

WHERE GYMNASTS BECOME PROSPECTS

D1 ISN'T THE ONLY DOOR.

Most families walk into recruiting with one division in mind: **Division I**. It's the one they see on TV. The one coaches talk about. The one that feels like making it. **It's also a small fraction of college gymnastics.**

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

**5 PATHS.
1 RIGHT FIT.**

5
PATHS TO COLLEGE GYMNASTICS

~85
VARSITY PROGRAMS (D1 THROUGH NAIA)

3/5
DIVISIONS AWARD REAL ATHLETIC \$\$

62
NCAA D1 WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS PROGRAMS

THE RIGHT FIT IS RARELY THE BIGGEST NAME.

Here's the reality of recruiting for this sport: college gymnastics is a small world. Across the NCAA and NAIA there are roughly **85 varsity programs**, with just **62 at the NCAA D1 level**. Compare that to the thousands of Level 10 and Elite gymnasts in the pipeline every year, and the math gets honest fast.

But here's what most families miss. The D1 spotlight is one of five paths. D2 stacks partial awards with academic aid into surprisingly affordable packages. NAIA programs are emerging fast and award real scholarship money. D3 awards zero athletic dollars but routinely costs families less than a state school once academic aid is layered in. And club gymnastics through the **NAIGC** opens up hundreds of colleges where you can keep competing – no varsity cuts.

The right fit is the one where you'll **compete, develop, and graduate** – not the one with the loudest name. Here's how the divisions actually compare.

§ 03 / THE TALE OF THE TAPE

SIDE BY SIDE.

Schools, roster spots, athletic money, and who each division is built for – at a glance.

DIVISION	SCHOOLS	ROSTER SPOTS	ATHLETIC \$	BEST FOR
D1 NCAA D1 NATIONAL STAGE	62 WOMEN'S PROGRAMS	MAX 20 PER ROSTER	YES - MAJOR	Top-tier club gymnasts who can compete nationally .
D2 NCAA D2 LIMITED FOOTPRINT	5 PROGRAMS	SMALLER REAL MINUTES	YES - OFTEN PARTIAL	Strong club gymnasts who want balance + a smaller school .
D3 NCAA D3 ACADEMIC-FIRST	14 PROGRAMS	LARGER MORE OPPORTUNITY	NO - ACADEMIC ONLY	Strong students who want to keep competing .
NAIA NAIA EMERGING, REAL \$\$	~3-4 HISTORIC TEAMS	MEDIUM FLEXIBLE RULES	YES - STACKABLE	Smaller-school feel with scholarship money on the table.
CLUB NAIGC CLUB GYMNASTICS	100S OF COLLEGES	OPEN NO CUTS	NO - CLUB, NOT VARSITY	Keep competing at nearly any college – without varsity pressure.

§ 04 / DIVISION BREAKDOWN

KNOW THE PATH. KNOW THE PLAY.

Five paths. Five stories. The scholarship reality, the on-the-floor reality, and the kind of recruit each one is actually looking for.

DIVISION 01
NCAA DIVISION I

THE NATIONAL STAGE. FULL-TIME COMMITMENT.

WHAT IT IS The highest level of college gymnastics. **SEC, Big Ten, Pac-12, and Big 12** schools dominate the spotlight with packed arenas and national TV coverage – just **62 women's programs** nationally.

SCHOLARSHIPS **Big changes in 2025.** Women's gymnastics was historically a headcount sport with 12 full scholarships per D1 program. For schools that opted into the **House settlement**, that cap is replaced by a roster limit – a strict **maximum of 20 athletes** – with flexibility on how aid is spread – every athlete can receive a full, partial, or no scholarship. **Ask the coach which model the school is using.**

BEST FOR **Top Level 10 and Elite club gymnasts** with deep competitive resumes, college-ready difficulty on multiple events, and the academic profile to qualify through the NCAA Eligibility Center.

REALITY CHECK Rosters are small and competition is national. Almost every D1 recruit comes through **Level 10 or Elite club programs, not high school teams**. Verbal commitments happen early, and the time commitment is essentially full-time alongside school.

DIVISION 02
NCAA DIVISION II

SMALLER STAGE. STILL COMPETITIVE.

WHAT IT IS A **tiny division** for women's gymnastics – just **5 programs** nationally (Texas Woman's, West Chester, Southern Connecticut State, Bridgeport, and Azusa Pacific). Less national spotlight than D1, but real competition and real lineup minutes.

SCHOLARSHIPS Available, usually as **partial awards**. D2 coaches stack athletic aid with academic and need-based aid to build full packages.

BEST FOR Strong club gymnasts who want **serious competition** without D1's full-time demands – often at a smaller school with a closer-knit team.

REALITY CHECK With only a handful of programs, **geography matters**. Spots are limited, and many D2 recruits had D1 interest at one point. Travel and practice are real, but more balanced than D1.

DIVISION 03
NCAA DIVISION III

ACADEMIC FIRST. COMPETITIVE GYMNASTICS.

WHAT IT IS A meaningful path at **academic-first schools** – exactly **14 NCAA D3 programs**, including strong liberal arts institutions.

SCHOLARSHIPS **Zero athletic money**. But D3 schools award generous academic and need-based aid – and many families pay **less at a D3 than they would at a state school**.

BEST FOR **Strong students** who want to keep competing without it being their entire identity. Academic profile matters as much as athletic.

REALITY CHECK D3 gymnastics is competitive and well-coached. The trade-off: more academic flexibility, no athletic dollars. Many programs **actively recruit Level 9 and Level 10 athletes**.

DIVISION 04
NAIA

SMALLER SCHOOL. STACKABLE MONEY.

WHAT IT IS A **separate governing body** from the NCAA – its own championships, rules, and recruiting calendar. NAIA gymnastics is **emerging but tiny** – just **3 to 4 historic programs** (Fisk, Talladega, Wilberforce). There is no standalone NAIA championship yet; teams compete under **USAG collegiate rules** alongside NCAA programs.

SCHOLARSHIPS Available and **stackable**. NAIA programs offer athletic scholarships stacked with academic aid for packages that can compete with NCAA D1 and D2.

BEST FOR Gymnasts who want a **smaller-school experience** with real scholarship dollars and a less restrictive recruiting process than the NCAA.

REALITY CHECK Recruiting rules are **more flexible** – coaches can contact athletes earlier and more often. Program count is still small but growing. Worth tracking as the division expands.

PATH 05
CLUB (NAIGC)

NO CUTS. NO VARSITY PRESSURE.

WHAT IT IS There are **zero active NJCAA varsity** women's gymnastics teams – the NJCAA does not sponsor the sport. At two-year and four-year colleges alike, gymnasts compete through the **NAIGC** (National Association of Intercollegiate Gymnastics Clubs).

SCHOLARSHIPS **No athletic dollars** – club programs aren't varsity. But cost is low, the format is highly organized, and it's open to all levels.

BEST FOR Gymnasts who want to **keep competing for the love of it** at hundreds of colleges – without the demands, cuts, or pressure of a varsity roster.

REALITY CHECK This is a **massive, underrated option**. The NAIGC runs organized competition at hundreds of schools – a real way to keep the sport in your life **regardless of where you get in academically**.

§ 05 / THE HONEST ANSWER

FIT BEATS PRESTIGE. EVERY SINGLE TIME.

The right division isn't the one with the loudest name. It's the one where you'll **compete**. The one where you'll **graduate**. The one where the coach actively wants you – not the one where you're the 20th option on the roster.

THREE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

- Q1 WILL I ACTUALLY COMPETE?**
- Q2 WILL I GRADUATE?**
- Q3 DOES THE COACH WANT ME?**