

Digital Academy of Florida Students are Now Eligible for NCAA Scholarships

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Online Classes offer flexibility and academic rigor for student-athletes

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Student-athletes are a competitive group of individuals who thrive amidst the dual responsibilities of excelling in their athletic endeavors while maintaining academic excellence. Because they dream of playing sports in college, going pro or even trying out for the Olympics, they are constantly training and competing in the sport of their choice. The flexibility of online schools often makes them a top option for these driven and laser-focused students. Because serving these passions and personal pathways are a top priority, **Digital Academy of Florida** (DAOF) is excited to announce that the NCAA has officially approved its core curriculum.

The NCAA supports sports across many seasons, and as an NCAA-accredited online public school, DAOF stands by its athletes and helps guide them toward academic and athletic success. Students strive to play at the collegiate level across an array of sports leagues - such as football, soccer, volleyball, gymnastics, swimming, baseball, lacrosse, tennis and many more - that are included in the NCAA.

Boca Raton, Fla., tennis pro Aida Mitrache is one of those students. She graduated from the Digital Academy of Florida (DAOF) last May, and now plays for Coastal Carolina on an NCAA scholarship. She is ranked 56th nationally for the class of 2023 and hopes to go pro one day.

"I worked to attend a D1 school on a NCAA scholarship my whole life, which involved constant practice and fitness training," says Aida. "DAOF was a good way for me to keep my focus on my training and excel in academics, too. It offered me flexibility so I could study and compete at the level I had prepared for."

Aida's story started in Romania, where she was born and lived until 2017, when her family received a Diversity Visa

from the U.S. government. They initially settled in Pennsylvania before moving down to Florida. Coached by Romanian great Florin Ionescu, Aida played at Wisehaven Tennis Club in high school.

Before Aida, DAOF students weren't eligible for NCAA scholarships – a standing that Principal Fred Whitaker was determined to change. "Aida's situation helped push us to make sure the scholarship happened for her. It's a very stringent process with lots of paperwork and follow-up. It took 6 months, but we got our approval!"

NCAA standards

NCAA schools award nearly \$3.5 billion in athletics scholarships every year and provide vast support to help student-athletes graduate at a rate higher than the general student population.

For a course to be NCAA-approved, it means the curriculum meets NCAA standards. The organization reviews factors like teacher qualifications, assessments, and content. DAOF offers a broad selection of NCAA courses across subject areas with the exception of some electives – which is common. As long as a student's core academic classes are approved, eligibility shouldn't be a problem. For example, English, math (algebra I or higher), natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy are all generally approved.

"We believe in going the extra mile for our students, and supporting our student-athletes," Whitaker says. "Because of Aida's situation, now the scholarships are potentially available for all of our many student-athletes – this opportunity is for all of them."

For more information about DAOF's curriculum and the NCAA approval, visit <https://daof.k12.com/>.

About Digital Academy of Florida

Digital Academy of Florida (DAOF) is a full-time online public-school program of the Hendry County District of Schools serving Florida students in grades K-12. As a public school, DAOF is tuition-free and provides families the choice to access the curriculum and tools provided by K12, a Stride Company. Stride offers learners of all ages a more effective way to learn and build skills for their future. For more information about DAOF, visit

<https://daof.k12.com/>.

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