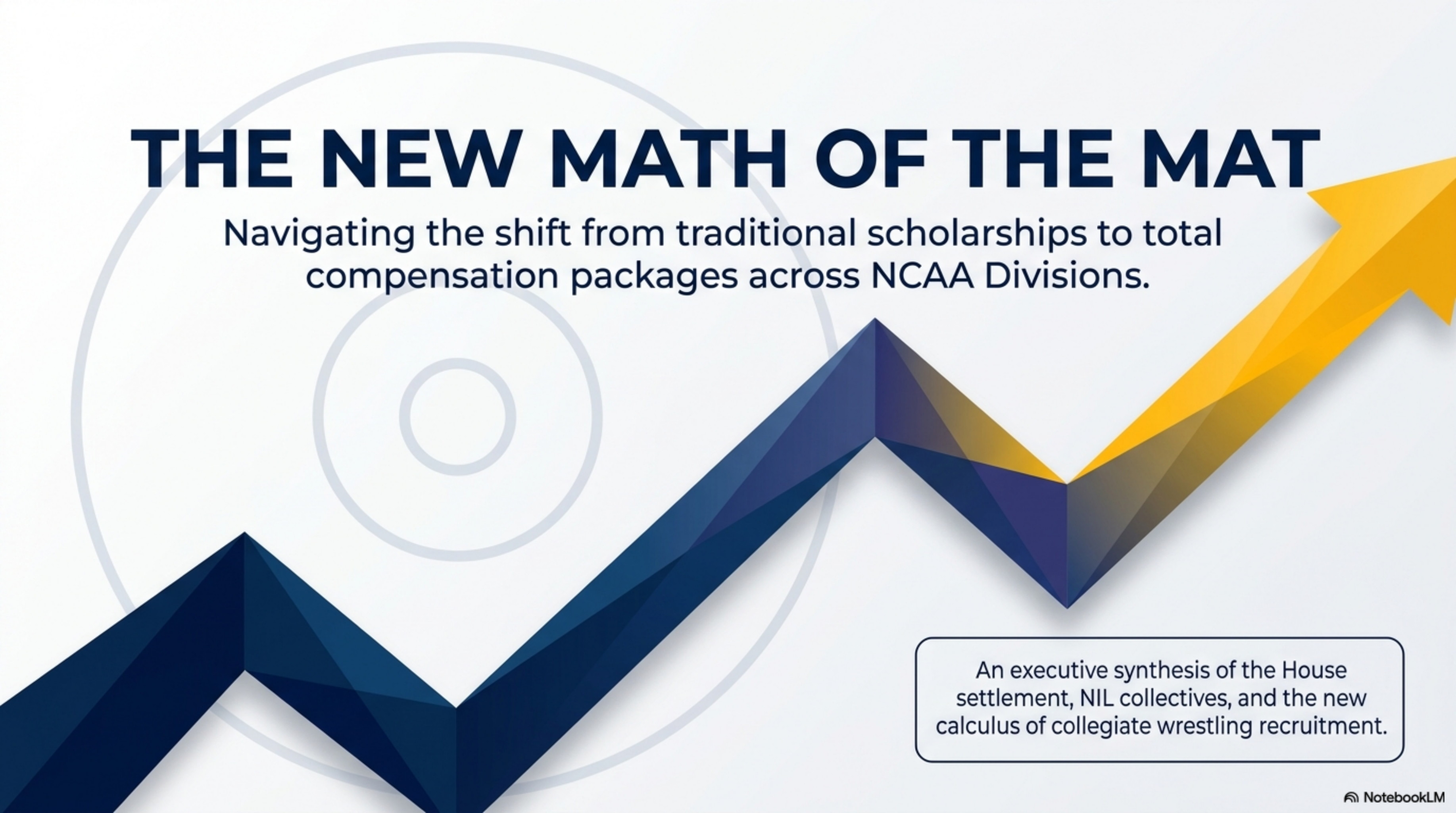


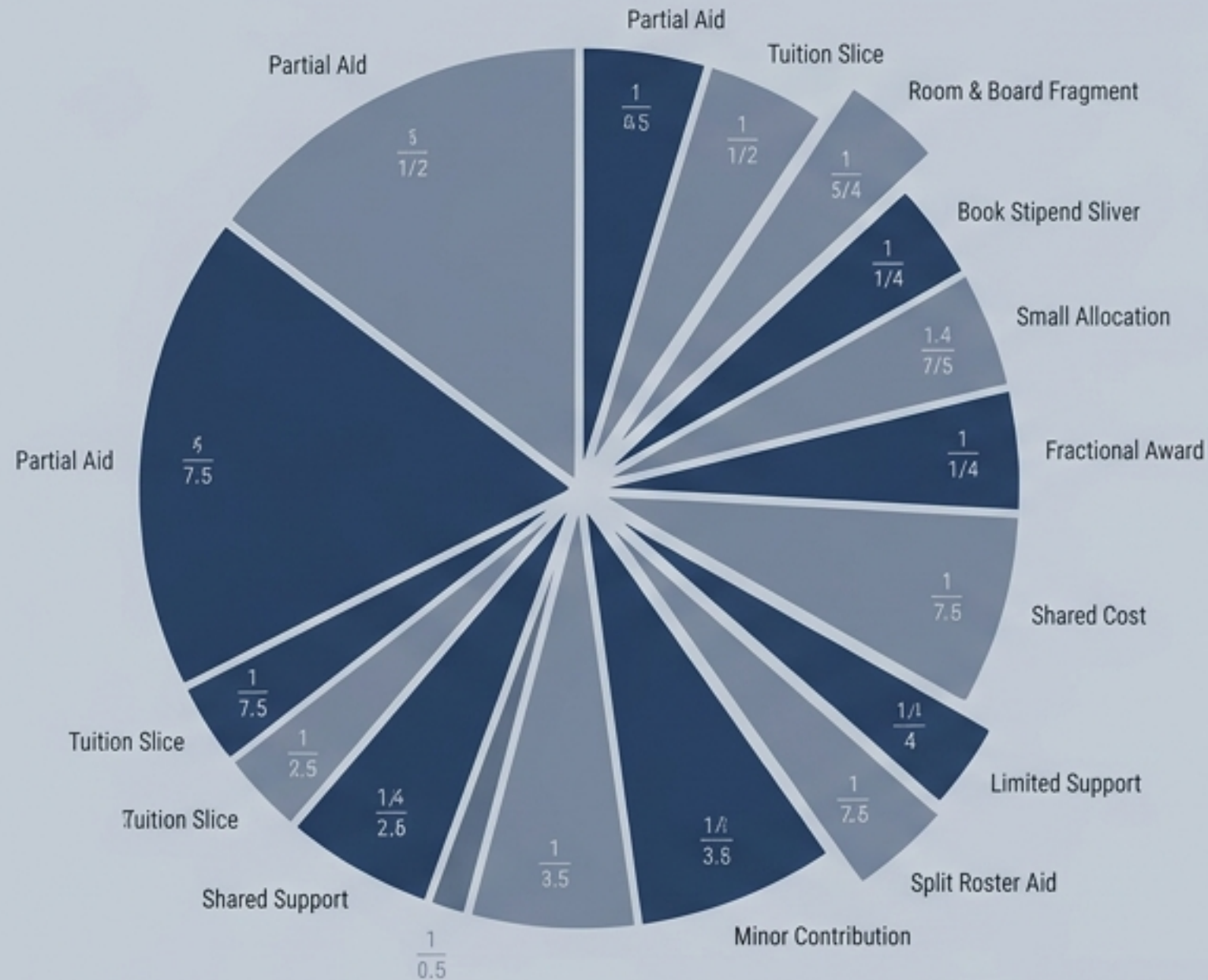
THE NEW MATH OF THE MAT

The background features a light blue gradient with a large, stylized arrow pointing upwards and to the right. The arrow is composed of several geometric shapes, including a dark blue base and a yellow tip. In the upper left, there are three concentric circles in shades of light blue. The overall design is modern and professional.

Navigating the shift from traditional scholarships to total compensation packages across NCAA Divisions.

An executive synthesis of the House settlement, NIL collectives, and the new calculus of collegiate wrestling recruitment.

The Old Model: 9.9 Equivalency Scholarships



Historically, Division 1 men's wrestling operated on a strict 9.9 equivalency limit, forcing coaches to creatively divide partial aid across a roster.

Core Insight: NIL is no longer just an added perk; it is the modern scholarship.

The New Model: Roster Caps + Market Forces



The House settlement replaces this with a **30-athlete roster cap** and **up to 30 athletic scholarships**. Concurrently, an **uncapped Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)** ecosystem has emerged.

Elite prospects now evaluate the Total Compensation Package



The modern recruitment conversation has fundamentally shifted. Top prospects no longer ask, "What is my scholarship percentage?" They ask, "**What is my total guaranteed value?**"

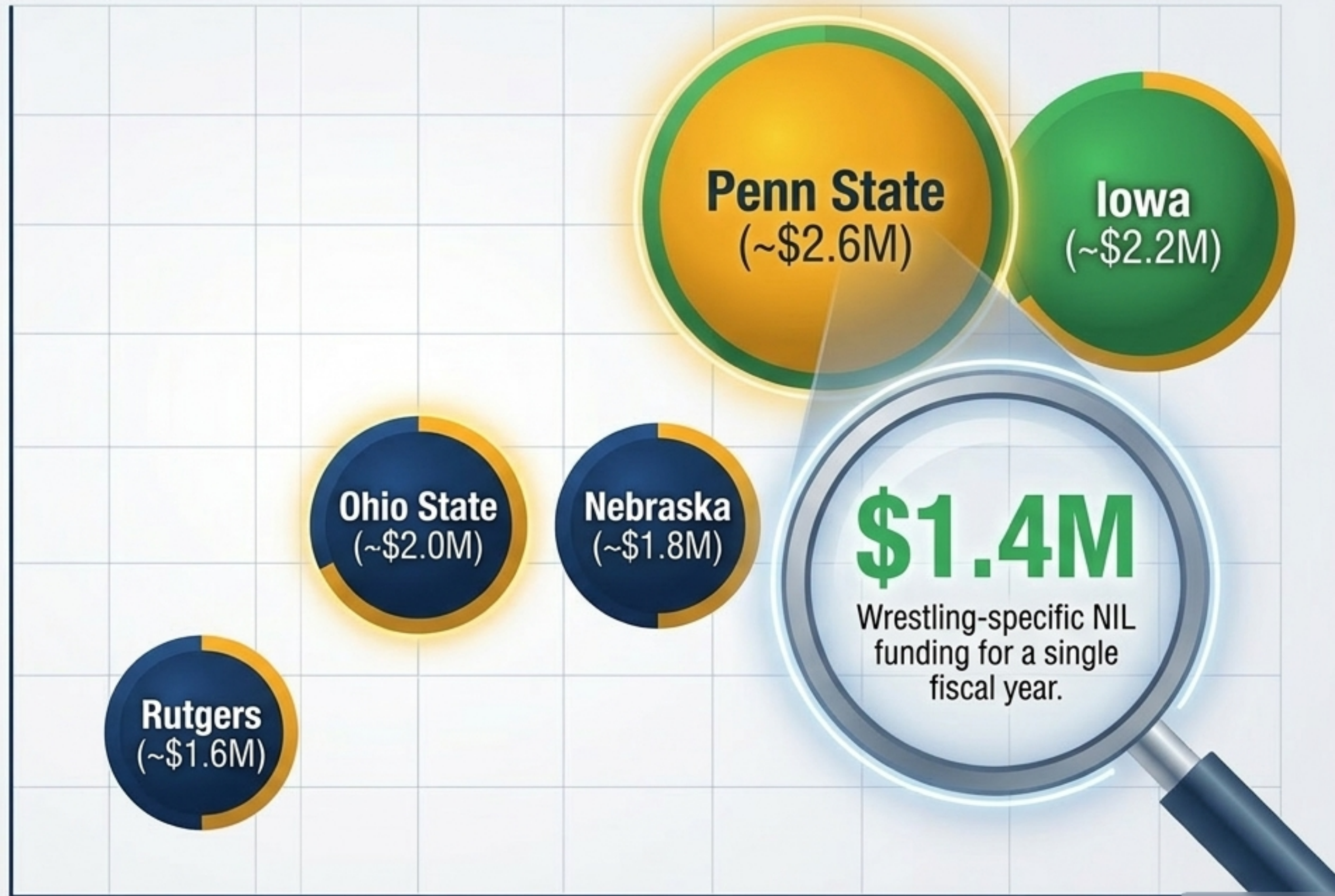
Because traditional athletic scholarships are capped (and often not fully funded by the university budget), **coaches must act as General Managers**, layering new market elements on top of traditional aid to build a competitive offer.

Division 1 powerhouses operate in a multi-million dollar stratosphere

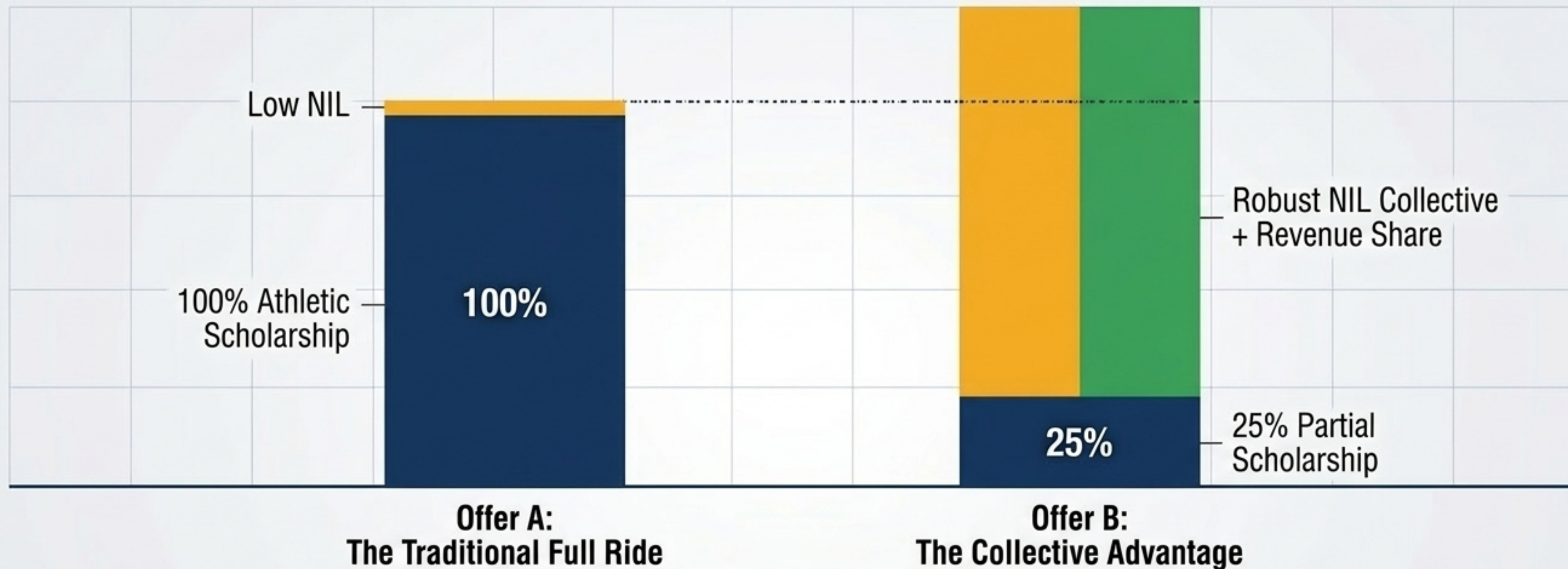
At the top of D1, NIL isn't bridging a gap—it is **creating a quasi-professional environment**.

Wrestling has entered a financial arms race. **Elite programs generate substantial NIL support that dwarfs traditional scholarship values** (e.g., PSU's wrestling NIL sits third-highest in its athletic department behind only football and basketball).

Strategic Note: Despite the money, elite coaches emphasize that these packages are used to attract “like-minded” athletes who prioritize program culture and on-mat development, not just the payout.



Unfunded programs leverage collectives to outbid traditional full rides

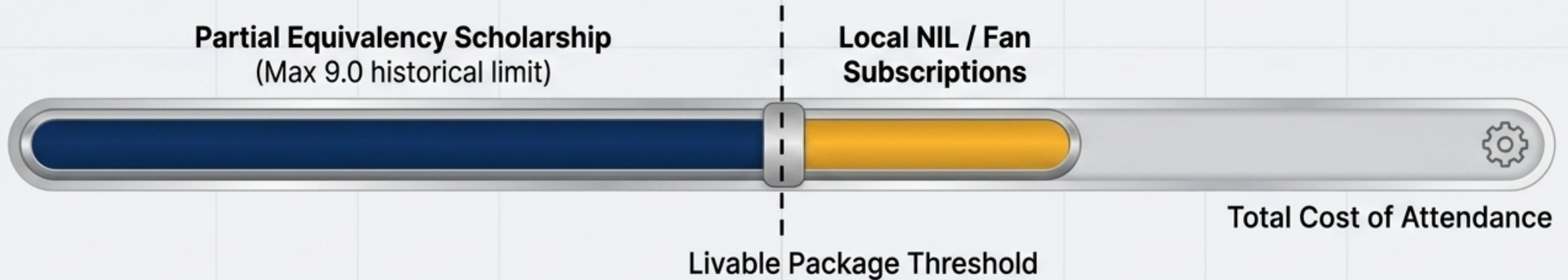


The Mid-Tier Advantage: Under the new 30-man roster cap, many D1 programs will not have the university budget to fully fund all 30 scholarships.

The Leverage: If a partially funded program possesses a robust donor network, they can assemble a “Total Package” that far exceeds the financial value of a traditional 100% scholarship at a school with weak NIL infrastructure.

The Result: NIL allows aggressive mid-majors to offset institutional scholarship shortfalls and win elite recruits.

Division 2 utilizes NIL as a strategic gap-closing supplement



Division 2 operates on an equivalency model where partial aid is the norm and resources are generally tighter than D1.

Here, NIL is rarely a six-figure recruitment weapon. Instead, it is a crucial supplementary layer. Deals focus on local business endorsements, social media, and community events.

Case Study: St. Cloud State University.

Programs utilize platforms like NIL Club to create fan subscriptions. This pools resources to provide direct financial benefits to athletes, mitigating incomplete scholarship funding and helping retain talent against lower-tier D1 schools.

Division 3 relies on merit aid and localized personal entrepreneurship



- **Zero Athletic Aid:** Because Division 3 prohibits athletic scholarships, NIL is the only legal avenue for direct athletic monetization.
- **The Scale:** D3 wrestling NIL is modest. Average deals hover under \$100–\$200, with rare exceptional cases reaching the low thousands.
- **The Differentiator:** It doesn't replace the need for academic aid. Instead, proactive D3 programs use NIL to teach financial literacy and differentiate their culture.
- **Success Stories:** Pacific Lutheran University facilitated 200+ deals resulting in ~\$20k in athlete earnings. Athletes with strong individual personal branding can thrive at the D3 level.

The cross-divisional matrix of wrestling recruitment leverage

	Division I	Division II	Division III
Traditional Aid Structure	30 Roster Cap (up to 30 scholarships)	Equivalency (Historically 9.0 cap)	Zero Athletic Aid (Merit/Need Only)
Primary NIL Engine	Mega-Collectives & Rev-Sharing	Local Boosters & Fan Platforms	Personal Hustle & Community Links
Financial Scale	Millions per program / Six-figures per elite athlete	Low thousands (supplemental)	Hundreds to low thousands
Recruiting Impact	Transformative (can replace/exceed full rides)	Strategic Supplement (closes the gap on partial aid)	Nuanced Differentiator (entrepreneurial appeal)

Critical vulnerabilities: The international visa blockade and compliance risks

The Visa Blockade



International student-athletes on F-1 visas cannot legally earn active NIL income while on US soil. This creates a massive competitive and financial disadvantage, effectively locking some of the world's best talent out of the new "Total Compensation" calculus.

The Compliance Burden



Division 1 programs must navigate an evolving minefield. While collectives operate with millions, institutions must treat NIL as direct "pay-for-play" while dealing with the reality that some schools keep individual NIL numbers private, making the recruitment trail increasingly murky.

Strategic imperatives for the modern wrestling ecosystem



For Athletes: Evaluate the total ecosystem.

Do not fixate on the official scholarship percentage. Assess the program's collective infrastructure, revenue-sharing model, and market size. Build an individual brand early to command immediate value.



For Coaches: Embrace the General Manager role.

Your role now requires assembling financial packages from disparate sources. If your institution lacks traditional funding, your primary objective is building an external collective to bridge the gap.



For Programs: Transparency wins the war.

In a landscape where total compensation is murky and rules constantly shift, the programs that clearly articulate and deliver how they stack merit, athletic, and NIL funds will secure the ultimate competitive edge on the mat.