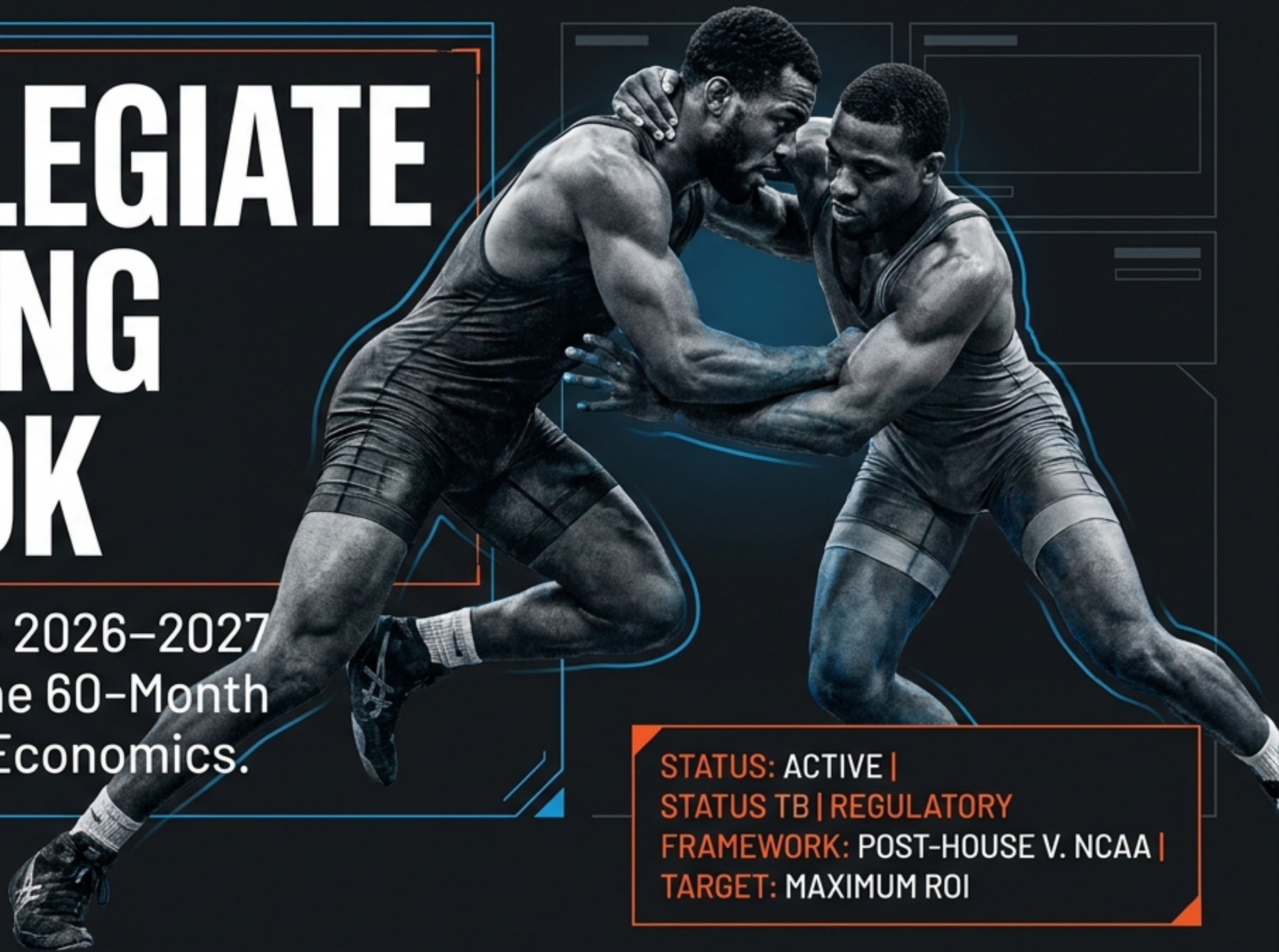


THE COLLEGIATE WRESTLING PLAYBOOK

A Strategic Guide to the 2026–2027
Eligibility Landscape, the 60-Month
Clock, and New Roster Economics.



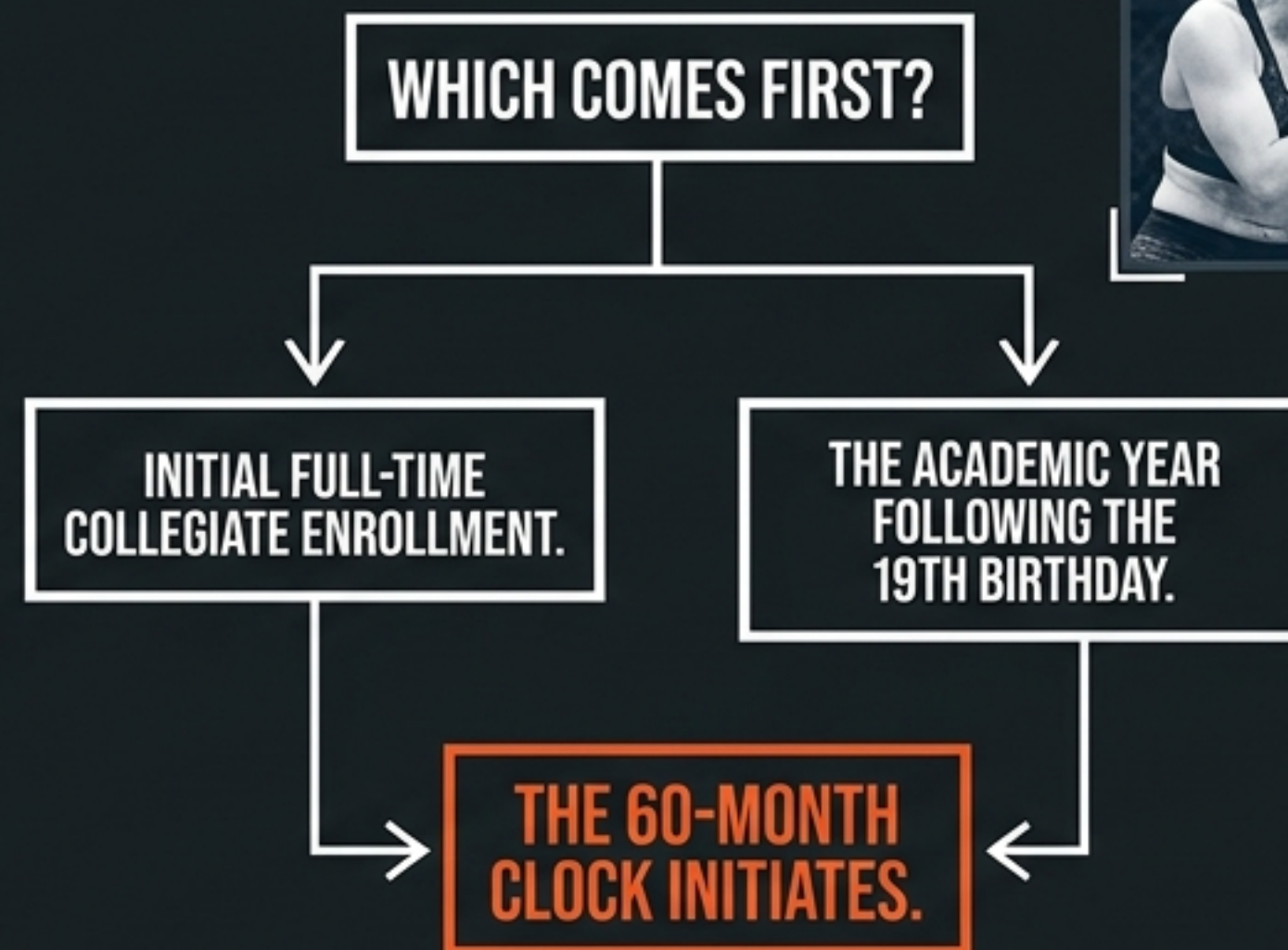
STATUS: ACTIVE |
STATUS TB | REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK: POST-HOUSE V. NCAA |
TARGET: MAXIMUM ROI

60-MONTH RELENTLESS CLOCK



THE "FIVE-FOR-FIVE" RULE: ONCE ACTIVATED, THE CLOCK CANNOT BE PAUSED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL RESETS OR ROSTER DEPTH.

CLOCK TRIGGERS



PERMISSIBLE PAUSES



1. ACTIVE-DUTY
MILITARY SERVICE



2. OFFICIAL
RELIGIOUS
MISSIONS



3. PREGNANCY



RISK ALERT: DIEGO PAVIA JUCO FEDERAL INJUNCTION TRIAL SET FOR FEBRUARY 2027. MULTI-YEAR PLANS MUST HEDGE AGAINST REGULATORY VOLATILITY

THE OBSOLESCENCE OF THE REDSHIRT

The traditional DI/DII redshirt is gone. Time can no longer be 'saved' inside the system; it must be leveraged before entry.

GAP YEAR (EXTERNAL)

Setting:

Outside Institution (RTCs/Academies)

Eligibility Cost:

Zero (if initiated before age 19 trigger)

Competition:

International/Open (Unattached)

NIL Opportunity:

High (Unrestricted Brand Building)



REDSHIRT (INTERNAL/~~OBSOLETE~~)

Setting:

Inside Institution (On-campus)

Eligibility Cost:

Burns 1 year of the 60-month lifecycle

Competition:

None (without burning a season)

NIL Opportunity:

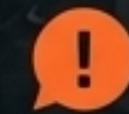
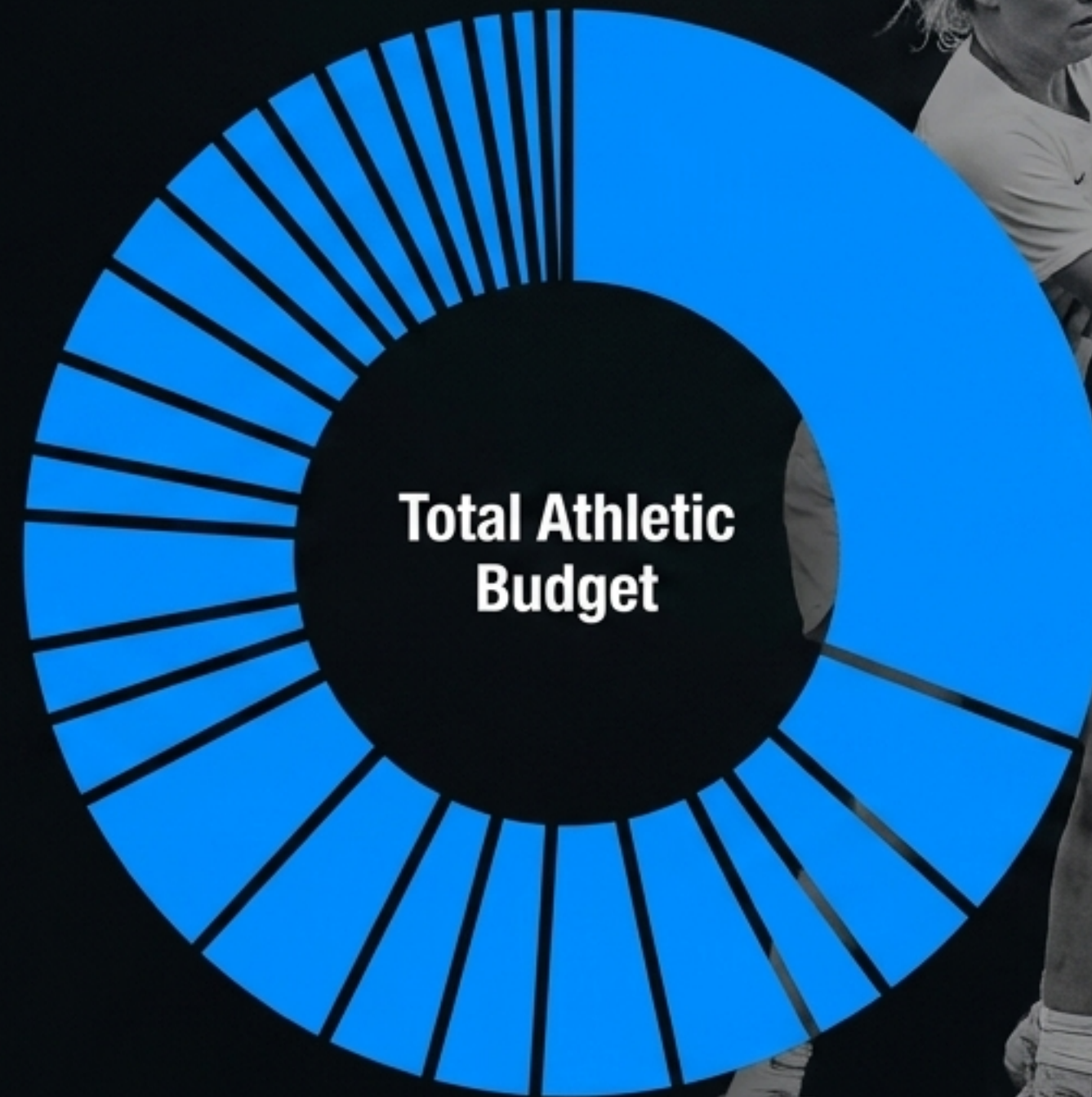
Restricted (Subject to NCAA/State law)

RESEARCH-BACKED RTC OUTCOMES: Gap year students post GPAs 0.1–0.4 points higher and achieve 90%+ return-to-college retention.

POST-SETTLEMENT ROSTER ECONOMICS: THE EQUIVALENCY REALITY

THE RULE

- **The 30-Man Limit:** Opt-in DI schools now have a 30-athlete roster ceiling for men and women. Non-opt-in schools remain at 9.9/10 limits.
- **Reality Check:** A 30-man ceiling does not equal 30 fully funded scholarships.



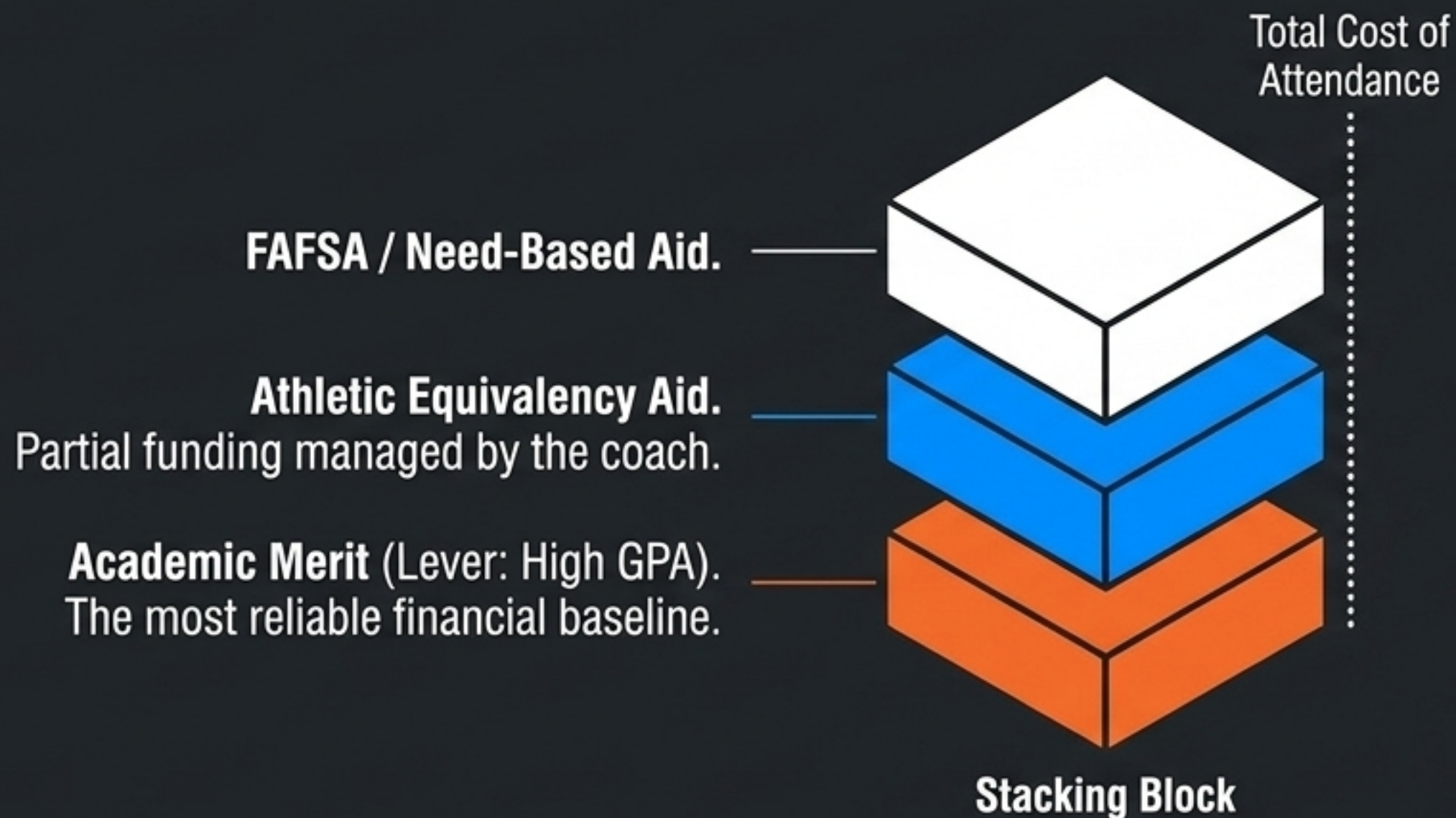
THE STRATEGIC INTERROGATION

Action Command: Change how you interview coaches. Stop asking "Do you have scholarships?"

Ask This Instead: "How many athletes on your current 30-man roster receive ~~0~~ ZERO athletic aid?" and "What is the average award for a non-starter?"

THE NET-PRICE PARADOX: STACKING YOUR CAPITAL

Do not dismiss a program based on 'Sticker Price.' Private institutions often yield a lower 'Net Price' due to robust institutional aid that stacks with partial athletic awards.

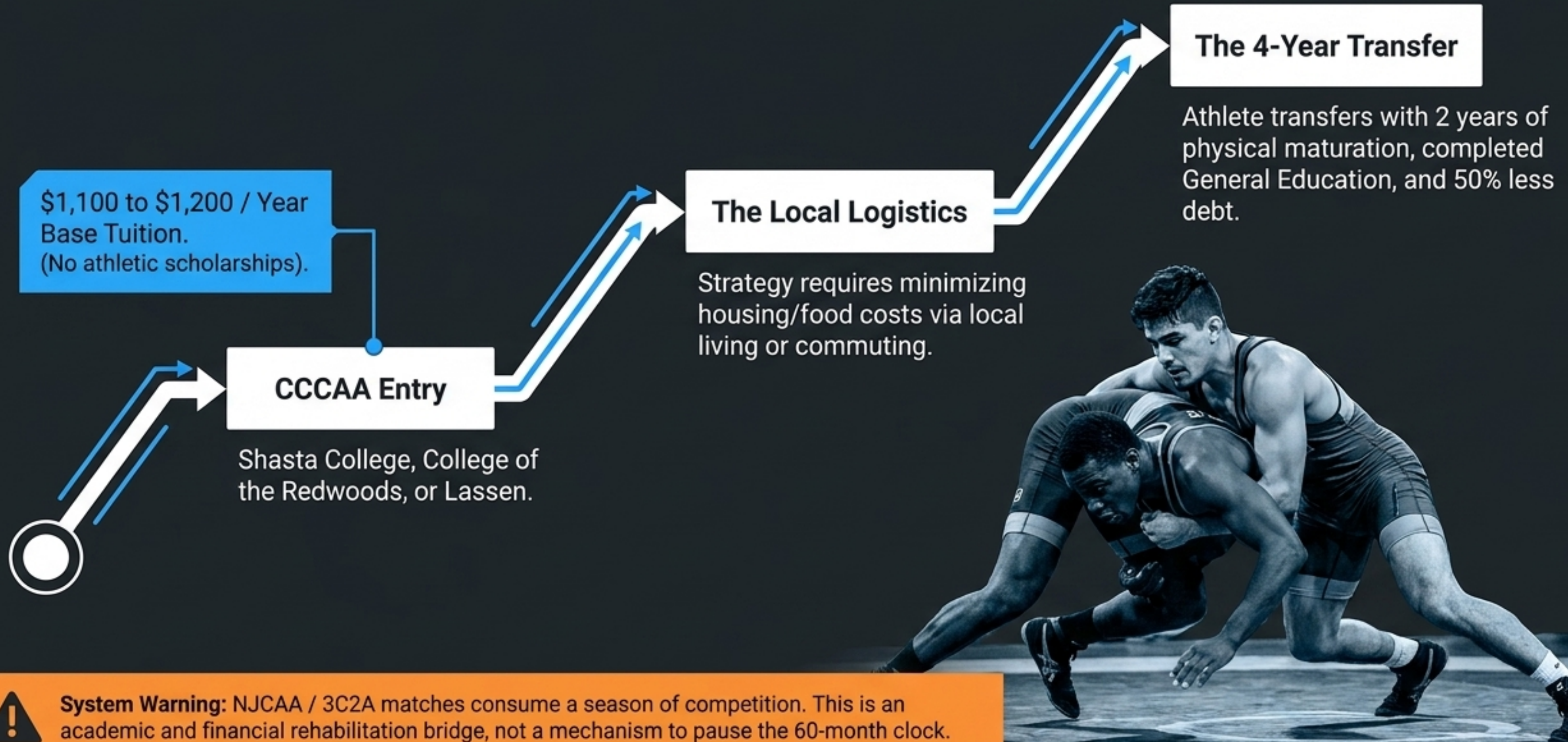


COST REALITIES

Public 4-Year (Sticker/Net):	\$20,000 – \$58,000
Private 4-Year (Aided Net Price):	\$28,000 – \$35,000

Your **academic profile** is the **primary lever** for securing the merit-based aid that makes heavily discounted private schools competitive with in-state public universities.

THE CALIFORNIA PIPELINE: HALVING UNDERGRADUATE DEBT



DIVISIONAL DIAGNOSTICS & MEDICAL HEDGING

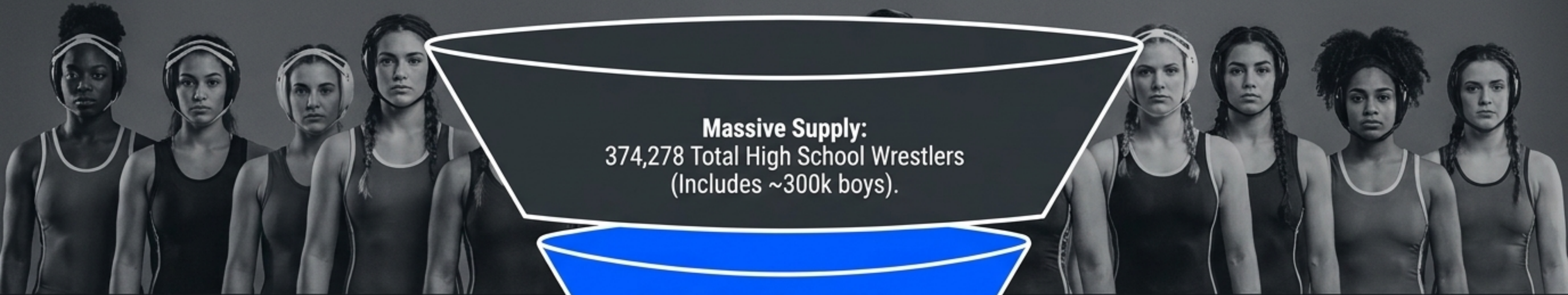
The elimination of DI/DII medical waivers makes injury a career-altering event. DIII and NAIA serve as critical “Strategic Sanctuaries” for medical protection.

	FRAMEWORK	MEDICAL PROTECTION	STRATEGIC USE
NCAA DI / DII	60-Month Clock	Eliminated (DII retains 30% freshman flexibility)	High-profile exposure; requires immediate durability.
NCAA DIII	Participation-Based	RETAINS MEDICAL HARDSHIP (Highlighted in flat alert orange)	Academic priority; ultimate medical protection hedge; zero athletic aid.
NAIA	20% Rule (5 Dates)	No formal waivers, but high threshold flexibility	Maximum financial equivalency flexibility; early mat time.
NJCAA / CCCAA	2-Year Bridge	Limited	Low-cost academic rehabilitation.



Ensure contemporary medical records are physician-signed. This documentation is useless in DI/DII but represents “salvage gold” in DIII/NAIA.

THE RECRUITING MATH: SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND SANCTUARIES



Massive Supply:
374,278 Total High School Wrestlers
(Includes ~300k boys).

The Bottleneck: ~4,390 NCAA
D1/D2 athletes competing for
severely limited, fractured
equivalency spots.

**The Strategic
Sanctuaries:**
NAIA and
Women's
Wrestling.

Women's Wrestling Engine:
~500 programs nationally.

Exploding due to 2026 inaugural
NCAA Championship and Title IX
proportionality.

The most scholarship-accessible market.

NAIA Men's Landscape:

~68-70 sponsoring institutions.

~1,800 athletes competing for ~488
scholarship spots.

Superior odds for non-blue-chip recruits.

THE NAIA ADVANTAGE: HIGH-VALUE TARGET ACQUISITION



THE “MONEYBALL” OF SCHOLARSHIPS

- Up to 8 equivalency scholarships per team.
- Smaller average roster sizes (~31 athletes).
- Coaches have maximum flexibility to package athletic aid with standard \$8,000+ academic merit awards.

IMMEDIATE MAT IMPACT

- D1 Bottleneck: Elite talent sits on the bench burning their 60-month clock.
- NAIA Reality: Clearer, faster track to varsity lineups. Development through high-level competition, not sitting behind a depth chart.

THE NIL PIONEERS

- First association to permit NIL (Oct 2020).
- Unlimited compensation, allowed to wear institutional gear, unburdened by the post-House NCAA compliance maze.

THE MODERN ARCHITECT'S EQUATION

The era of saving time is over; the era of leveraging it has begun.
Tactical advantage goes to the architect, not the recruiter.

[External Gap Year Maturation]

[Preserves the 60-month clock]

+

[NAIA/DIII Equivalency & Merit Stacking]

[Maximizes net-price affordability]

+

[Medical Waiver Hedging]

[Protects against career-ending injury]

= MAXIMUM CAREER ROI

Chasing a low-tier D1 roster spot at the expense of development time and financial ruin is mathematically inferior. Manage your 60-month asset with absolute precision.