

Athletics FAQs

- **Which sports are being reinstated?**

Women: Basketball, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball

Men: Basketball, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer

- **What is the timeline for new seasons?**

New seasons will begin in fall 2027

- **Why were these sports chosen? What was the process?**

Membership in NCAA and CCAA Division II athletics requires a minimum of 10 sports. The Athletics Fiscal Feasibility Committee used the Athletics Task Force Report from January 2026 as a guiding document to determine this mix. The final mix for the restart of athletics must:

- Satisfy Title IX gender equity and NCAA and CCAA Division II Athletics conference compliance;
- Generate community interest to generate philanthropic and spectator engagement beyond past levels and maintain that interest;
- Be fiscally sustainable based on our best knowledge to date of both sources and uses of funds to support athletics.

An appropriate reflection of campus demographics and achieves a cost balance that will ease pressure on funding sources while promoting on-campus and broader community engagement and support.

- **How many total athletes do you expect to have?** 186

- **Will former coaches be asked back?** Former coaches are welcome to apply for their previous positions.

- **How is this being funded?**

A combination of:

- Existing student fees directed back to sports following their fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 use for other programs in fiscal year 2027-28 when competition begins
- Net tuition revenue based on the number of new student athletes
- Fundraising and sponsorships from the community through a broad campaign to support athletics, including alumni
- Sports camp fees and other revenues from using spaces and places on campus
- Fees for outside use of sports facilities
- Additional institutional support, including a combination of SSU Commitment funding provided by the State of California in 2025

- **What sponsors have you secured?**

Several potential athletics sponsors have been identified and are in conversation with the university. They will be announced as sponsorship details are finalized.

- **Will new and/or upgraded facilities be needed? How will these be funded?**

Funds provided to the university through the state legislature's Sonoma State Commitment will be used to upgrade SSU facilities in a priority determined by SSU's athletic and university leadership.

- **Will this help overall enrollment?**

A robust athletics program is an enrollment draw for every university. Specific to Sonoma State, the expectation is that the presence of athletics will help grow enrollment over time.

- **Do you plan to bring back other sports?**

As the re-implementation of athletics gains traction and sustainability, opportunities will emerge for additional sports to be considered based on the new sports' ability to make a case to be self-sustaining financially over time.

- **What about baseball?**

The 10 sports chosen represent a mix that satisfies Title IX and Division II Athletics Conference compliance requirements; reflect campus demographics; and are best suited to be fiscally sustainable to restart SSU athletics given available resources for the overall athletics program. Additional programs may be considered as overall financial resources allow additional sports to be supported sustainably.

- **If SSU can find funds for athletics, why can't it find funds for shuttered programs, e.g., WGS, theater, dance, etc.?**

This is less a budget issue than an innovation issue. Just as athletics is being reimagined to reflect the current and ongoing needs and makeup of the university, so too are other programs. For example, geology, physics, and history programs initially included in the January 2025 budget cuts have been reintegrated thanks to innovative reorganization by faculty. This process will continue wherever and whenever possible.

- **What is the impact of the recent news that the state Supreme Court will review the student athletes' appeal to challenge the University's prior changes to athletics and academic programs in the *Lencioni* matter?**

The Supreme Court will only be addressing a procedural issue regarding appealability. The Court will not be reviewing or addressing whether the elimination of Sonoma State's academic or athletic programs was proper or permissible.

- **What are the next steps following this announcement?**

The university is in the process of hiring a development officer specifically for athletics fundraising, and will begin the hiring process for coaches and athletics department staff, followed by recruitment of athletes to begin competition in 2027-28. Further, SSU will be initiating an all-funds budget approach to generate university-wide financial sustainability. This will be done to support athletics as an extension of both recruitment and retention efforts, and support SSU's overall mission of educational access and excellence.