

NCAA & Current Issues in Intercollegiate Sport

(Eitzen & Sage, 2003)

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS



Governing bodies of collegiate athletics.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's purposes are:

- To initiate, stimulate and improve intercollegiate athletics programs for student-athletes and to promote and develop educational leadership, physical fitness, athletics excellence and athletics participation as a recreational pursuit.
- To uphold the principle of institutional control of, and responsibility for, all intercollegiate sports in conformity with the constitution and bylaws of the Association.
- To encourage its members to adopt eligibility rules to comply with satisfactory standards of scholarship, sportsmanship and amateurism.
- To formulate, copyright and publish rules of play governing intercollegiate athletics.
- To preserve intercollegiate athletics records.
- To supervise the conduct of, and to establish eligibility standards for, regional and national athletics events under the auspices of the Association.
- To legislate
- To study in general all phases of competitive intercollegiate athletics and establish standards whereby the colleges and universities of the United States can maintain their athletics programs on a high level.

<http://www.ncaa.org/about/purposes.htm>

Introduction to Collegiate Sport Issues

Current issues in college sport:

- College Sport as big business
- NCAA and student – athletes
- Education and non-education
- Efforts to reform big-time college sports
- Ethics
- The Big-Time College “Arms Race”
- Title IX compliance issues

What do you think?: Small Group Discussion

- ⊙ Have we lost our way when it comes to college athletics?
- ⊙ Should college athletes be able to have agents? Leave to the pros whenever?
- ⊙ Are scholarships benefit enough for student-athletes?

The Business of College Sport

- ⊙ NCAA charged \$160 for Final 4 basketball tickets in 2001
- ⊙ \$215.6 million from the television rights of Final 4
- ⊙ 2002 NCAA received an average of \$545 million for rights sold to CBS through 2013
- ⊙ 2001 the NCAA signed 11-year agreement to broadcast W final 4 and other sports - \$160 million
- ⊙ ABC – football – BSC = \$930 million
- ⊙ Each team playing in top bowls receives 13-17 million each
- ⊙ Nike & Adidas contracts with top universities

Coach Salaries: "Can I borrow five bucks?"

- ⊙ *Bowden FL. St. = 2 million per year plus*
- ⊙ *Patina Un. Of OK = 2 million plus*
- ⊙ *On average, top two sport coaches at top universities make substantially more than teachers and administrators, even at the highest levels*

"It is good to be the King"

- Housing, Cars
- Television deals & Loyalty bonuses
- Travel expenses
- Country club
- "Friends of the Program"
- Lucrative endorsement deals

So, Where is the \$ Coming From?

Critical Read:

- College athletic programs are *not* amateur athletics
- Budgets range from 10 to 73 million per year

Traditional forms of revenue:

- Gate receipts & Merchandising
- Booster organizations
- TV contracts
- Deals with apparel companies
- Reimbursements from leagues and bowls
- Student athletic fees

The Athletic Arms Race: Competition off the Field

Athletic programs are often losing propositions!

- 2000-01 *only* 48 of 976 A.D.s finished with a profit
- More than half operate at a loss
- Big sports are often burdened with supplying cash to smaller programs

Escalating Arms Race

- Competing to build bigger stadiums
- Recruit better athletes
- More TV visibility and mainstream visibility
- Training facilities
- Support staff growth (trainers, tutors, administrators, etc.)
- Booster (and community) support and pressure
- Any expense acceptable in pursuit of athletic glory
- Ancillary – parties, mixers, “benefits”

Consequences of Big-Time College Athletics

- ⊙ Lack of adequate monies leads to a reduction in the number of sport offered
- ⊙ Decisions made based on revenue and money rather than best practices
 - e.g. games scheduling
- ⊙ Money has “corrupted” the university and the purpose of sport
 - (amount of \$\$ spent = wins)
 - Class Q? - Can you buy a championship?

Extreme Consequences of Collegiate Sport Arms Race

- ⊙ Illegal recruiting practices
- ⊙ Grade doctoring and class “passing”
- ⊙ Use of steroids and HGH
- ⊙ Ethics of cheating and lying to win
- ⊙ Unbalanced budgets
- ⊙ Reduced opportunities for smaller sports
- ⊙ Violence off the field, rape, and drinking
- ⊙ High arrest rates, low graduation

Class Discussion...

- **Are universities using students to hustle money and recognition?**
- **Do universities have a responsibility to graduate scholarship student-athletes?**
- **Should programs that do not graduate at least half of their programs be banned from competition for a period of time?**
- **Should student-athletes be paid? If yes, who? Top 20 D 1 schools only?**

College Sport: Amateur Student Athletes or Exploited Labor?

- Student-athletes are an unpaid labor force with very little rights or room for redress
- Play or scholarships are revoked; perform or scholarships are revoked
- Loads of money is being made, yet student-athletes in top 2 sports are not graduating
- Are scholarships a form of worker exploitation?
- Amount given to students compared to amount made by universities very incongruent
- Programs are year-round, when school?
- Top schools, athletes spend more time on "field" than in classroom
- Coaches, administrators, universities, boosters, sponsors – big \$; athletes - highly *surveilled* and wildly underpaid

NCAA: Ethical Governing Body and/or The Evil Empire

The NCAA: What does it do?

- Provides and enforces uniform set of rules and conduct
- Adjudicates disputes
- Organization of play-offs and tournaments
- Oversees all intercollegiate athletics
- Helps enforce Title IX compliance (led by Office of Civil Rights)

Two major NCAA Concerns

- Enforcement of "amateurism"
- Rules that limit athlete rights

NCAA: Amateurism or Professionalism

Major Limits on athlete autonomy and labor rights

Athletes cannot:

- ⊙ Have a financial advisor (agent)
- ⊙ Lose amateur status if they allow their pictures or names linked to commercial enterprises
- ⊙ Receive payment for athletic services
- ⊙ Be used to raise money even for charities
- ⊙ Receive extra compensation from university outside scholarship

Relationship between sport participation and character

- ⊙ One-sided agreement contracts
- ⊙ Major limits on student-athletes rights
- ⊙ Letters of intent
- ⊙ Transfer must sit out one year – lose a year
- ⊙ Transfer without coach consent – sit (lose) out two years
- ⊙ Coach leaves, abusive treatment, no redress for transfer
- ⊙ Athlete commitment id four years; schools commitment is one-year (don't perform, don't like you...see ya!)
- ⊙ Historic NCAA response to blame student-athletes

These economic practices would be illegal in the private sector.

Unequal and Unfair Treatment: Student-Athletes

1. Student-athletes in top 2 sports are not graduating in equal numbers to the student body
2. Indicators of college success:
SAT, ACT, high school GPA
3. Scores for student-athletes at most top universities tends to be lower than student body
4. Athletes are more likely to receive special treatment in admission process or admitted below standard
(1990, 27% failed to meet standards)

Academic Performance & Graduation

- ⊙ Tutors, sympathetic teachers, easy classes, surrogate test takers, ghost paper writers
- NCAA Graduation Rates (1994-2000):
- ⊙ University: 68%-73% females graduate; 54% of males from student body graduate
 - ⊙ Problems with who collects data, who interprets data, who stands to benefit from "interpretations" of the data

Chronicle of Higher Education and NCAA Study on Graduation Rates

- 1994 class (six year tracking)
 - 40% of scholarship players graduated in 2000
 - Men's basketball – 32% graduated overall
 - 47 schools did not graduate a black player in men's basketball
 - 12 schools graduated not one player in men's basketball
 - White football players = 51%; 42% black players graduated
 - Top schools (bowl-bound) graduate fewer players than smaller schools despite more resources
 - The Ohio State: 33% of football team; 17% of black players; 73 million budget)

Problems with Data and Stats

- ⊙ Data does not take into account those athlete who transfer or leave school to become professionals
- ⊙ Be wary of official stats supplied by the NCAA comparing grad rates between athletic and non-athletic student bodies
 - Lumps all athletes together
 - Misrepresents grad rates from revenue producing sports
 - Does not account for SES and social identity

The Reform Movement

- ◎ Athlete Rights
 - Fair compensation for labor
 - Athlete bill of rights
 - Transfers, four-year scholarships, same student rights, right to consult agents, make money from endorsements
- ◎ Emphasizing Education
 - Ensure athletes are equipped to compete academically prior to entry & competition
 - Freshman ineligible for competition
 - Colleges must insist athletes make satisfactory progress toward a degree
 - Time demands must be reduced