 [[] FBS 3 []]	26	Greensboro, North Carolina
Big Ten Conference **	Big Ten, B1G	1896	14 [[] FBS 4 []]	28	Rosemont, Illinois
Big 12 Conference **	Big 12	1996	10 [[] FBS 5 []]	21	Irving, Texas
Conference USA	C-USA	1995 [[] FBS 6 []]	14 [[] FBS 7 []] [[] FBS 8 []]	19	Irving, Texas
Division I FBS Independents [[] FBS 9 []]			4		
Mid-American Conference	MAC	1946	12 [[] FBS 10 []]	23	Cleveland, Ohio
Mountain West Conference	MW	1999	11 [[] FBS 11 []] [[] FBS 12 []]	19	Colorado Springs, Colorado
Pac-12 Conference **	Pac-12	1915 [[] FBS 13 []]	12 [[] FBS 14 []]	23 [[] FBS 15 []]	Walnut Creek, California
Southeastern Conference **	SEC	1932	14	20	Birmingham, Alabama
Sun Belt Conference	Sun Belt	1976	12 [[] FBS 16 []] [[] FBS 17 []]	18	New Orleans, Louisiana

(**"Big Five" or "Power Five" conferences with guaranteed berths in the "access bowls" associated with the [College Football Playoff](#))

See also: *List of NCAA Division I FBS football programs*

Notes

- ↑ The conference was founded in 1979 as the [original Big East Conference](#). It renamed itself the American Athletic Conference following a [2013 split](#) along football lines. The non-FBS schools of the original conference left to form a new conference that purchased [the Big East name](#) , while the FBS schools continued to operate under the old Big East's charter and structure. The American also inherited the old Big East's [Bowl Championship Series](#) berth for the 2013 season, the last for the BCS.
- ↑ In addition to the full members, three schools have single-sport associate membership:
 - [Navy](#) is a football-only member.
 - [Sacramento State](#) and [San Diego State](#) are members in women's rowing.
- ↑ [Notre Dame](#) is a full member except in football, in which it remains independent. It has committed to play five games each season against ACC opponents, and to play each other ACC member at least once every three years.
- ↑ In addition to the full members, [Johns Hopkins](#) , otherwise a [Division III](#) member, is an affiliate member in both [men's](#) and [women's](#) lacrosse, sports in which the school fields Division I teams.
 - Notre Dame will become a men's hockey affiliate in July 2017.

5. [^] In addition to the full members, the Big 12 has 10 members that participate in only one sport:
 - [Denver](#) in women's gymnastics.
 - [Alabama](#) , [Old Dominion](#) , and [Tennessee](#) in women's rowing.
 - [Air Force](#) , [North Dakota State](#) , [Northern Colorado](#) , [South Dakota State](#), [Utah Valley](#) , and [Wyoming](#) in wrestling.
6. [^] The conference was founded in 1995, with football competition starting in 1996.
7. [^] In addition to the 14 full members, Conference USA features three schools that play [men's soccer](#) in the conference: [Kentucky](#) , [New Mexico](#) , and [South Carolina](#) .
8. [^] Currently, 13 of the 14 members field football teams in the conference. [UAB](#) dropped football after the 2014 season, but later reversed course, announcing that the sport would return for the 2017 season.
9. [^] Note that "Independents" is not a conference; it is simply a designation used for schools whose football programs do not play in any conference. All of these schools have conference memberships for other sports.
10. [^] In addition to the 12 full members, the Mid-American Conference features eight members which only participate in one sport each, and one other school that competes in two sports; another school will become a single-sport associate in the near future.
 - [Binghamton](#) competes in men's tennis.
 - [Evansville](#) and [Southern Illinois](#) compete in men's swimming and diving.
 - [Longwood](#) competes in [women's field hockey](#) , as will [Appalachian State](#) in 2017.
 - [Missouri](#) , [Northern Iowa](#) , and [Old Dominion](#) compete in [wrestling](#) .
 - [Missouri State](#) competes in field hockey and men's swimming and diving.
 - [West Virginia](#) competes in men's soccer.
11. [^] Since 2012, [Hawai'i](#) has been a football-only associate member, with most of its remaining teams in the non-football [Big West Conference](#).
12. [^] In addition to the 11 full members and football affiliate Hawai'i, [Colorado College](#) , a Division III school with a Division I [men's ice hockey team](#), plays Division I women's soccer in the MW.
13. [^] The charter of the Pac-12 dates only to the formation of the Athletic Association of Western Universities (AAWU) in 1959. However, the Pac-12 claims the history of the [Pacific Coast Conference](#), which was founded in 1915 and began competition in 1916, as its own. Of the nine members of the PCC at the time of its demise in June 1959, only [Idaho](#) never joined the Pac-12. The PCC's berth in the [Rose Bowl](#) passed to the AAWU.
14. [^] The Pac-12 also includes several associate members which compete in one or two sports in the conference. [San Diego State](#) plays men's soccer. Boise State, [Cal State Bakersfield](#) , and [Cal Poly](#) compete in [wrestling](#) . Cal Poly also participates in men's [swimming](#) and [diving](#), which the NCAA considers a single sport. [UC Santa Barbara](#) only competes in men's swimming and diving.
15. [^] 24 sports in 2017 with addition of women's lacrosse.
16. [^] Ten Sun Belt Conference members currently sponsor football, with [Little Rock](#) and [UT Arlington](#) as members that do not play football at all, and [Coastal Carolina](#) , which joined as an all-sports member in 2016, as a non-football member for the 2016–17 school year only. [Idaho](#) and [New Mexico State](#) are football-only members. Coastal Carolina will join Sun Belt football in 2017, the second year of its transition from FCS to FBS.
 - Idaho and New Mexico State will leave Sun Belt football after the 2017 season. Idaho has announced it will downgrade to FCS football and add football to its all-sports membership in the [Big Sky Conference](#) . New Mexico State's future football affiliation has not yet been determined.
17. [^] In addition to the full members and football-only affiliates, two other schools—[Hartwick](#) (a Division III school with Division I programs in men's soccer and women's water polo) and [Howard](#) —are affiliates in men's soccer.

Football Championship Subdivision [edit]

See also: [NCAA Division I Football Championship](#)

The **Division I Football Championship Subdivision** (**FCS**), formerly known as **Division I-AA**, determines its national champion on the field in a *24-team, single-elimination tournament* ^[55] With the expansion of the tournament field in 2013 from 20 teams to 24, the champions of 11 conferences receive automatic bids, with 13 "at-large" spots; and the top 8 teams receive first-round byes. A team must have at least seven wins to be eligible for an at-large spot.^{[56][57]}

The tournament traditionally begins on [Thanksgiving](#) weekend in late November, and during the era of the 16-team field ran for four weeks, ending with the championship game in mid-December. Since 2010, the tournament has run for four weeks (for seeds 9–24) to determine the two finalists, who play for the FCS national title in early January in [Frisco, Texas](#) , the scheduled host through the 2019 season. For thirteen seasons, the title game was played in [Chattanooga, Tennessee](#) , (1997–2009), preceded by five seasons in [Huntington, West Virginia](#) , where host [Marshall](#) advanced to the title game in four of the five years.^[58]

When I-AA was formed in 1978,^[2] the playoffs included just four teams for its first three seasons, doubling to eight teams for one season in 1981.^[59] From 1982 to 1985, I-AA had a 12-team tournament, with each of the top four seeds receiving a first-round bye and a home game in the quarterfinals.^[60] The I-AA playoffs went to 16 teams in 1986, and the FCS playoffs expanded to 20 teams starting in 2010. After 28 seasons, the "I-AA" was dropped by the NCAA in 2006, although it is still informally and commonly used.

Abstainers [[edit](#)]

The Football Championship Subdivision includes several conferences which do not participate in the eponymous post-season championship tournament.

The **Ivy League** was reclassified to I-AA (FCS) following the **1981 season**^[61] and plays a strict ten-game schedule. Although it qualifies for an automatic bid, the Ivy League has not played any postseason games at all since 1956, citing academic concerns.

The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** (SWAC) has its own **championship game** in mid-December between the champions of its East and West divisions. Also, three of its member schools traditionally do not finish their regular seasons until Thanksgiving weekend. **Grambling State** and **Southern** play each other in the **Bayou Classic**, and **Alabama State** plays **Tuskegee University** (a **Division II** team) in the Turkey Day Classic. SWAC teams are eligible to accept at-large bids if their schedule is not in conflict. The last SWAC team to participate in the I-AA playoffs was **Jackson State** in 1997; the SWAC never achieved success in the tournament, going winless in 19 games in twenty years (1978–97).

From 2006 through 2009, the **Pioneer Football League** and **Northeast Conference** champions played in the **Gridiron Classic**, though all conference teams technically remained tournament eligible. If a league champion was invited to the national championship, the second-place team would play in the Gridiron Classic. That game was scrapped after the 2009 season when its four-year contract ran out; this coincided with the NCAA's announcement that the Northeast Conference would get an automatic bid to the tournament starting in 2010. The **Big South Conference** also received an automatic bid in the same season. The Pioneer Football League earned an automatic bid beginning in 2013.

The **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) began abstaining from the playoffs with the 2015 season.

Schools in a transition period after joining the FCS from a lower division (or from the **NAIA**) are also ineligible for the playoffs.

Scholarships [[edit](#)]

Division I FCS schools are currently restricted to giving financial assistance amounting to 63 full scholarships. As FCS football is an "equivalency" sport (as opposed to the "head-count" status of FBS football), Championship Subdivision schools may divide their allotment into partial scholarships. However, FCS schools may only have 85 players receiving any sort of athletic financial aid for football—the same numeric limit as FBS schools. Because of competitive forces, however, a substantial number of players in Championship Subdivision programs are on full scholarships. Another difference is that FCS schools are allowed to award financial aid to as many as 30 new players per season, as opposed to 25 in FBS. Finally, FCS schools are limited to 95 individuals participating in preseason practices, as opposed to 105 at FBS schools (the three service academies that play FBS football are exempt from preseason practice player limits by NCAA rule).

A few Championship Subdivision conferences are composed of schools that offer no athletic scholarships at all, most notably the **Ivy League** and the **Pioneer Football League** (PFL), a football-only conference. The Ivy League allows no athletic scholarships at all, while the PFL consists of schools that offer scholarships in other sports but choose not to take on the expense of a scholarship football program. The **Northeast Conference** also sponsored non-scholarship football, but began offering a maximum of 30 full scholarship equivalents in 2006, which grew to 40 in 2011 after a later vote of the league's school presidents and athletic directors. The **Patriot League** only began awarding football scholarships in the 2013 season, with the first scholarships awarded only to incoming freshmen. Before the conference began its transition to scholarship football, athletes receiving scholarships in other sports were ineligible to play football for member schools. Since the completion of the transition with the 2016 season, member schools have been allowed up to 60 full scholarship equivalents.^[62]

Conferences [[edit](#)]

Conference	Nickname	Founded	Full Members	Sports	Headquarters	FCS Tournament

						Bid
Big Sky Conference	Big Sky	1963	12 ^[FCS 1] ^[FCS 2]	16	Ogden, Utah	Automatic
Big South Conference	Big South	1983	10 ^[FCS 3]	18	Charlotte, North Carolina	Automatic
Colonial Athletic Association	CAA	1983 ^[FCS 4]	10 ^[FCS 5] ^[FCS 6]	21	Richmond, Virginia	Automatic
Division I FCS Independents ^[FCS 7]			1 ^[FCS 8]			
Ivy League	Ivy League	1954 ^[FCS 9]	8	33	Princeton, New Jersey	Automatic – (Abstains)
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	MEAC	1970	13 ^[FCS 10] ^[FCS 11]	15	Norfolk, Virginia	Abstains
Missouri Valley Football Conference	MVFC	1985 ^[FCS 12]	10	1	St. Louis, Missouri	Automatic
Northeast Conference	NEC	1981	10 ^[FCS 13] ^[FCS 14]	22	Somerset, New Jersey	Automatic
Ohio Valley Conference	OVC	1948	12 ^[FCS 15]	17	Brentwood, Tennessee	Automatic
Patriot League	Patriot	1986 ^[FCS 16]	10 ^[FCS 17] ^[FCS 18]	23	Center Valley, Pennsylvania	Automatic
Pioneer Football League	PFL	1991	11	1	St. Louis, Missouri	Automatic
Southern Conference	SoCon	1921	10 ^[FCS 19]	21	Spartanburg, South Carolina	Automatic
Southland Conference	SLC	1963	13 ^[FCS 20]	17	Frisco, Texas	Automatic
Southwestern Athletic Conference	SWAC	1920	10 ^[FCS 21]	18	Birmingham, Alabama	Abstains

See also: *List of NCAA Division I FCS football programs*

Notes

- [^] All 12 full members play football in the Big Sky except [Idaho](#), which plays in the FBS Sun Belt Conference. [Cal Poly](#) and [UC Davis](#), both full members of the non-football [Big West Conference](#), are football-only affiliates.
 - Idaho will downgrade its football program from FBS to FCS in 2018 and rejoin Big Sky football that year.
- [^] In addition to the full members and football affiliates, [Binghamton](#) and [Hartford](#) are associate members in men's golf.
- [^] The Big South has four full members that compete for its football championship, plus two football-only associates in [Kennesaw State](#) and [Monmouth](#). Although [Campbell](#) became a full member of the Big South in July 2011, its football program remains in the [Pioneer Football League](#).
- [^] The CAA football conference was only founded in 2007, but has a continuous history dating to the late 1930s (although not under the same charter):
 - The [New England Conference](#) was formed by five New England state universities, plus one private university in that region ([Northeastern](#)), in 1938. Four of the public schools—[Maine](#), [UMass](#), [New Hampshire](#), and [Rhode Island](#)—were in the CAA football conference through the 2011 season. However, [UMass football](#) left for the MAC in 2012. [URI football](#) initially planned to leave for the Northeast Conference in 2013, but decided to remain in the CAA.
 - In 1946, the four then-remaining members of the New England Conference affiliated with two other schools to form the [Yankee Conference](#) under a separate charter, with athletic competition starting in 1947.
 - In 1997, the Yankee Conference was absorbed by the [Atlantic 10 Conference](#). The A10 inherited the Yankee Conference's automatic berth in the [Division I-AA \(now FCS\) playoffs](#). In addition to the four charter New England Conference members mentioned above, five other members of the Yankee Conference at the time of the A10 merger are still in the CAA football conference.

- After the 2006 season, all of the A10 football teams left for the new CAA football conference. The CAA inherited the A10's automatic berth in the FCS playoffs.
- 5. [^] The CAA has 10 full members, but only five of them are part of the CAA football conference. Currently, seven associate members fill out the ranks of the CAA football conference: [Albany](#) , [Maine](#) , [New Hampshire](#) , [Rhode Island](#) , [Richmond](#) , [Stony Brook](#) , and [Villanova](#) . Villanova is also a CAA associate in women's rowing.
- 6. [^] In addition to the football associates, the CAA has four other associate members that each participate in one sport:
 - [Buffalo](#) and [Eastern Michigan](#) compete in women's rowing.
 - [Fairfield](#) and [UMass](#) play men's lacrosse.
- 7. [^] Note that "Independents" is not a conference; it is simply a designation used for schools whose football programs do not play in any conference. All of these schools have conference memberships for other sports.
- 8. [^] [Coastal Carolina](#) will play as an FCS independent in the 2016 season, the first of its two-year transition to FBS. No independents in 2017 when Coastal joins [Sun Belt Conference](#) football.
- 9. [^] Although the conference considers 1954 to be its founding date, the athletic league's origins go back to the turn of the 20th century.
 - The Ivy League considers the [Eastern Intercollegiate Basketball League](#) (EIBL), a men's basketball-only conference founded in 1901, as part of its history. Every school that had been an EIBL member would become part of the Ivy League.
 - In 1945, the eight schools that would eventually form the athletic Ivy League entered into the Ivy Group Agreement, which governed football competition between the schools. The original agreement was renewed in 1952.
 - The official founding date of 1954 reflects the extension of the Ivy Group Agreement to all sports. As part of the agreement, [Brown](#) , the only one of the original Ivy Group that had not joined the EIBL, did so. All-sports competition began in 1955, with the EIBL directly absorbed into the new league.
- 10. [^] The football conference currently consists of 11 of the 13 member schools.
- 11. [^] In addition to the full members, [Augusta](#) , a Division II school that operates Division I programs in men's and women's golf, is an associate member in men's golf only.
- 12. [^] The football conference dates to 1985, but the conference charter was established in 1982. See [History of the Missouri Valley Football Conference](#) for more details.
- 13. [^] The conference has seven full members that sponsor football. [Duchesne](#) of the non-football [Atlantic 10](#) is a football associate.
- 14. [^] In addition to Duquesne in football, the NEC has seven other associate members that each participate in one sport:
 - [Adelphi](#) , [Caldwell](#) and [Kutztown](#) , all Division II institutions; [New Jersey City](#) , a Division III member; and [Saint Peter's](#) participate in women's [bowling](#) .
 - [Hobart](#) , otherwise a Division III member, and [Saint Joseph's](#) participate in men's lacrosse.
- 15. [^] The football conference consists of 9 of the 12 member schools. [Morehead State](#) plays non-scholarship football in the Pioneer Football League, while [Belmont](#) and [SIU Edwardsville](#) do not sponsor football.
- 16. [^] The Patriot League was founded as the football-only Colonial League in 1986. In 1990, it became an all-sports conference and adopted its current name.
- 17. [^] Five of the full members do not sponsor FCS football. [American](#) , [Boston University](#) and [Loyola \(Maryland\)](#) do not sponsor football at all; [Army](#) remains an [FBS independent](#) ; and [Navy](#) football is now in the [American Athletic Conference](#) . [Fordham](#) and [Georgetown](#) are associate members in football.
- 18. [^] In addition to the football associates, two other schools have single-sport membership:
 - [MIT](#) , otherwise a Division III institution, is an associate in women's rowing.
 - [Richmond](#) is a women's golf associate.
- 19. [^] In addition to the full members, the SoCon currently has nine associate members which play one sport in the conference:
 - [Air Force](#) , [Bellarmine](#) (a Division II institution that sponsors Division I men's lacrosse), [High Point](#) , [Jacksonville](#) , and [Richmond](#) are members in men's lacrosse. Jacksonville is a full member of the Atlantic Sun Conference, which has a formal relationship with the SoCon in lacrosse. The newest A-Sun member, [NJIT](#) , sponsors men's lacrosse, but did not immediately join in men's lacrosse; no official announcement has yet been made regarding when that team will join.
 - [Appalachian State](#) , [Campbell](#) , [Davidson](#) , [Gardner–Webb](#) , and [SIU Edwardsville](#) are members in [wrestling](#) .
 - [Georgia Southern](#) , [North Georgia](#) (a Division II institution), and [UAB](#) are members in rifle, which the SoCon added as a sponsored sport in 2016. Rifle has a [single national championship](#) for all divisions.
- 20. [^] The football conference currently consists of 11 of the 13 member schools.
- 21. [^] In addition to the full members, [Howard](#) is an associate member in women's soccer.

Division I non-football schools [edit]

Several Bowl Subdivision and Championship Subdivision conferences have member institutions that do not compete in

football. Such schools are sometimes unofficially referred to as I-AAA.

The following non-football conferences have full members that sponsor football:

- The **America East Conference** has four football-sponsoring schools, all of which play in the **Colonial Athletic Association** (CAA)—**Albany**, **Maine**, **New Hampshire**, and **Stony Brook**.
- The **Atlantic Sun Conference** has two members with football programs in the **Pioneer Football League** (PFL). **Jacksonville** has played in the PFL since 2001. **Stetson**, which had dropped football in 1956, reinstated varsity football in 2013. A third A-Sun member, **Kennesaw State**, launched an FCS program in 2015 which plays in the **Big South Conference**.
- The **Atlantic 10 Conference** has seven football-sponsoring members:
 - **Davidson** and **Dayton** play in the PFL.
 - **Duquesne** plays in the **Northeast Conference** (NEC).
 - **Fordham** plays in the **Patriot League**.
 - **Rhode Island** and **Richmond** play in the CAA.
 - **UMass** plays FBS football as an Independent.
- The current **Big East Conference** has three football-sponsoring schools, all of which play in FCS—**Butler** in the PFL, **Georgetown** in the Patriot League, and **Villanova** in the CAA.
- Three **Big West Conference** members have football programs. **UC Davis** and **Cal Poly** play FCS football in the **Big Sky Conference**, and **Hawai'i** plays FBS football in the **Mountain West Conference**.
- The **Horizon League** has two football schools. **Valparaiso** plays in the PFL, and **Youngstown State** plays in the **Missouri Valley Football Conference** (MVFC).
- The **Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference** (MAAC) has two football schools. **Marist** plays in the PFL, and **Monmouth** plays in the Big South.
- The **Missouri Valley Conference** has six football schools—**Drake**, **Illinois State**, **Indiana State**, **Missouri State**, **Northern Iowa** and **Southern Illinois**. Drake plays in the PFL, while the others compete in the MVFC (a separate legal entity from the MVC, despite the similar name).
- The **Summit League** has four football schools, all MVFC members—**North Dakota State**, **South Dakota**, **South Dakota State** and **Western Illinois**.
- The **West Coast Conference** has two football schools in **BYU** and **San Diego**, which respectively play football as an **FBS independent** and a **PFL member**.
- The **Western Athletic Conference** has one football school in **New Mexico State**, which plays FBS football in the **Sun Belt Conference**.

The following Division I conferences do not sponsor **football**. These conferences still compete in Division I for all sports that they sponsor.

Conferences [[edit](#)]

Conference	Nickname	Founded	Members	Sports	Headquarters
America East Conference	America East	1979	9 ^[NF 1]	18	Boston, Massachusetts
Atlantic Sun Conference	ASUN	1978	8 ^[NF 2]	19	Macon, Georgia
Atlantic 10 Conference	A-10	1975	14 ^[NF 3]	21	Newport News, Virginia
Big East Conference	Big East	2013 ^[NF 4]	10 ^[NF 5]	22	New York City, New York
Big West Conference	Big West	1969	9 ^[NF 6]	17 ^[NF 7]	Irvine, California
Horizon League	Horizon	1979	10 ^[NF 8]	19	Indianapolis, Indiana
Independents ^[NF 9]	Independents		0 ^[NF 10]		
Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference	MAAC	1980	11 ^[NF 11]	23	Edison, New Jersey
Missouri Valley Conference	MVC / Valley	1907	10 ^[NF 12]	19	St. Louis, Missouri
The Summit League	The Summit	1982	9 ^[NF 13]	19	Elmhurst, Illinois

West Coast Conference	WCC	1952	10 ^[NF 14]	15	San Bruno, California
Western Athletic Conference	WAC	1962	8 ^[NF 15]	19	Greenwood Village, Colorado

See also: *List of NCAA Division I non-football programs*

- [^] In addition to the full members, four California schools are associate members in field hockey—[California](#), [Pacific](#), [Stanford](#), and [UC Davis](#).
- [^] In addition to the full members, the ASUN has nine associate members:
 - [Central Michigan](#), [Delaware State](#), [Detroit](#), [Furman](#), [Howard](#), [Old Dominion](#), and [Wofford](#) participate only in women's lacrosse.
 - [Coastal Carolina](#) and [Mercer](#) compete in beach volleyball and women's lacrosse.
- [^] In addition to the full members, [Lock Haven](#), otherwise a Division II institution, and [Saint Francis \(Pennsylvania\)](#) are associate members in field hockey.
- [^] The current Big East was formed in 2013 as a result of [the split](#) of the [original Big East Conference](#). The original conference charter was retained by the football-sponsoring schools now known as the [American Athletic Conference](#). While both leagues claim 1979 as their founding date, the current Big East maintains the history of the original conference in all sports that it sponsors. The pre-split histories of Big East football and rowing—the two sports that are sponsored by The American but not the current Big East—are not recognized by either offshoot conference.
- [^] In addition to the full members, the following schools are Big East affiliates in one or more sports:
 - [Cincinnati](#), [Florida](#), and [Vanderbilt](#) participate in women's lacrosse.
 - [Connecticut](#) and [Temple](#) participate in both field hockey and women's lacrosse.
 - [Denver](#) participates in men's and women's lacrosse.
 - [Liberty](#), [Old Dominion](#), and [Quinnipiac](#) participate in field hockey.
- [^] In addition to the full members, the Big West has two associate members, with a third set to join in July 2017. [Cal State Bakersfield](#) and [Sacramento State](#) are members in beach volleyball, and Sacramento State is also a member in men's soccer. [UC San Diego](#), a Division II member, will join in men's volleyball, a sport in which D-I and D-II members compete under identical scholarship limitations for [a single national championship](#).
- [^] 18 sports in 2017 with addition of men's volleyball.
- [^] In addition to the full members, [Belmont](#) is a men's soccer affiliate.
- [^] Note that "Independents" is not a conference, it is simply a designation used to indicate schools which are not a member of any conference.
- [^] There will be no independents in the 2016–17 school year; the last previous independent, the [New Jersey Institute of Technology](#), joined the Atlantic Sun Conference in 2015.
- [^] In addition to the full members, 13 other schools are MAAC affiliates in one sport, and three others have multiple sports in the conference:
 - [Albany](#), [Dayton](#), and [Hartford](#) participate in women's golf.
 - Detroit participates in men's lacrosse.
 - [Drake](#), [Robert Morris](#), and [Stetson](#) participate in women's rowing.
 - [St. Francis Brooklyn](#), [Villanova](#), [VMI](#), and [Wagner](#) participate in women's water polo.
 - [Bryant](#) participates in field hockey and men's swimming and diving.
 - [Sacred Heart](#) participates in field hockey.
 - [Jacksonville](#) participates in women's rowing and the non-NCAA sport of men's rowing.
 - [La Salle](#) participates in women's golf and women's water polo.
- [^] In addition to the full members, six schools house one sport each in the conference:
 - [Central Arkansas](#) and [SIU Edwardsville](#) are associates in men's soccer.
 - [Dallas Baptist](#), otherwise a Division II institution, plays baseball.
 - [Stony Brook](#) and [UMBC](#) compete in men's tennis.
 - [Little Rock](#) is an associate in women's swimming and diving.
- [^] In addition to the full members, [Eastern Illinois](#) is an associate member in men's soccer, plus men's and women's swimming and diving.
- [^] In addition to the full members, [Creighton](#) is an associate member in women's rowing.
- [^] In addition to the full members, the WAC currently has 10 associate members that house one or two sports in the conference:
 - [Air Force](#) and [UNLV](#) participate in men's soccer and men's swimming and diving.

- [Houston Baptist](#), [Incarnate Word](#), and [San Jose State](#) participate only in men's soccer.
- [North Dakota](#) and [Wyoming](#) participate in men's swimming and diving.
- [Northern Colorado](#) participates in baseball and women's swimming and diving.
- [Northern Arizona](#) participates in women's swimming and diving.
- [Sacramento State](#) participates in baseball.

Of these, the three that most recently sponsored football were the Atlantic 10, MAAC, and WAC. The A-10 football league dissolved in 2006 with its members going to the Colonial Athletic Association. In addition, four A-10 schools ([Dayton](#) , [Fordham](#) , [Duquesne](#) , and [Massachusetts](#)) play football in a conference other than the new CAA, which still includes two full-time A-10 members ([Rhode Island](#) and [Richmond](#)). The MAAC stopped sponsoring football in 2007, after most of its members gradually stopped fielding teams. The only pre-2007 MAAC member that still sponsors football is [Marist](#); [Monmouth](#) became the second full MAAC member with football upon its arrival in 2013. Marist plays in the Pioneer Football League, while Monmouth spent the 2013 season as an FCS independent before moving its football program into the Big South. The WAC dropped football at the end of the 2012 season, after a [near-complete membership turnover](#) that saw the conference stripped of all but two of its football-sponsoring members. The two remaining football-sponsoring schools, [Idaho](#) and [New Mexico State](#), played the 2013 season as FBS independents before becoming football-only members of the Sun Belt Conference in 2014.

Division I in ice hockey [edit]

Some sports, most notably [ice hockey](#) ^[64] and men's [volleyball](#), have completely different conference structures that operate outside of the normal NCAA sports conference structure.

As [ice hockey](#) is limited to a much smaller number of almost exclusively Northern schools, there is a completely different conference structure for teams.^[64] These conferences feature a mix of teams that play their other sports in various Division I conferences, and even [Division II](#) and [Division III](#) schools. For most of the early 21st century, there was no correlation between a team's ice hockey affiliation and its affiliation for other sports, with the exception of the Ivy League's hockey-playing schools all being members of the ECAC. For example, before 2013, the [Hockey East](#) men's conference consisted of one ACC school, one Big East school, four schools from the America East, one from the A-10, one CAA school, and two schools from the D-II [Northeast Ten Conference](#), while the [Central Collegiate Hockey Association](#) (CCHA) and [Western Collegiate Hockey Association](#) (WCHA) both had some Big Ten representation, plus Division II and III schools. Also, the divisional structure is truncated, with the Division II championship abolished in 1999.

Starting with the 2013–14 season, Division I men's hockey experienced a [major realignment](#) . The [Big Ten Conference](#) became the first regular all-sport Division I conference to sponsor hockey since the [Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference](#) ceased its sponsorship of the sport in 2003,^[65] with the remaining members forming [Atlantic Hockey](#) . Existing Big Ten schools withdrew their membership from the WCHA and CCHA.^[66] Additionally, six other schools from those conferences withdrew to form the new [National Collegiate Hockey Conference](#) at the same time. ^[67] The fallout from these moves led to the demise of the CCHA, two more teams entering the NCHC, and further membership turnover in the men's side of the WCHA.

Women's hockey was largely unaffected by this realignment. The Big Ten still has only four members with varsity women's hockey, with six teams required under conference bylaws for official sponsorship. As a result, the only changes in women's hockey affiliations in the 2010–13 period occurred in [College Hockey America](#), which saw two schools drop the sport and three new members join.

Conferences [edit]

Conference	Nickname	Founded	Members (Men/Women)
Atlantic Hockey	AHC	1997	11 (11/none)
Big Ten Conference	Big Ten	1896 ^[H 1]	6 (6/none) ^[H 2]
College Hockey America	CHA	1999 ^[H 3]	6 (none/6)
ECAC Hockey	N/A	1962	12 (12/12)
Hockey East	N/A	1984	12 (12/9) ^[H 4]
Independents			2 (1/1) ^[H 5]
National Collegiate Hockey Conference	NCHC	2011 ^[H 6]	8 (8/none)

Western Collegiate Hockey Association	WCHA	1951	16 (10/8)
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- ↑ Founded as an all-sports conference in 1896, but did not sponsor ice hockey until 2013–14.
- ↑ 7 members in 2017 with Notre Dame becoming a hockey-only affiliate.
- ↑ Founded as a men's-only conference in 1999, with women's hockey added in 2002.
- ↑ 11 men's members in 2017 with loss of Notre Dame; women's membership will not change.
- ↑ The only independent programs in 2015–16 are the [Arizona State men's team](#), newly upgraded from club status, and the established [Sacred Heart women's team](#).
- ↑ Date of founding; play began in 2013–14.

Classification debate [edit]

In the early 21st century, a controversy arose in the NCAA over whether schools will continue to be allowed to have one showcased program in Division I with the remainder of the athletic program in a lower division, as is the case of, notably, [Johns Hopkins University lacrosse](#) as well as [Colorado College](#) and [University of Alabama in Huntsville in ice hockey](#) . This is an especially important issue in [hockey](#) , which has no Division II national championship and has several schools whose other athletic programs compete in Division II and Division III.

This controversy was resolved at the 2004 NCAA Convention in [Nashville, Tennessee](#) when the members supported Proposal 65-1, the amended legislation co-sponsored by [Colorado College](#) , [Clarkson University](#) , [Hartwick College](#) , the [Johns Hopkins University](#), [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) , [Rutgers University-Newark](#), [St. Lawrence University](#) , and [SUNY Oneonta](#) .^{[68][69]} Each school affected by this debate is allowed to grant financial aid to student-athletes who compete in Division I programs in one men's sport and one women's sport. It is still permitted for other schools to place one men's and one women's sport in Division I going forward, but they cannot offer scholarships without bringing the whole program into compliance with Division I rules. In addition, schools in Divisions II and III are allowed to "play up" in any sport that does not have a championship for the school's own division, but only Division II programs and any Division III programs covered by the exemption can offer scholarships in those sports.

The Division I programs at each of the eight "waiver schools" which were grandfathered with the passing of Proposal 65-1 were:

- [Clarkson University](#) – men's and women's [ice hockey](#)
- [Colorado College](#) – men's [ice hockey](#) , women's [soccer](#)
- [Hartwick College](#) – men's [soccer](#) , women's [water polo](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University](#) – men's and women's [lacrosse](#)
- [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) – men's [ice hockey](#) (women's [ice hockey](#) moved up to Division I in 2005)
- [Rutgers University–Newark](#) – men's [volleyball](#) (dropped to [Division III](#) in 2014)
- [St. Lawrence University](#) – men's and women's [ice hockey](#)
- [SUNY Oneonta](#) – men's [soccer](#) (dropped to Division III in 2006)

See also [edit]

- [List of NCAA Division I institutions](#)
- [List of non-NCAA Division I schools competing in NCAA Division I sports](#)
- [List of NCAA Division I athletic directors](#)
- [List of schools reclassifying their athletic programs to NCAA Division I](#)
- [Progress toward degree](#)

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