

# Intercollegiate Athletics

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Intercollegiate athletics is an integral part of student life at Azusa Pacific. The university views athletics, a “lab of life,” as an opportunity to develop and display unique physical abilities while glorifying God in teamwork and competition. Intercollegiate athletics also brings together the university in a distinctive manner that serves as a venue to reach into local communities and forge new and lasting relationships.

Most Cougar teams are part of the uniquely diverse and scenic Pacific West (PacWest) Conference, a 13-member association of schools from Hawaii, southern and central California, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Women's water polo is a member of the Golden Coast Conference, and women's swimming and diving competes in the Pacific Collegiate Swim and Dive Conference. APU's acrobatics and tumbling team competes in the National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association.

In the summer of 2014, the university completed a three-year process earning the 18-sport Cougar athletics program (<https://athletics.apu.edu>) membership in Division II of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In the university's first decade of active Division II membership, Azusa Pacific has won two NCAA national championships (women's outdoor track and field in 2021 and 2023) and hosted more NCAA west regional playoff tournaments over the past ten years than any other school. In addition, the Cougars have advanced to basketball's Elite Eight as the West Region champion in men's and women's basketball. Azusa Pacific has won the Pacific West Conference Bob Hogue Commissioner's Cup as the top athletics program in the conference for four of the past five years. Overall, Azusa Pacific has claimed 51 conference titles since transitioning to NCAA Division II.

In the spring of 2025, the university announced that, after a five-year hiatus, football would be reinstated in the fall of 2026 and add women's flag football in the spring of 2028. In addition to these sport additions, the athletics program will shift its membership to NCAA Division III beginning in the fall of 2026, allowing student-athletes a more balanced experience of academics and athletics at a high level.

Currently, men's intercollegiate competition is offered in the following sports: baseball, basketball, cross country, soccer, tennis, and track and field (indoor and outdoor). Women's intercollegiate competition is available in acrobatics and tumbling, basketball, cross country, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field (indoor and outdoor), volleyball, and water polo.

Students who participate in Azusa Pacific's intercollegiate athletics program must meet NCAA and conference academic eligibility requirements. Registration with the NCAA Eligibility Center and completion of academic and amateurism requirements also impact a student's eligibility to compete in intercollegiate athletics. Financial aid is awarded on the basis of financial need and/or superior academic achievement. The university is fully committed to the academic success of each student-athlete, to his or her physical welfare, to the principles of fair play, and to compliance with all NCAA rules and regulations.

Prior to joining the NCAA in 2012, the Cougar athletics program was governed by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Azusa Pacific captured 37 NAIA national championships, the third-most in association history, and won an unprecedented eight consecutive Directors' Cups, which recognized Azusa Pacific as the NAIA's best overall athletics program from 2005-12. Including 14 national championships awarded by other associations, Azusa Pacific teams have claimed a total of 52 national championships.