

**The Sparkle On Scholarship Presented by Kate Courtney  
In Partnership with SCOTT, Syncros, SRAM, and Rockshox**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Who is eligible for the Sparkle On Scholarship?**

The Sparkle On Scholarship is open to all NICA 2020-21 student-athletes graduating high school who will attend college for the 2021-22 academic year and seek to balance mountain bike racing with college studies. College attendance for the 2021-22 academic year is key to eligibility and can be to community college or 4-year college program.

**How does a student-athlete apply?**

The application will be available on March 1st and due by March 31st. The application process will be online and include the ability to upload the requested letter of recommendation. Check back on March 1st for a link to the application.

**How will recipients be selected?**

Scholarships will be awarded based on the information provided in the application and supporting recommendation. All applications will be thoroughly reviewed by a committee made up of representatives from NICA, both staff and coaching, parents of former NICA racers, community members skilled in selection processes, and representatives from the sponsoring organizations.

**How can recipients use the scholarship?**

The scholarship can be used for college expenses including tuition, books and materials, and living expenses, and for expenses related to mountain bike racing, including race fees, travel expenses, gear, and the like. The goal of the scholarship is to assist in making college possible while still being able to race your mountain bike. Each applicant will likely need something different and the scholarship is meant to be flexible in meeting these different needs.

**How will the financial scholarship be awarded?**

The monetary part of the scholarship will be awarded in full upon confirmation of each recipient's enrollment in the college of their choice.

**Is this a multi-year scholarship?**

This is a one-year scholarship.

**How will the mentoring program work?**

The mentoring program with Kate will consist of quarterly calls covering whatever questions, concerns, and/or challenges the recipients are experiencing with either college work or mountain bike competition. For example, tips on how to get classwork done while traveling and competing, getting professors on your side when race schedules mean missing in-person class time, clarifying race goals and learning to balance them with being a college student, and generally how to make sure to keep the joy and passion for cycling alive.

The career mentoring with SRAM will enable recipients to connect with experts within the SRAM organization based on areas of interest to the recipients. These could include mechanical and electrical engineering, finance, marketing, business, to name but a few. SRAM is excited to introduce the next generation of lifelong cycling enthusiasts to the compelling and fulfilling career opportunities which exist in the world of cycling.

**What are the details about the bike from SCOTT?**

Scholarship recipients who do not already have a bike sponsor and that will commit to racing on a SCOTT bike for the year will also receive a mountain bike from SCOTT. The model of bike, components, etc. will depend upon the needs of the recipient and what stock is available at the time and will be coordinated between the recipient and SCOTT Bikes, not the scholarship committee.

**Why can't I receive a SCOTT bike if I already have a bike from a sponsor?**

Congratulations on being one of the lucky few to have a bike sponsor during high school. Our goal is to add to the number of student-athletes competing on high-quality race bikes. That is why we are focused on those who have not had that opportunity before. Also, we respect the willingness to invest in the up-and-coming racers shown by companies providing bike support to development teams and the like and do not want to interfere with that relationship.

**How will a student-athlete's financial need be evaluated in the application process?**

While financial need is not a requirement to be considered for the scholarship, need may be taken into consideration in the selection process. If you have financial limitations that will make going to college and continuing to be able to enter and travel to races a hardship, be sure to let us know on the application. Whatever details you wish to share will be helpful in the decision-making process.

**Do I need to have a certain GPA to be considered for this scholarship?**

No. We are, however, looking for student-athletes who have shown grit and determination in the pursuit of good grades and success on the bike. That does not necessarily mean lots of race wins, but can be reflected in showing a love for the sport, a great attitude within a team and in competition, and a willingness to consistently show up, work hard, and "sparkle on."

**Do I need to include a recommendation letter?**

Applicants are asked to provide the name and contact information for a person that will write a recommendation letter for you should the committee like to learn more about you. This should be the person best able to describe how you demonstrate the attributes central to the scholarship goals of academic and athletic excellence as broadly defined in the description of the scholarship.

**What if I haven't heard from my dream school or made a decision about where I will be attending college?**

The requirement is that the applicant actually attends college for the 2021 academic year and also continue to race. There is no requirement to know exactly which school at the time of applying for the scholarship.

**What if my college of choice doesn't have a cycling team, am I still eligible to apply for the scholarship?**

Yes. The requirement is that you continue to race your mountain bike. This could mean competing in more local events or on the National Level at events like the US Cup Series, Epic Rides Series, or National Championships. While there is no "minimum level" of racing, it is expected that applicants have the passion to compete to the best of their abilities and will use this scholarship as an opportunity to continue to develop as a mountain bike racer.

**What if I decide to take a “gap year” and defer my acceptance to college for a year, can I still be awarded the scholarship?**

No. The recipient must actually attend college for the 2021-22 academic year.

**When will I find out if I am selected for the Scholarship?**

We are expecting a large number of applicants and want to take the time necessary to evaluate all applications. It is our goal to make the selections as quickly as possible, but certainly by the beginning of June 2021.

**Will this scholarship be available for NICA student-athletes graduating in the future?**

The Sparkle On Scholarship will be awarded to graduating Seniors only in order to assist them in their transition out of NICA. NICA has incredible resources to support student-athletes during their time in high school and the aim of this scholarship is to provide continued support for students who wish to continue competing in college. Currently, all sponsors are committed through 2022 at the same level of support and we hope to continue to provide this scholarship beyond that date. It is our hope that this opportunity will be inspiring for young racers to continue to work hard and aim to be a recipient in their Senior year!

**Are Georgia and Colorado League student-athletes eligible even though they are no longer a part of NICA?**

Yes, all 2020-21 academic year NICA graduating student-athletes are eligible. Next year, however, Georgia and Colorado League student-athletes will no longer be eligible for this scholarship.

**For questions and more information, please write us at [scholarships@nationalmtb.org](mailto:scholarships@nationalmtb.org).**