



Differences Between NIL in Division I and Division III

While NCAA rules on Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) apply across all divisions, the way NIL operates in practice is very different at the Division I (D-I) and Division III (D-III) levels. The following section highlights the key contrasts.

1. Recruiting Environment

- Division I: NIL is often front and center in recruiting conversations. Collectives and boosters may structure deals that strongly influence commitments, though inducements remain technically prohibited.
- Division III: NIL cannot be used in recruiting in any way. Collectives and schools may only provide general education and transparency, not promises or deals.

2. Athletic Scholarships

- Division I: Athletic scholarships are available, and NIL is layered on top of these awards.
- Division III: No athletic scholarships are permitted. NIL cannot substitute for scholarships or aid tied to athletic participation.

3. Scale of NIL Activity

- Division I: Deals can be high-dollar, commercial, and national in scope, often involving six- or seven-figure contracts.
- Division III: Deals are typically modest, local, and community-driven (e.g., local businesses, camps, and social media promotions).

4. Compliance Oversight

- Division I: Compliance offices are large, often with dedicated NIL staff and third-party platforms like Opendorse or Teamworks.
- Division III: Compliance resources are limited, often managed by a single administrator. Simpler, low-cost or manual disclosure processes are common.

5. Cultural Emphasis

- Division I: NIL is part of the athlete recruitment and retention strategy, with expectations from coaches, boosters, and athletes.



Johnnie Athletes

A NIL Collective supporting SJU Athletics

- Division III: NIL is framed as a student development tool, emphasizing leadership, financial literacy, and community engagement.



Example Comparison Scenarios

Recruit Visit:

- Division I: A booster-funded collective says: 'We can't promise, but athletes here often earn \$50k annually in NIL deals.'
- Division III: Collective may only say: 'We provide education about NIL opportunities after enrollment. We do not promise or arrange NIL deals during recruiting.'

Athlete Compensation:

- Division I: Star QB signs a \$250k endorsement deal with a national brand.
- Division III: Basketball player earns \$1,000 for promoting a local training camp.

Institutional Role:

- Division I: Schools partner with platforms like Opendorse to centralize NIL disclosures and education.
- Division III: Compliance officers rely on simple forms or direct disclosure by email.