



How to Find Student-Athlete Graduation Rates

The NCAA has a public service announcement stating that most of their athletes go pro in something other than sports. They actually provide a [table](#) with the probability of competing beyond high school and the percentage who actually make it to the professional level. Given this information, any sensible athlete should pay serious attention to the student part of

"student-athletes." One thing prospective student-athletes should take a look at is the [graduation rate](#) for the schools they're interested in and compare the graduation rate for their sport. It's not hard to do.

You can look up athlete graduation rates by school, conference, and state at the [NCAA website](#). When using this website, you need to realize there's a difference between the [Graduation Success Rates](#) (GSR) and the Federal Graduation Rates (FGR). Without going into details, the GSR is a rate calculated by the NCAA and is not comparable to the general student population. To make sure you're using an apple to apples comparison, use the Federal Graduation Rates.

I think that once people look up the athlete graduation rates, they'll be surprised at how well most athletes do compared to the regular student body. For example, according to the latest available report for the University of Alabama, the six-year graduation rate for the freshman of 2008-09 was 66%. The rate for student-athletes was 72%.

Definitely good news but very depressing when you consider that the standard graduation rate for a four-year degree is based on taking six-years to complete. Think about that next time you consider borrowing to pay for college.

Back to the FGR report. When you open the report for a school, Part A of the first section will show the six-year graduation rate for the latest available freshman class broken down by gender and race/ethnicity. You'll also see columns for "4-class" with the average for the last four years.

Part B of the first section shows the same information for student-athletes but includes the GSR as well. If your goal is to compare the athletes and the general student population, just ignore the GSR.

Part C will show the student-athlete information broken down by sport category. Only Baseball, Basketball, CC/Track, and Football are shown in their own category. The remaining sports

are listed as "Other." The website only shows the athlete graduation rates for D1 and D2 schools.

There are plenty of other factors student-athletes should take into consideration knowing they are likely to be going pro in something other than their sport. They need to know if their choices of majors will be limited, the [amount of time](#) they can expect to devote to their sport, and what [costs](#), if any, they'll responsible for. But understanding your chances of just graduating is a good place to start.

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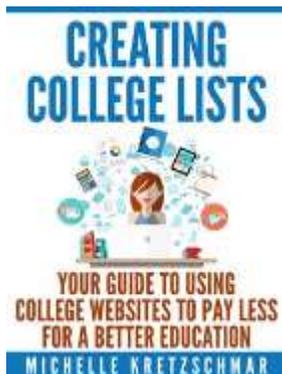
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