

# What About My Athletic Scholarship?

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By Keyth Searcy - Originally Published 10/2018

Georgia Gwinnett College does not usually give out athletic scholarships that cover room and board. The majority of the athletes that live on campus are foreign-born. Awards surrounding athletes at GGC vary between sports.

The NIAA (Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association) gives the GGC athletics program a certain number of scholarships for each sport. "They give us their maximum for the NIAA, we're not at the maximums for anything; we're probably closer to the maximum on tennis because of the team size," said Athletic Director Darin Wilson. There is a maximum for each sport, baseball and soccer receive 11, softball receives eight, and tennis receives six.

Scholarships are often offered without the possibility of housing due to the overall team budget per sport.

"Depending on the sport, I mean it costs more to fund a baseball program than it takes to run a soccer team, but proportionally they are all very similar. Certainly, our men and women's teams are very similar," Athletic Director Darius Wilson said.

The teams' budgets includes athletic supplies such as bats for the baseball team, balls for the soccer team, scholarships, and maintaining their fields. Teams pick and choose what will fall into their budget and what holds more precedence over others.

"We look at numbers from last year, and project our numbers for this year, and make tweaks to our budget every year based on the need by team," Wilson said.

In the state of Georgia, it is illegal for an institution to use state and tuition dollars for the funding of athletics; however, the student fee and the donors pay for athletics. This pertains to money the college has for scholarships and what its budget must contain to maximize their efforts in recruiting players.

Scholarships vary a lot between each player, each sport, and what they offer to cover their more elite players. A lot of players that live on campus as athletes are foreign, freshman and have their housing completely paid for. Student athletes are given a certain amount awarded based on the level of play and need on the team. Most of the freshman players that were brought in the 2018 academic year were brought in based on the criteria of need and ability.

Freshmen must live on campus if they are outside a certain range of counties such as Gwinnett, DeKalb, Walton, Hall, Fulton, Forsyth, Barrow, Rockdale, Newton, Cobb, Henry, Clayton and Jackson County or the potential student does not have military status. These limitations affect foreign athletes that are recruited to GGC and scholarships that cover housing.

Trips that coaches plan to take are often taken out of the overall budget with additional outside saving, leading to a stricter budget for the team.

"Our coach decided to go to Indiana in the middle of the season for a Mock World Series," said Jason Grant, Pitcher for the Georgia Gwinnett College Grizzlies.

The female soccer team added a lot of foreign freshmen who are required to stay on campus. For those players, the program wanted their incentive to come to Georgia Gwinnett College included scholarships that had housing because they needed housing.

"Scholarships are a sensitive topic on our team just because some girls get nothing and it's sort of like a rule that we don't talk about them just because we do have everything covered" said Soccer Player Hailey Ann.

"I use my refund from financial aid to get me by while living off campus and through my experience I have learned it has gotten me by," wing back James Roy for the men's soccer team explained.

"Understanding how this is cost efficient was taught to us by our coaches when asking why we don't stay on housing," stated Roy, explaining why he chose to live off-campus.

This is not the first year that teams did not offer scholarships that cover housing. A Majority of the athletes live in the surrounding neighborhoods for Georgia Gwinnett College.

According to a few of the athletes on their respective team like Jason Grant stated, "that housing is not covered, because it's just cheaper for them to live off campus and in past years, that is what players preferred."

Majority of these athletes know the expense of staying off campus and choose to do so.

Understanding how to balance school, athletics, social life, while worrying about rent seems to work out best for them in a statement shared by Jason Grant, an athlete that lives outside of campus.

"I have a 4.0 [GPA] and my job right now is to play baseball, and that is how I pay for school. My parents help me out with the bills and rent."

A majority of student-athletes have apartments around campus because they are cheaper; "11 thousand [dollars] for two semesters compared to 500 [dollars] a month for a year living with your buddies is cheaper, so that is how it's been," said by Jason Grant.

"We've learned that it isn't the content that is hard to understand, it's the amount of work we are given which does interrupt our social life. I mean we're in the library after class and after practice from five in the afternoon to ten in the afternoon every day to keep our scholarships and not be on academic probation being forced not to play. The reason we are here is education and soccer, but we haven't discussed if I will have housing next year that is covered," said Hailey Ann.

Players from outside of the country like Celia Blue have scholarships that cover housing, but for athletes like Jason Grant who have family in the States, their awards do not include accommodations or a meal plan.