

# Understanding the Levels of Collegiate Men's Volleyball

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## NCAA Division I

This is the highest level of collegiate competition. Athletes will practice at least 5 days per week, workout 3-4 times per week and travel often during the season. Time management will be a necessary key to success. These schools compete for a chance to play in the NCAA DI-DII National Championship Tournament every year. Athletes recruited to play Division I volleyball are typically among the most elite in their age group.

You might be fit for DI Volleyball if you can answer "YES" to the following questions: Are you the "star" on your nationally-competitive club team? Did you receive All-State awards as a high school player? Are you exceptionally tall and/or athletic for your age (i.e., among the tallest in your grade and/or have exceptionally high jumping abilities or outstanding passing/digging/blocking abilities)? If you're an outside hitter, are you also an excellent passer (consistently putting up "perfect" passes to your setter)? If you're a libero, are you one of the strongest passers/defenders in your conference/region/state? In all positions -- have your club and/or high school coaches recommended you look at Division I programs/schools?

\*\*Note: there are always exceptions and a program/coach's needs change from year to year. These are just general guidelines to help you assess where you might fit.

## NCAA Division II

This is the second highest level of collegiate competition. Athletes will most likely practice 5 days per week, workout 2-3 times per week and travel often during the season. Time management will be a necessary key to success. DII schools have a chance to compete in the same National Championship Tournament as D1 schools.

You might be fit for DII Volleyball if you can answer "YES" to the following questions: Are you the "star" on your nationally-competitive club team? Did you receive All-State awards as a high school player? Are you exceptionally tall and/or athletic for your age (i.e., among the tallest in your grade and/or have exceptionally high jumping abilities)? Have your club and/or high school coaches recommended you look at Division I programs/schools?

\*\*Note: there are always exceptions and a program/coach's needs change from year to year. These are just general guidelines to help you assess where you might fit.

## NCAA Division III

This is the third highest level of collegiate competition. Athletes will most likely practice 5 days per week, workout 2-3 times per week and travel often during the season. Time management will be a necessary key to success. There is a separate annual National Championship Tournament for NCAA DIII Volleyball.

You might be a fit for DIII Volleyball if you are one of the stronger/strongest players on your club and/or high school teams, you've received awards like "All Conference" or "All Area" in high school, and/or if your club or high school coaches have recommended you play at this level in college.

*NOTE: The major difference between Division I, II and III is the level of competition. The time commitment between the three Divisions does not differ by much.*

## NAIA

This is the fourth highest level of competition. Athletes will be expected to practice 2-3 times per week, possibly more. Working out and conditioning will vary from team to team and usually come at the coach's request. Teams will do some traveling during the season. NAIA teams often offer slightly more flexibility regarding practices and team commitment. There is an annual National Championship Tournament for NAIA Volleyball.

## Club

This is a great option for those who enjoy and want to continue playing volleyball but do not want the full commitment of a structured collegiate program. Athletes will typically practice 2 days per week and do some traveling throughout the year. Teams are often self-coached and flexible about missed practices or tournaments. There is an annual National Championship Tournament for Intercollegiate Club Volleyball. Some schools have a paid, designated coaching staff and consistent practice schedule. Commitment and competition level varies greatly between schools.