

College Baseball Opportunities

In the last 10-15 years there has been a number of Canadian baseball players participating in college baseball programs in the United States and Canada. College baseball offers Canadian players an opportunity to achieve a university/college degree while furthering their baseball careers. Often players may receive part or a majority of their education paid for through an athletic or academic scholarship as well as exposure to MLB baseball as college baseball is covered by scouts.

NCAA Baseball – National Collegiate Athletic Association

NCAA baseball has three divisions – NCAA division 1, 2 and 3. All of these schools are 4 year universities and colleges and offer a variety of academic programs and degrees. NCAA division 1 baseball is very competitive and often attracts the best baseball players in Canada and the United States. Division 1 and 2 offers scholarships but it is allowed only 11.7 full scholarships per team. Therefore many players get only a part scholarship and very few get all of their education paid for – (tuition and room and board). Division 3 baseball often does not have athletic scholarships but may offer academic scholarships. Division 1 schools in the IVY league such as Harvard, Columbia or Yale may not have athletic scholarships but may offer high academic achieving players academic scholarships.

Examples of NCAA Division 1 baseball - Arizona State University Sun Devils, Ohio State Buckeyes, University of Miami Hurricanes, Canisius University Griffons.

Examples of NCAA Division 2 Baseball – Cal State Dominguez Hills California, Central Missouri University, University of Tampa

Examples of NCAA Division 3 Baseball – Emory University, Massachusetts Institute of Tech (MIT)

As of 2009-10 there are no Canadian Universities competing in the NCAA regular season

NJCAA – National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association

The NJCAA offers academics for 2 year degrees or courses offering training in fields where players can transfer to 4 year schools as players continue with their academic interest and two more years of college baseball. There are advantages of playing junior college baseball as these schools often play a fall and a spring schedule and have less restrictions on when and how often they can practice and play. Also players may be able to step in and play right away as this is a two year program and competing for a spot on the roster may be easier. However, having to transfer to another school and adapting to a new school and baseball program may be a deterrent for some student-athletes.

There are different divisions of junior college baseball. NJCAA division 1, 2, and 3. California junior colleges compete within their own state in the California Community College Association. Washington and Oregon compete within the Northwest Athletic Association of Colleges – or NWAAC. Douglas College in British Columbia competes in the NWAAC and Prairie Baseball Academy in Lethbridge will often schedule junior college teams in the spring.

Examples of Junior College baseball programs – Chipola Junior College – Florida, Colby County Community College – Kansas, and College of Southern Idaho – ID

Canadian College Baseball Programs

There are many players who opt to stay in Canada and play college baseball while attending a Canadian university

or college. Prairie Baseball Academy in Lethbridge offers players to study either at Lethbridge Community College or University of Lethbridge while competing in a college baseball program that will schedule other American and Canadian colleges in fall and spring. Players in the PBA may also transfer to another school in the NCAA, NJCAA or NAIA after two years. University of BC currently competes in the NAIA division (4 year universities) in the United States and Douglas College in BC competes in the NJCAA division (2 year colleges) in the Oregon and Washington NWAAC conference.

There is also the Canadian Intercollegiate Baseball Association. There are teams in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, and Ontario. This league plays in the fall and has a CIBA championship. Universities such as McGill University, Western University, University of New Brunswick and University of Ottawa participate in CIBA. For more information visit www.ciba-abic.org.

The Canadian College Baseball Conference consists of teams from British Columbia and Alberta such as Prairie Baseball Academy, University of Calgary, Thompson River University, Kwantlen Polytechnic, Vancouver Island Baseball Institute, and Okanagan University. These teams have a fall and spring schedule with a championship held in May.

NCAA Clearing House

Players interested in playing NCAA Division 1 or 2 athletics must register in the NCAA Clearinghouse in order to be eligible to play in the NCAA. The NCAA clearing house is an organization that determines whether or not the athlete has the required academics in order to enrol and compete in an NCAA school. They will review SAT or ACT scores of the athlete. It is recommended that student athletes register with the NCAA Clearinghouse in their third year of high school. A student athlete must be registered in the NCAA Clearinghouse before receiving any type of scholarship or competing in the NCAA.

Helpful Suggestions for Interested Athletes:

Looking for opportunities

- draft a letter that describes your desire to play college baseball, list your capabilities such as your 60yd dash, catcher pop times, radar gun etc, season stats, and awards you have received. Be sure to list other sports played that will show you are one of the top athletes in your community. Keep newspaper clippings of articles about your achievements. This letter can be emailed, faxed or sent regular mail to as many schools possible.
- Attend tryout camps – often some schools offer tryout camps that you can attend, or attend prospects camps
- Find references that can verify you as a legitimate college baseball prospect – MLB scouts, your coaches, provincial baseball coaches etc.
- Play at the highest level that you can - if you know of teams that are traveling to high profile tournaments or showcase tournaments contact the coach to let them know you are available
- Find out where other Canadian athletes are going to school and contact them and their coach to express interest.
- Market yourself!
- *SAT Tests* – get these done in the early fall – contact your high school guidance counselor for this information.
- Contact the US border and inquire about a student visa and paperwork involved. It is often referred as the I-20 form.
- Search the internet for NCAA recruiting programs that will help to market yourself to school across the country.

Choosing a school:

- Visit the school before committing
- Choose a school that fits your level
- Check the school's baseball roster and see how "deep" they are in the position you play
- Find all of the costs! Tuition, room and board, books etc.
- Make sure the school offers the program or degree in your interested area
- There are very few "full rides" in baseball – expect to pay and know the costs.