

Frequently Asked Questions: Varsity Athletics At W&M

1. *How many varsity teams does William & Mary sponsor and what is the total number of student-athletes who participate?*

W&M sponsors [23 varsity teams](#). In the 2023-24 competition year, 547 students (288 men / 259 women) participated in one of 11 men's teams and 12 women's teams.

2. *How many receive scholarship support?*

337 student-athletes receive scholarships: 167 Men (49.5%) and 170 Women (50.5%). Of these, 117 student-athletes received a full scholarship. Note: this is below the NCAA allowable number of scholarships for W&M. Based on the sports sponsored by W&M, the NCAA allows the equivalent of 258.4 scholarships to be awarded. In the 2023-24 academic year, W&M awarded the equivalent of 184.96.

3. *How does the number of sports sponsored by W&M compare to other universities?*

W&M participates in the Coastal Athletics Association (CAA) conference, and FCS Football. CAA institutions average 19 varsity teams. With 23 teams, W&M sponsors the second highest total; Monmouth has 24. The three smallest programs have 17. Five CAA schools have 20 or more. UVA has 25 varsity teams, VT has 22, ODU has 18, Richmond has 17, VCU has 16. Harvard University sponsors the most in NCAA Division I, with 42.

Questions about quality and competitiveness

4. *Please address the academic strength of our student-athletes and how we measure this.*

W&M is an academic powerhouse in Varsity Athletics – as measured by student-athlete academic achievement, graduation rates, conference awards, and national awards. W&M achieved elite marks in the NCAA annual ratings: federal graduation rate (FGR), graduation success rate (GSR), and academic progress rate (APR). See Appendix I of the Deep Dive.

5. *Please address the competitiveness of W&M Varsity Athletics and how we measure this.*

W&M has an episodic history of national competitiveness – as measured by CAA Championships, All-American individuals, NACDA Directors' Cup ranking, national post-season appearances, and appearances on the national stage. See Appendix II of the Deep Dive.

6. *Does W&M give special treatment to student-athletes? E.g. specific dorms, training tables, steering student-athletes to major in certain disciplines or fields of study?*

W&M Athletics coaches, staff, and student-athletes take great pride in creating an environment where the education and experience of our student-athletes is paramount. We see them as learners who will flourish when they are full participants in all aspects of student

life. We do not create separate dorms, cafeteria spaces, or majors. This philosophy requires tremendous support and flexibility on the part of coaches and staff. W&M faculty have embraced it as well. In Spring 2024, 102 undergraduate student-athletes graduated with 25 different majors. That W&M student-athletes involve themselves in every aspect of campus life enriches our community. One area where some preferential access is bestowed upon student-athletes is class registration. As part of a pilot program started in the 2023-24 academic year, student-athletes who are in-season receive some priority access (up to eight credits) in recognition of the time commitments required of them during competition seasons.

7. *What are we currently lacking, or in greatest need of, for W&M Athletics to achieve a higher level of competitive success?*

The greatest need is scholarships. The NCAA mandates the maximum number of scholarships that may be awarded in any sport. In 2023-24 we were permitted to award the equivalent of 258.4 scholarships across our 23 programs. We were able to fund 184.96, or roughly 72%, of the possible scholarships. That gap of 73.44 scholarships is our greatest opportunity to bring even more competitive success to W&M Athletics. The next biggest area of need is increased salary support for coaches and staff to not only attract and retain the right people, but also to add positions in different areas throughout the department.

Questions about W&M's Financial Model for Varsity Athletics

8. *What is the total annual budget for the Department and what are the major revenue sources and expenditure categories?*

W&M Athletics expenses totaled nearly \$33.5M for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Those expenses were broken down into three major categories - scholarships, salaries & benefits, and operating expenses - each comprising roughly a third of the total amount spent. This represents a \$140k reduction in expenses from the prior fiscal year. The revenues that offset those expenses are comprised of student fees, philanthropy, general revenues, and NCAA distributions. See Appendix III of the Deep Dive for greater detail.

9. *What is "Total Cost of Attendance?" and who receives it?*

The "Total Cost of Attendance" (TCA) recognizes that student-athletes have additional costs, such as travel to and from their homes, that are not fully covered by scholarships. As of 2015, universities are permitted to provide additional stipends to cover some of these costs. W&M provides stipends of \$2,650 (in-state) and \$2,886 (out-of-state) per student-athlete in men's and women's basketball (28 total student-athletes). Of the 309 student-athletes on other teams who would be eligible, no others receive TCA stipends.

10. *Do any of our teams generate enough revenue from ticket sales, concessions, philanthropy, etc., to cover the cost of sponsoring them?*

No. Beyond a few institutions at the Power 5 level, college athletics programs do not generate enough revenue to cover the costs associated with them. None of our 23 teams generate sufficient revenue and philanthropy to offset the total invested in the programs.

11. Please speak to the recently concluded “All-In” Campaign for Athletics. What did the campaign do for W&M Athletics? How much was raised for facilities, scholarships, etc.?

Please see details of the three-year All In [Campaign Report](#). In sum, the All-In Campaign raised a total of \$57,222,457.

Endowments	10,027,799
Expendable funds (current use)	29,599,523
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 13,223,527
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual sports & the Athletics Impact Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16,375,996
Facilities	12,496,322
Department discretionary funds	5,002,115
Gifts in Kind	96,698

12. What percent of our student-athlete alumni give to the university? How does this compare to alumni giving overall at W&M and nationally?

In Athletics, as for the institution as a whole, W&M far surpasses peer institutions for alumni engagement. Last fiscal year, 23% of former student-athletes made a philanthropic gift to support Tribe Athletics as compared to 20% alumni who give to W&M. By comparison, the national average for student-athlete alumni giving is less than 10%.

Questions about the NCAA, State, and Federal Landscape

13. How does W&M ensure equitable treatment for all student-athletes, as required by law?

Following an external review in 2021, a Gender Equity plan was created to establish policies and processes that ensured equitable treatment of all student-athletes at W&M. The Gender Equity plan guided comprehensive improvements in facilities, scheduling, budgets, media relations, and more. Annual processes routinely include close examination of any potential equity issues.

Our Gender Equity policy provides for annual review of the areas for equitable treatment highlighted by the Office of Civil Rights. A review team delivers an annual report noting any

equitable treatment issues to the Director of Athletics. He in turn provides a report– including proposed actions – to the President. With her approval, he advances those actions.

14. *Much has been made of “NIL” in the media recently. What is NIL?*

In 2021, the NCAA approved an interim policy to permit student-athletes to be compensated for the use of their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). College student-athletes can make money for promoting companies, services or products. NIL deals are done primarily through “collectives” – third-party intermediaries that help arrange the deals. Collectives are typically formed by fan and/or alumni groups that support a particular program. Most Division I schools now have collectives. In Virginia, recent changes to legislation surrounding the relationship between universities and collectives has changed to permit those groups to be directly involved in the recruiting process.

15. *What is the “Green & Gold Exchange?” Is this a way to raise money for the university to pay our student-athletes? What is the impact on W&M?*

The “Green & Gold Exchange” is a W&M NIL online platform designed to connect student-athletes with potential business opportunities. The company who designed the platform is INFLCR, a group that works with over 270 elite collegiate and professional sports organizations. Funds from agreements made between student-athletes and businesses go directly to the athletes, not the university.

At W&M, we educate student-athletes on how best to capitalize on these opportunities. The athletics department is partnering with the Mason School of Business and the William & Mary Law School for programming on topics such as personal branding and networking, digital engagement and financial literacy.

We have yet to fully understand the impact of NIL on W&M. Were fans and alumni to redirect substantial philanthropic support to individual athletes – *instead of* making a contribution to the department or our programs – it would hurt W&M’s ability to provide a world-class experience to our student-athletes.

16. *Please speak to the “Transfer Portal”: what is it and how does it work? Is it a positive or a negative for W&M?*

Since 2021, the NCAA has allowed student-athletes to transfer from one university to another without sitting out a year of competition, as they were previously required to do. The portal itself is an online database of student-athletes who wish to explore new opportunities, though the term “transfer portal” is often used to describe the entire process of leaving one school to enroll in another. The way it works is that a student-athlete informs the athletics compliance office of his or her desire to transfer. The compliance office then registers the student-athlete in the portal, and coaches from other schools can then see who is in the portal and legally contact the student-athlete, thus initiating the recruiting process.

The impact on W&M has been mixed. On the negative side: more student-athletes than ever are moving between institutions. This newfound flexibility negatively impacts roster management and recruiting budgets; it draws coaches’ time and attention away from the current program and players. It complicates student-athlete progress to graduation based on

the rate at which credits transfer from one institution to another. It destabilizes team culture and strategy.

However, this new flexibility also allows talented student athletes to find better homes for their abilities and interests. It brings to W&M individuals who have a lot to offer the Tribe but who did not enroll right out of high school. And because of the high quality of W&M's educational model, we have something unique to offer young people that both keeps them enrolled at a higher rate and gives them a stronger ROI as future professionals in many fields than they might have had otherwise.

17. Do we have "hard" rules regarding our athletes entering the Transfer Portal? In other words, if they entered and did not land at another school, do we still honor their scholarship and keep them on their respective team(s)?

At W&M, when a student-athlete chooses to enter the transfer portal, their previously guaranteed scholarship and roster spot returns to the program. If the student-athlete subsequently withdraws from the portal and decides to stay at W&M, a coach may or may not offer a scholarship and/or a spot on the roster, based on availability.

18. What is the impact to the university and Athletics Department of the recent settlement of the House v. NCAA class-action lawsuit?

This lawsuit is still pending and many questions remain. We will learn more if/when the settlement is finalized, likely not until later this calendar year. That said, here is what the NCAA is proposing:

- The proposed settlement includes \$2.8B in back-pay (to 2016) to student-athletes who were not legally able to capitalize on their NIL. The proposal states that the \$2.8B will be paid over the course of ten years and will be funded from two primary sources. The first is the operational budget of the NCAA totaling \$120M per year for ten years (\$1.2B). The second would come from a reduction in the funds distributed from the NCAA to its Division I member institutions totaling \$160M per year for ten years (\$1.6B).
- In addition to this back-pay, schools in the Power 5 conferences will be required to share up to 22% of annual revenues with their student-athletes. All other Division I members will now be allowed to do the same but are not required to do so.
- In the settlement proposed, the NCAA would also lift current scholarship limits for each sport and instead set a cap at the number of student-athletes allowed on the roster. Individual schools would now determine how to distribute scholarship support.

Early projections of the cost to W&M of the proposed settlement show a reduction to W&M's annual distribution from the NCAA of roughly \$350k per year, for ten years. Most conferences (including the CAA) do not participate in NCAA revenue-sharing at the high levels shared at the Power 5. Those conferences are not decision-makers in the settlement; they have formally objected to this distribution of costs, to no avail.

Discussion Topics

Topics should be distributed to tables, with one member of the Student Experience Committee at each table and one member of ELT.

1. *For the sake of what* do we value W&M Varsity Athletics at W&M?
2. What is the place of W&M Athletics in W&M's teaching, learning, and research mission?
3. What might higher visibility on the national stage mean for W&M Athletics and the university?
4. What goals should we set for the department and why? How might W&M Athletics serve our students, larger community, state, nation, going forward?
5. As we contemplate future disruptions nationally, what should be our principles for decision-making in response to changes in the national landscape?