

## **College Baseball Opportunities**

In the last 10-15 years there have 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 various area 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. The NCAA College World Series for division 1 is held in Omaha, Nebraska every spring. Division 2 and division 3 will also host a championship College World Series.

### **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. Student athletes are able to achieve Associated Arts degree that is transferable to a 4 year school.

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

The NJCAA will host a championship college world series for all divisions. The division 1 World Series is held every June in Grand Junction, Colorado.

### **NAIA – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics**

This association is affiliated with various 4 year schools in the United States and one university in Canada – University of British Columbia. Most of these schools offer athletic and academic scholarships and a variety of 4 year degrees. The schools will often have smaller enrolments than the larger NCAA division 1 schools which might be benefit for many student athletes. The level of play at many schools is similar to NCAA division 2 and often these schools will schedule division 2 schools in the spring.

Examples of NAIA College programs – Lewis & Clark State College. ID, Jamestown College, ND, Oklahoma City University, Bellevue University, NE

The NAIA World Series is hosted in Lewiston, Idaho annually in late May.

### **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](http://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 Student 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 ASAP – contact your high school guidance counsellor 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 and Some Questions to Consider:*

- 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.
- Are you prepared to go that far from home?
- How many players from the program are playing pro baseball – this will give you an idea of the level of the program.
- If the school is a junior college, where do the players usually transfer to?
- What is the weather like in the area – is it suitable for spring baseball?
- Check the schedule – who do they play? When do they play? How many cancelled games due to weather? If it is a northern college do they take a spring trip in February or early March?
- Does the school have a specialized pitching coach, hitting coach, or a coach specialized for your position?
- Do they have campus dorms or are you required to live off campus? What is the condition of the dorms like or off campus housing arrangements? What is the neighbourhood like?

- Consult with your local university in Canada – does the 2 year Associate Arts degree transfer to a Canadian university?
- Find other Canadians who played college baseball and ask for advice or guidance in the process of choosing a school.
- Does the college qualify as a registered educational institution for income tax purposes?

Helpful Websites:

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) and [www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com) - info on the NCAA and NCAA Clearinghouse

[www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) - info on NAIA

[www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org) – information on the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

[www.canadianbaseballnetwork.com](http://www.canadianbaseballnetwork.com) – Bob Elliot and his coverage of all Canadian baseball including a list of current players attending college baseball programs from Canada.

[www.collegebaseballconnect.ca](http://www.collegebaseballconnect.ca) – example of one of the many recruiting services available