

## Division I College Football in the U.S.

By  
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This Industry Analysis examines the stakeholders within the constructs of the college football environment and seeks to explain the various impacts on key stakeholders within the constructs of this industry. More importantly, this research tracks the student-athlete with regards to both decision paths of either seeking a professional football career or an education with the benefits to playing football.

The student athlete will face many decisions within his journey as a football player and it can be critical that the supporting people within his family environment become a voice of practicality when making a college selection or deciding when to leave college in order to pursue the quest of playing in the National Football League (NFL). This decision for a young adult can be challenging, as it will have a binary outcome of either success or failure that will result in a direct and far-reaching impact on his adult life.

Many Division I student-athletes, at some point in their collegiate careers, will face the struggle of

making the decision to remain a college student or leave college early to play professional football. For some this decision will not be an issue as there are some student-athletes that will accept the reality that professional football will not be their career vehicle. However, there are a large majority of student-athletes that will need to go through that decision thought process. Understanding how to distinguish

**Does the journey of being recruited and participating in a Division I college football program enrich the experience of the student-athlete's college life athletically and academically?**

attainable reality compared to chasing a dream of playing professional football and comprehending the low probability of that intended dream will need to be understood by the student-athlete and their support system(s).

The parent(s) may have to become more aware of the

long-standing impacts as they introduce their child to football and consider the level of importance that they may place on their child's athletic success. A balanced approach must be in place that prioritizes success in both college football and academically. Thus, the student-athletes journey cannot be defined by expectations of playing professional football alone.

**Keywords:** National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, Division I, Student-Athlete, Parents, College Football, Conferences, SEC, ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Conference USA, High School, Recruiting, Recruit, Coach, Head Coach, African American, Student, University, College, College Football, Football, National Football League, NFL Draft, NFL, Revenue, Academics, National Championship, BCS.

## Introduction to the U.S. College Athletic Landscape

The term “college athletics” refers to sports-related and organized athletics competitions, where the participants are students of institutions of higher education (e.g., colleges and universities) in the United States. These institutions of higher learning subsidize the various sports and athletic activities as part of their extracurricular programs. The college athletics framework is built upon a two-tiered system.

The first tier of college athletics is overseen by academic sport governing organizations, including the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) which is an association made up of community college and junior college athletic departments throughout the United States

For this industry analysis, the author focuses on the first tier of the college athletics framework, which involves only the sports sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). For some, it is considered a privilege to compete at the height of collegiate athletics and receive a valuable education. However, many athletes in today’s evolving college athletic landscape—more specifically those in college football—believe they are victims because they do not benefit from the revenues at the Division I level.

Participating in college athletics enriches the student’s college experience. However, the physical and mental demands can outweigh the intended academic purpose. Players train daily in hopes of demonstrating an uncommon level of performance, so that their football accomplishments and accolades result in multimillion-dollar contract offers from National Football League (NFL) teams.

In recent NCAA reports, statistics show that approximately 2% will see financial contractual rewards for college football student-athletes. However, the majority of student-athletes who play football experience and endure the wear and tear on their bodies without ever reaping professional rewards. A number of misconceptions exist about the student-athlete and his journey into his attended college and football program. Student-athletes and their parents participate in the recruiting process, a far from normal experience when compared to the non-athletic college student.

This industry analysis outlines the collegiate football landscape from various facets and provides insights into the many layers of college athletics as an

industry. Due to the magnitude of the population of athletes who participate in college athletics at the Division I level, this analysis only focuses on Division I college football. This focus is accomplished by highlighting the stakeholders within the constructs of Division I college football and addressing the various impacts on the identified stakeholders. These stakeholders include the student-athlete, the colleges and universities that exist within the industry environment, and the professional sports teams, such as the NFL, that are the potential employers of the student-athletes from the collegiate football system.

The business model of the NCAA is that it serves as the governing body of college sports and currently monopolizes the earning potential of the student-athlete and his attended university. Since its conception, the NCAA has maintained its status as a profitable organization by increasing its profits year in and year out.

In this analysis, Porter’s *Five Forces Model* is used to identify and evaluate the key factors that could possibly disrupt college athletics as an industry and cause a breakdown in the control the NCAA has

on student-athletes, the educational institutions, and other revenues. For a period of time, the NCAA and other partnering corporate entities made millions of dollars from the likeness of the student-athlete. In a class action suit filed by an ex-University of California at Los Angeles bas-

ketball player, the judge ruled that it was unlawful for the NCAA to profit from the likeness of a student-athlete. An athlete’s likeness was defined as a student-athlete’s personal rights; it was ruled that the student-athlete reserved the right to govern the commercial use of his name, image, likeness, or other obvious facets of the student-athlete’s distinctiveness or brand recognition.

If the NCAA allowed players to profit from their right to use their likenesses, would it increase the chances of student-athletes choosing to stay and play at the college level?

## College Athletics: The Industry and the Business

On December 28, 1905, in New York, 62 colleges and universities became charter members of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS). The IAAUS was established officially on March 31, 1906, and took its present name, the NCAA, in 1910. The NCAA did not function under a full-time leader until 1951.

The majority [98%] of student-athletes who play football experience and endure the wear and tear on their bodies without ever reaping professional rewards.

Currently, the NCAA is headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. The NCAA has had only six leaders/presidents within the 66 years of its existence. The NCAA remains divided into three divisions (Divisions I, II, III). Its current organization is structured by three divisions with approximately 347 institutions in Division I (DI), 309 in Division II (DII), and 442 in Division III (DIII).

In August of 1973, Division I, Division II, and Division III were adopted by the NCAA membership in a special convention. Under NCAA rules, Division I and Division II schools can offer scholarships to athletes for playing a sport. Division III schools, in most cases, do not offer any athletic scholarships. Generally, larger schools compete in Division I and smaller schools participate in Division II and Division III. Division I football was further divided into I-A and I-AA in 1978. Subsequently, the term "Division I-AAA" was added briefly to delineate Division I universities that do not have a football program.

The core essence and values for Division I collegiate football programs include compliance, ethical conduct, academics, diversity, amateurism, recruiting, eligibility, financial aid, postseason competition, and the financial sustainability of the athletic program operations. This industry analysis examines the football student-athlete and parent's/guardian's environments to better understand the key priorities when selecting a college and why.

The NCAA membership has adopted amateurism rules to ensure the students' priority remains obtaining a quality educational experience and that all student-athletes compete equitably. All incoming student-athletes must be certified as amateurs. To be certified as an amateur, prospective student-athletes must first register with the NCAA Eligibility Center online at ([www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)), where they provide information about their amateur status. The amateurism certification process ensures that incoming Division I or II student-athletes meet NCAA amateurism requirements. Student-athletes who fully complete the process are typically approved as certified.

With the global recruiting of athletes becoming more common, determining the amateur status of prospective student-athletes can be challenging for colleges and universities. All student-athletes, including international students, are required to adhere to NCAA amateurism requirements to remain eligible for intercollegiate competition.

Another NCAA function is to provide an orga-

nizational structure for the participating athletic programs of numerous colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. The NCAA's organizational structure includes over 450,000 college student-athletes who compete yearly in college competitive sports.

Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships to their student-athletes, but these students can apply to receive academic scholarships and other financial aid, including tuition, room and board, and other college related fees, to defray the costs of obtaining a college education. Division III students do not need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse ("How We Serve," n.d.).

The NCAA operates as a non-profit association that provides the rules and regulations to govern the athletes of 1,123 institutions, conferences, organizations, and individuals. It is also comprised of 98 voting athletic conferences and 39 affiliated organizations. The NCAA membership consists of various roles that make up participating colleges/universities, voting athletic conferences, and affiliated groups (see Appendix for NCAA Members).

Typically, these roles which are outlined in the appendix, are salaried staffed positions and, in some cases, are mandatory for the athletic program to have in order to be considered compliant as a college/university participating in NCAA athletics.

On numerous occasions, the NCAA has been ques-

tioned and challenged on its positions regarding policies related to student-athlete financial guidelines, especially regarding its use of the age-old classification of college athletes as "amateurs" who should be the first to be acknowledged as student-athletes and subject to the restrictions its members have imposed on the compensation student-athletes receive. Every year, a significant number of players are reported to have received benefits over and above the NCAA's approved limits.

The sanctions for such violations have led to players having their college eligibility revoked. The impact of the violations also affects the colleges and universities where these players competed. In some well-publicized cases, teams' wins were stripped away, the college and university football teams were banned from participating in bowl/tournament championship games and, for more extreme violations, coaches were fired and athletic programs severely restricted in their abilities to recruit student-athletes.

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## Understanding the Collegiate Stakeholders

### The Student-Athlete

The definition of a student-athlete is an individual who participates in an organized competitive sport sponsored by the educational institution in which he or she is currently enrolled. Typically, student-athletes must balance the roles of being a full-time student with being a full-time athlete.

According to NCAA Research, the estimated probability of competing in professional athletics is extremely low and could alarm the aspiring college athlete, especially if he desires a career as a professional athlete. According to NCAA research conducted in 2015, approximately 1.5% of NCAA students who are draft-eligible will have an opportunity to make a professional roster. This 1.5% represents the total 20% of all participating athletic programs that have potential student-athletes with the opportunity to play on a major league level.

The creation of a student-athlete occurs at a very early stage of life, depending on the individual's level of development and physical growth. Most universities compete against each other to recruit and acquire the high-performing student-athletes as early as the junior year of high school.

On average, a Division I prototypical athlete entering his junior year in high school will receive hundreds of offer letters from colleges and universities. Many athletes will have the opportunity to make numerous campus visits at the athletic departments' expense; these visits are intended to provide a glamorous glimpse of the campus life.

From that early age, coaches place a great deal of emphasis on student-athletes playing at the peak of their abilities, making the big plays, and creating the highlight reel footage. Winning is absolutely everything to young athletes, and college coaches know it. In a number of cases, high school seniors who are stars on their teams and in their regions are visited and recruited by Division I head football coaches of

major universities.

Some realities of college football are not commonly discussed, such as the limited financial aid the student-athlete can receive. Without adequate support from family, the student-athlete's campus life could be extremely grim. As the student-athlete struggles with the time commitment demanded to balance their academic and athletic lives, many choose football to survive and maintain their positions.

The vast majority of Division I athletes are considered to be professional grade athletes; they use their college careers as a platform to transcend to the professional level. Some of these athletes openly acknowledge and admit that obtaining a college degree is secondary in their priorities, if important at all.

From an early age, the idea of becoming an NFL superstar is an expectation embedded in the student-athlete's mind; the mindset begins when the student is first introduced to the sport and begins to excel in it. For many Division I athletes, college serves as a formality and training process that helps them transition into a professional athlete. Many coaches are aware of the student-athletes' aspirations

for playing professional football, so they coach these young men in a fashion that can make their aspirations a potential reality.

There are alarming statistics about NCAA sports that parents should know! In an article titled "Facts about the NCAA

Sports," the NCAA highlights details about collegiate sports of which most high school athletes may not be aware (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2018). Of the 176,000 student-athletes in 346 Division I schools, less than 2% of high school athletes will receive an athletic scholarship. The odds of being a scholarship athlete are indeed low (see Table 1).

Today, high school football and basketball seniors across the country host live nationally televised press conferences to announce where they have signed a letter of intent to play college ball. These young kids are the product of the college recruiting business model because nearly every major university has

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**Table 1: Estimated Probability of Competing in NCAA Athletics Beyond High School (NCAA, 2018).**

Student-Athletes	Football
High School Student-Athletes	1,083,600
NCAA Student-Athletes	72,800
Percentage Moving from High School to NCAA	6.7%
Percentage Moving from NCAA to Major Professional Team*	1.6%



adopted this model; many schools invest millions of dollars yearly to recruit and attract the elite athletes from across the country.

Some of these student-athletes may have inherited a false sense of reality during their recruitment process, which further heightens their intention of pursuing professional football as the primary goal of attending college. Recently, this mentality was highlighted in an ESPN documentary conducted on the University of Kentucky head basketball coach, John Calipari.

While it is not common knowledge to the student-athlete or the parent, the NCAA has well-structured rules related to the validity of an athletic scholarship. Athletic scholarships are treated as only a yearly commitment; the university or college reserves the right to withdraw the scholarship at any time, regardless of the student's academic or athletic status.

### The Student-Athlete's Parents

As the young child begins to learn to play football and gets acknowledged for his ability to play the sport, he receives praise and pressure from his parents and the thoughts of excelling in football grow. The transition from playing a recreational sport quickly shifts to having the ability to earn a college scholarship for playing football. Many parents and students know the athletic scholarship can be achieved due to the increasing number of U.S. colleges and universities that are part of the NCAA that provide athletic scholarships yearly. However, many parents plant the idea into their child that even better opportunities exist beyond college.

The parent's role is essential to the student-athletes' decision-making process. Parents may dismiss the notion that their child's first priority should be excelling as a student; many parents may consider academics an institutional formality and focus on the success of their child's football career. There has been an increase of the over-emphasizing of the prospects associated with playing football. When it is time for a student-athlete to select a college, most high performing athletes select their school based on the football team's performance and records rather than the institution's academic ranking.

National reports state that over 30 million young children participate in some kind of organized competitive athletic sports; 70% will quit that sport prior to reaching the age of 13 or before their freshman year in high school (Miner, 2016). Of the 30 million young students who participate in sports, approxi-

mately 126,000 student-athletes will receive some form of a college scholarship. That number is considerably low; research reflects that less than 2% of that 126,000 will transition to the professional level, which means that, in the United States for all division collegiate schools, only 2,520 will become professional athletes in their perspective sports in America (Kelto, 2015).

Parents may not understand that their core responsibility is to influence a child's growth and development in academics as well. The characteristics and make-up of the parents' expectations for the child set the stage of how much of the child's time will be invested in scholastic endeavors, commitment to sports training and related activities, and preparation to be successful in football and academically.

Too much emphasis on football can negatively impact and potentially develop character issues. Placing this type of pressure on the child to perform can slowly cause the young athlete to develop an extremely narrow focus of goals in life.

Some of these issues are found most frequently in African American communities. High school foot-

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ball coaches believe the parents and students do not understand the student's life beyond the athletic scholarship. This belief could be the cause of the lack of awareness of the value of athletic scholarships, due to the fact that, in some instances, African American high school student-athletes are

first generation college students. The NCAA reports that many participants recruited to play at NCAA participating schools are first-generation college students (NCAA, 2018).

Student-athletes from the African American community may have parents who are more likely to instill in their child the ideals of pursuing a career in professional football as a high priority. This type of parental thinking has become a systematic epidemic to some youths within various African American communities.

A research study, "Parent academic involvement as related to school behavior, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescence," has indicated that, based upon Socioeconomic Status (SES), parents' academic level of importance will more likely play a major part in the raising of the child academic goals. Researchers have discovered that African Americans families from lower SES are often less involved in the success of their children's education and academic achievements (Hill et al., 2004).

Because the value of formal education is discounted by some parents, most young African American males believe that using their athletic abilities to succeed in sports is likely to be their only avenue to success. Developing an affinity and love for football at an early age to strengthen their focus and efforts on athletics diminishes the importance of education, which has become a cycle passed from generation to generation, more specifically in African American communities.

## The Universities

Year after year, there have been documented incidents of the widespread corruption in college athletics. Even after many revisions of the NCAA rules and regulations, colleges and universities continually have failed to bring lasting institutional and cultural changes within the collegiate sports arena. In recent studies and publications, various scholarly faculty members across many U.S. universities have stated the numerous contradictions within intercollegiate athletics.

Many academic institutions have stated that their athletic programs show glaring disrespect of the value and integrity of higher education. In a research article, the authors noted that some faculty viewed university athletics and sports programs as negatively affecting the academic reputation of their universities while others believed there is a direct disconnect between athletics and academics (Lawrence, Ott, & Hendricks, 2009).

Faculty members have recognized the harsh reality of the commercialization of college athletics. As a result, whether or not they agree with the collegiate business model, most universities are in the business of sports. In today's collegiate climate, various schools provide CEO-level financial compensation packages to their head coaches. This compensation includes the coaches' salaries, which are considerably more than the highest salaries of the university's faculty and administration staff. Financial contributions have gone as far as the alumni of the university, who have formed groups that are structured in a way that they can augment the coaches' salaries without violating NCAA compliance regulations.

## The Role of the NCAA

### Student-Athlete's Success

The role of the NCAA is to create and foster an eligibility standard that considers the academic performance of the student-athlete, which includes the student-athletes' grade point average (GPA), test

scores, core curriculum courses taken in high school and grades earned for the core courses. The NCAA's stated mission is to enable all student-athletes to be successful in college and successfully manage the amount of coursework required of them.

In past years, the NCAA officials have admitted that there are probably student-athletes who are not academically inclined to keep up with the general student body population. While a population of student-athletes struggles academically, the NCAA also states that a significant number of student-athletes perform at high levels in the classroom.

In some cases, student-athletes are admitted to college underprepared academically. The NCAA has sanctioned some universities to create college courses catered for football student-athletes to enroll in to insure they maintain eligibility. In some cases, these courses had classroom environments where the professor took attendance, issued and graded various assignments and exams, and passed student-athletes without the players attending one class or taking a test (Ganim & Sayers, 2014).

The University of North Carolina admitted that it was guilty of the academic-fraud-for-athletes scandal for athletes taking a

course in African American studies. The outcome of the NCAA investigation from the summer 2007 to summer 2009 revealed that approved classes were taught by an identified professor at the university. The investigation

discovered 50 plus students were enrolled in an abnormal course that indicated no evidence of the faculty member listed as instructor of record, or any other faculty member, actually supervised the course, nor graded the work (Ganim & Sayers, 2014).

While this egregious act is alarming, universities are pressured constantly by the desire to win at all cost, resulting in professors making unethical concessions to help the student-athlete remain academically eligible. Some universities are essentially admitting that football student-athletes did not achieve required academic standards and did whatever they could to circumvent the academic process in return for wins and losses.

## Proper Governance

The NCAA has another functional role that helps guide the rules of engagement across conferences and divisional levels. The NCAA consists of a Board of Governors that ensure the overall core strategic direction, guidance, and controls are in place. Currently, the NCAA governance model has two ap-

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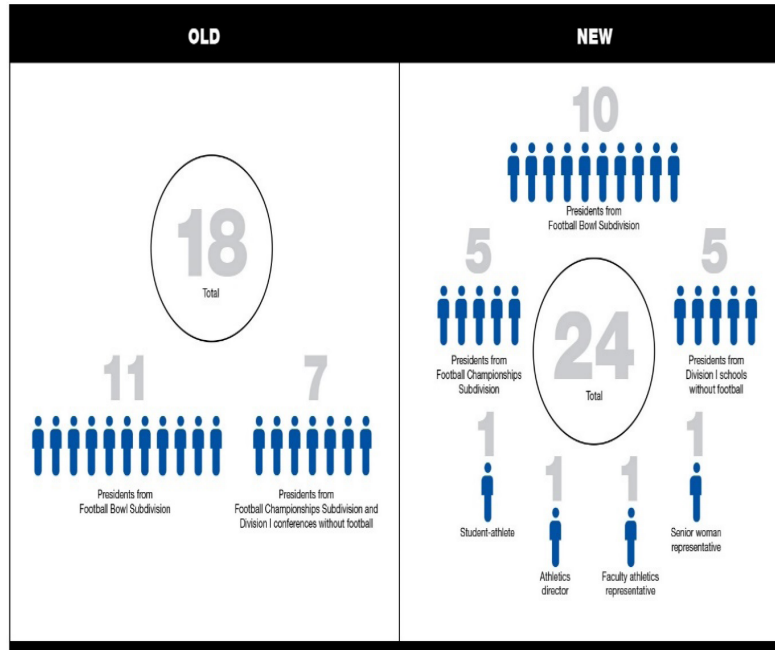


Figure 1: NCCA Board of Directors Model (Brutlag Hosick, 2014).

proaches. The first approach consists of the Division I Board of Directors, which includes university presidents, a student-athlete, a faculty representative, the athletics director, and a female administrator. The primary function of the Board is to provide for day-to-day operations of the division (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 depicts the Council, which is responsible for making the day-to-day policy and legislative decisions for the NCAA participants (see Figure 2).

The end goal of this governance structure is to improve the perception of collegiate athletics as well as participating universities and conferences. This structure provides a great deal of decision power to the presidents to dictate the desired course of collegiate athletics, policies, and bylaws. In 2014, the NCAA governance was revamped due to a much-needed reorganization and strategic focus.

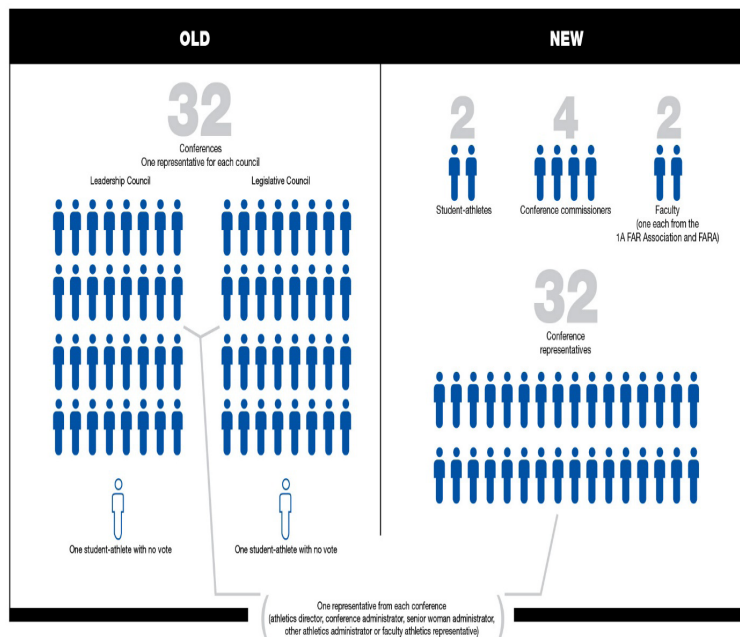


Figure 2: NCCA Council Operations (Brutlag Hosick, 2014).

## NCAA Programs

The NCAA also provides programs to ensure it cultivates and facilitates a culture that supports the student-athlete. To ensure a support system for the student-athlete community, the NCAA created a “Stay in the Game” initiative. This initiative guarantees the student-athlete athletic scholarship, regardless of athletic performance or football-related injury. In 2015, 65 of the Division I conference institutions adopted this policy. For participating schools, the “Stay in the Game” program ensures the student-athlete an education.

The NCAA has several other programs, including programs that promote and support various causes and diversity focused agendas, such as gender equality, health awareness, and injury prevention and safety. Furthermore, the 65 participating schools within the major conferences (Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern) have structured their scholarship offerings to include the full cost of university attendance.

In summary, the NCAA holds the university accountable for the academic progress of the student-athlete. Its goal is to provide the framework and confines within which the Division I school must play. If the participating institution plays outside the boundaries, harsh penalties can be assessed at various levels of the athletic programs.

The NCAA, rich in history and revenue, has stood the test of time and managed to provide a structured format by which the majority of the large universities abide. With the evolving reality that everyone in the collegiate landscape makes money, the NCAA has acknowledged the rapid growth of commercialization placed on college athletics and commented that potential changes are imminent in the near future.

An exponential amount of profits flows to and from the NCAA and its participating institutions, compared to the financial assistance provided to the vast pool of scholarship student-athletes. While the NCAA has made strides in progressing its thinking about how to create an equal balance of equity, the student-athlete education and academic achievement remains looming. The NCAA faces a long journey to bring a holistic solution of financial equality to all key stakeholders. To truly transform the current collegiate landscape, the NCAA may have to transform its perspective on amateurism and academic achievement of the student-athlete. The approach needs to provide a more effective mechanism to ensure that the student-athletes’ success equates to more than that of a national championship.

## Comparison of a University Professor’s Compensation to an Athletic Coach’s Compensation

In the evolving financial landscape of college athletics in the United States, one group that has benefited from the upward trend in salaries and other compensation is Division I football coaches. Highlights of the multimillion-dollar contracts and compensation deals have been aired on sports cable networks and documented in sports publications worldwide. It has become common knowledge that coaches make significantly more than tenured college professors.

For example, for the fiscal years including 2015 and 2016, the highest salaried non-student football staff member at the University of Alabama earned \$1,082,248. Judith Bonner, serving as President of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was compensated at that level (University of Alabama, 2015). At the same time, the highest paid head football coach, Nick Saban, at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, made \$15,214,395 annually, according to the *USA Today* website (Berkowitz, Schnaars, & Dougherty, n.d.). This salary difference is significant, in the range of approximately \$14,000,000.

Athletic programs at many universities in the United States will continue to struggle to identify the moral balance between academics and athletics. More and more universities are losing the

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academic compasses as their essential existence and yielding to the ever-increasing demand to promote and invest in their athletic programs.

Universities are making strategic decisions to promote their brand by emphasizing their athletic programs and the quality of the athletic talent they can bring to the campus. However, in some cases, institutions will make these strategic decisions and elect not to equally invest in academia. In numerous cases, this decision has resulted in an over-emphasis on the football athletic program as the focal point of the school, not the academic successes of the student-athletes.

In trying to understand the financial dynamics related to how universities invest in athletics, the researcher began to investigate the top ranked Division I universities and the financial agendas at play within the institutions. Four universities were selected in this study: The University of Alabama, the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, and Oklahoma State University.

Across the four universities, collectively, a total of \$60,000,000 was spent on the head football coach in







2015-16 while a total of \$8,000,000 was spent on the top paid professors or presidents. Four head coaches are worth \$60,000,000 to these universities; however, the academic future, landscape and mission are seemingly worth only \$8,000,000.

The researcher recognizes that these state institutions have salary constraints and regulations that are governed by their respective governing bodies. In the discussion case section, the researcher presents how a state university overcame institutional adversities to ensure they would financially secure their head coach.

In efforts to provide an unbiased approach, further research was conducted on the same four universities to identify the top 19 salaried faculty/professor positions. Likewise, the same effort was utilized to outline the head football coaching staff and its salaries; across the board, the disparity of salaries was not close.

In Table 2: Top 4 College Coaching Salaries, the researcher provides a detail breakdown of the universities' coaching staff in comparison to academic employees.

**Table 2: Top 4 College Coaching Salaries**

2015 - 2016 Salary in Comparison Coaches & Assistant Staff vs. Top Salaried President & 19 Top Salaried Professors				
University - NCAA Conf.	Head Coach	Salary	Michigan Asst Football Coach's Salary	Football Program Salary
Michigan - Big	Jim Harbaugh	\$ 19,333,000	\$ 4,308,750	\$ 23,641,750
	Michigan Top Salaried	Salary	Michigan Top 19 Professors' Salary	Top 20 Academia Salary
	Paul Castillo	\$ 895,209	\$ 11,856,234	\$ 12,751,443
	(+) Coach (-) Professor	\$ 18,437,791	\$ (7,547,484)	\$ 10,890,307
University - NCAA Conf.	Head Coach	Salary	Alabama Asst Football Coach's Salary	Football Program Salary
Alabama - SEC	Nick Saban	\$ 15,203,790	\$ 5,320,000	\$ 20,523,790
	Top Salaried Faculty	Salary	Alabama Top 19 Professors' Salary	Top 20 Academia Salary
	Judith I Bonner	\$ 1,082,248	\$ 6,445,963	\$ 7,528,211
	(+) Coach (-) Professor	\$ 14,121,542	\$ (1,125,963)	\$ 12,995,579
University - NCAA Conf.	Head Coach	Salary	Ohio State Asst Football Coach's Salary	Football Program Salary
Ohio State -	Urban Meyer	\$ 13,214,600	\$ 4,583,100	\$ 17,797,700
	Top Salaried Faculty	Salary	Top 19 Paid Academia Employees	Top 20 Academia Salary
	Raul Weiss	\$ 1,981,635	\$ 21,326,260	\$ 23,307,895
	(+) Coach (-) Professor	\$ 11,232,965	\$ (16,743,160)	\$ (5,510,195)
University - NCAA Conf.	Head Coach	Salary	Oklahoma Asst Football Coach's Salary	Football Program Salary
Oklahoma -	Bob Stoops	\$ 12,267,000	\$ 4,390,900	\$ 16,657,900
	Top Salaried Faculty	Salary	Top 19 Paid Academia Employees	Top 20 Academia Salary
	T Ford	\$ 4,696,561	\$ 9,869,190	\$ 14,565,751
	(+) Coach (-) Professor	\$ 7,570,439	\$ (5,478,290)	\$ 2,092,149

**Table 3: Football Coach versus Academic Professor Salaries**

Four Universities Combined	Head Coach / Top Salaried Professor	Asst. Coaching Staff / 19 Top Salaried Prof.	Total Salaries Combined
<b>University Football Program</b>	\$60,018,390.00	\$18,602,750.00	\$78,621,140.00
<b>University Academic Positions</b>	\$8,655,653.00	\$49,497,647.00	\$58,153,300.00
Difference	\$51,362,737.00	\$(30,894,897.00)	\$20,467,840.00

While the data depicts significant differences in Head Coach's salaries in comparison to those for the senior academic positions, the data also shows some institutions place equal importance on their staff.

Illustrated in Table 3 are the salaries of the four combined universities' head football coaches compared to the highest paid faculty/staff. Also illustrated is the assistant football coaching staff compared against the top 19 paid professors.

The outlier in the data collected was Ohio State University. According to an article written in *The Lantern* in 2014, Ohio State was ranked 5th in the Big Ten conference for providing the highest average faculty salaries (Hickman, 2014). While the Ohio State University clearly understands the importance of investing in its academic staff, it also comprehends the value it receives from investing in the football program.

These academic investments are important because they support a student-athlete's academic development; however, they are even more important for ensuring that student-athletes are provided the education to help them develop a career plan and manage their finances when their athletic career is over.

Universities must invest in the coaches, and the athletic departments must own the responsibility for their players' academic success. These investments will better enable their athletes to be independent and successful in their college careers and beyond.

### **Discussion Case Study: Roll the Tide: How the University of Alabama is Financing its Football Program**

*Securing Coach Saban's ability to "Roll the Tide," The University of Alabama and its financial supporters' determination to prioritize and strengthen the football program.*

Division I universities make millions of dollars from their athletic programs. That source of revenue enables them to pay their athletic department staffs' multi-million-dollar salaries. At present, only the coaches and universities are allowed to profit from sports-related endorsements and the use of their student-athletes' likenesses.

In a growing number of situations, alumni and university boosters supplement the coach's salary. At these same universities, however, student-athletes leave their training and practice sessions hungry and with no money to buy food. In 2013, a private foundation established to support the University of Alabama's athletic program, purchased a \$3,100,000 home for the head football coach and his wife. This private foundation also has paid the yearly property taxes for them. One important detail in this scenario is the private foundation bought the home from Coach Nick Saban and then gave the home back to him.

In 2017, the University of Alabama trustees approved a three-year contract extension for Coach Saban through the 2024 football season that is estimated to pay him more than \$65,000,000 over that time. To illustrate the importance the University of Alabama has placed on its head coach, the records of the university's average salaries for its academic and coaching personnel were researched.

A professor at the University of Alabama earns, on average, \$186,636 per year. In comparison, Coach Nick Saban will make approximately \$11,400,000 for his coaching duties with an additional \$4,000,000 as a contract signing bonus. The contract also includes a \$400,000 completion bonus.

From a review of the University of Alabama salary data for academic positions, there are a total of 304 full-time professors who earn an average of \$186,636 per year, totaling approximately \$55,900,000 per year. In seven years, Coach Saban could personally fund an entire university of full-time professors and have \$14,400,000 left to live on.

Also, the University's trustees wanted to ensure that Coach Saban's staff was well compensated; they approved a five-year arrangement for the new athletic director, Greg Byrne, including salary increases for Coach Saban's assistants. The athletic director Byrne will make \$900,000 a year with a \$25,000 annual raise starting in 2018.

The offensive coordinator, Brian Daboll, will earn \$1,200,000 annually under his new three-year agreement. Defensive coordinator Jeremy Pruitt's three-year contract is worth \$4,200,000, including

**Table 4: The University of Alabama's Professor – Football Coaching Staff Salary Comparison.**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA	Academic	Athletics *Football
	Full-Time Professors	Primary Football Staff
EMPLOYEE COUNT	304	12
AVG. YEARLY SALARY	~\$55.9M	~\$26.1M

a \$100,000 raise each year. This financial compensation previously outlined only accounts for the salaries of Coach Saban and two members of his coaching staff. Alabama's assistant football coaches' compensation can be found in the appendix (see Table A1).

The financial summation comparison in the table below does not include Coach Saban's medical and administrative staff or any other sport (e.g., basketball: men and women, baseball: men and women, etc.). Table 4 shows the University of Alabama's professor versus football coaching staff salary comparison.

Potentially, the university receives millions of dollars that cannot be accounted for. This revenue comes from a variety of sources, such as corporate endorsements and athletic apparel/equipment contracts.

Essentially, the University of Alabama is cashing in on its student-athletes. The University of Alabama is not alone; many other Division I schools operate the same way and build up their athletic programs by similar means. These student-athletes are not provided any financial health guarantees in the event they can no longer compete for the university due to an unforeseen injury.

To put the total amount of revenue generated by these Division I institutions into perspective, the NFL, across both divisions, made a total of \$12,156,000,000 in 2016. The NCAA's Colleges and University collectively generated 33% of the NFL's total revenue (see Table 5).

Are the universities unwilling to improve the equality in the distribution of sports revenue to its student-athletes in fear of potentially losing billions of dollars in profitability? The institutions exploit the student-athletes to maintain the revenues the athletic programs generate from ticket sales, television contracts, and apparel and other merchandising licensing agreements.

In many scenarios, most athletes recruited to play a sport are habitually persuaded to major in fields that will not aid their success in a career later in life. This persuasion primarily occurs because the majors suggested by the athletes' coaching staff are not as academically demanding, which results in more time the athlete can dedicate to perfecting his athletic craft. However, the recommended majors are not academically challenging, thereby causing a scholastic gap for the athlete.

Most college freshman athletes major in interdepartmental studies. The student-athlete is taught that this major allows them to have less of a course load and provide more time in the gym. The primary focus for most college athletes is to remain academically eligible to play, so the quality of education and com-

**Table 5: Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Forbes Sports Money: 2016 NFL Valuations ("Sports Money," 2016).**

NCAA Division I College Teams	
ACC	\$527,658,411
American	\$159,353,816
Big 12	\$531,951,895
Big Ten	\$744,393,720
C-USA	\$123,409,990
Independent	\$124,002,513
MAC	\$101,646,998
Mountain West	\$126,719,325
PAC-12	\$547,680,916
SEC	\$952,080,336
Sun Belt	\$78,228,399
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,017,126,319</b>
NFL AFC Division	
AFC East	\$1,631,000,000
AFC North	\$1,430,000,000
AFC South	\$1,438,000,000
AFC West	\$1,372,000,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$5,871,000,000</b>
NFL NFC Division	
NFC East	\$1,998,000,000
NFC North	\$1,403,000,000
NFC South	\$1,397,000,000
NFC West	\$1,488,000,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,286,000,000</b>

**Table 6: Common Majors Selected by College Football Players**

Conference	School	Major
ACC	Clemson	Parks, recreation and tourism management
ACC	North Carolina	Exercise and sport science
Big 10	Illinois	General studies
Big 10	Michigan	General studies
Big 12	West Virginia	General or multidisciplinary studies
Big 12	Baylor	Health, human performance and recreation studies
PAC 12	Arizona State	Interdisciplinary studies
PAC 12	Washington State	Tie-Criminal justice, sport management and social sciences
SEC	Tennessee	Recreation and sport management
SEC	Ole Miss	General studies

mitment to education are non-existent in the minds of many of these athletes.

While researching some of the schools in the Power Five Conference, data was collected to identify the majors that football players were enrolled in during 2015. The data collection from the individual university was conducted through the institution's on-line rosters.

The variety of ambiguous curriculum to choose from further enables the student-athlete to easily check off the eligible check box in order to play football. See Table 6 for a review of the common majors selected by football players within the top NCAA Division I conferences.

The NCAA promotes that athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student body. However, the federal rates provided yearly paint a different picture. The NCAA statistic does not portray a holistic view of the student-athlete. Its research study does not follow the student as he may transfer from school to school until graduating or dropping out. On its organization's website, the NCAA has stated that this methodology is not the most accurate approach for accounting for graduation rates (NCAA, 2015). Current reported numbers provided by the NCAA position it as an institution that has made positive strides in graduating student-athletes. What is not clearly stated in their statement of "success" is whether the graduating students were able to translate their degrees into promising, meaningful careers (NCAA, 2015).

With the academic landscape predefined for the student-athlete, how can anyone expect to place value on college? The moment a high school senior commits to a college, he is instantly convinced the value of his college experience is not in the rigor of his studies, but in the investment of his time dedicated to football strength and conditioning, which, in his mind, is preparing him to be a star in his sport.

Some institutions have had head coaches go as far as providing their athletes with "students" to "help" the athletes with their curriculum work, so much "student help" that various universities have been sanctioned by the NCAA and governing bodies for violating school policies and major acts of plagiarism. Yet, the sanctions have not deterred these institutions from continuing down this path.

A few years ago, a Northwestern quarterback by the name of Kain Colter shared his personal story in a federal courtroom in Chicago about the impasse he was challenged with as he tried to balance what defined success for him academically and athletically (Strauss, 2014).

While Colter was dedicated to the football program, he wanted to ensure that his studies were aligned properly with what was required for him to attend medical school. In a humble tone, he admitted that he knew that, had it not been for his athletic ability, he would not have been accepted to Northwestern University. He clearly stated, "Football was the reason I was there" (Strauss, 2014).

Colter detailed his struggle with his football obligations contradicting his focus on pre-med studies. Consequently, he chose a psychology major! Colter's dilemma does not happen for many athletes, primarily because, for a majority, sports are their only focus.

Strangely enough, when assessing the student-athlete's situation, the conflict of prioritizing the college education and the athletic requirements and sacrifices presents a significant challenge for these young people. With the amount of pressure placed on these students to succeed athletically, are the institutions creating an academic pitfall? Institutions seem to be disregarding their educational responsibilities to the student-athlete and not providing the guidance to help them make the most informed decisions that could dictate the student-athletes' future.



## Professional Sports

To fully understand the athletic landscape and journey student-athletes take to become a professional athlete, a person must recognize that it is neither a coincidence nor luck that only a few student-athletes make it to the professional level. Natural talent separates the average athlete from the elite athlete. However, the transformation from a college athlete to a professional athlete is based on the level of physical training and mental preparation made by the athletes and the investments of time made by their coaches and trainers.

In Division I football, a student-athlete can request for his college to have him evaluated to determine if he would be selected in the professional draft. Depending on the outcome of that evaluation, the student-athlete could get a red flag about his potential draft ranking, which could serve as a recommendation for the student-athlete to stay in school.

The NFL provides this player evaluation service to help NFL organizations in identifying NFL-quality players and high-level student-athletes, who have the potential to enter the league early. The basis of the evaluations is clearly the NFL's responsibility.

The NFL depends on its College Advisory Committee from NFL clubs and directors from the league's two sanctioned scouting organizations, National Football Scouting Organization and the Bears Lions Eagles Steelers Talent Organization (BLESTO), to provide realistic projections to underclassmen student-athletes regarding their draft stock before they declare their desire to enter the Draft to the NFL.

Division I college football and basketball coaches essentially create a "farm league" for professional teams. NFL organizations depend on certain coaches to continuously produce professional-caliber athletes.

While some universities may develop two NFL prospects a year on average, several coaches at the Division I level are well known for running athletic programs that professional sports organizations rely on as a source of draft quality players. These professional sports teams rely on student-athletes from these schools to shape the future of the NFL organization. To be eligible for the NFL draft, college players must be out of high school for a minimum of three years and have used up their college eligibility before the start of the next college football season. Underclassmen and players who graduated before using all their college eligibility may request the league's approval to enter the draft early.

Collectively, the NFL teams build their franchises solely with college football players. In more cases, college coaches are convincing players that their university athletic experience is merely the development process that will enable them to reach their goals of playing in the NFL.

Regardless of the college football player's academic status, the university he attends has reached the financial understanding that the coach's job is to win games, win the conference championship, and prepare student-athletes for the NFL. The academic understanding of the university's responsibility to prepare the student-athlete for his life after sports is less evident.

## The Impact of the Media on College Football

Media plays a significant role in the commercialization and monetary valuation of college sports. The researcher examined how much significant reliance college athletics places on various media channels and outlets (i.e., TV, radio, and social media). Several drivers influence the relationships between the NCAA and the various types of media with which it partners.

Recent news stated that Entertainment Sports Network (ESPN) is contracted in total to spend \$5.64 billion to the NCAA for the rights to televise NCAA sanctioned schools' collegiate games (Bachman, 2012). These types of mul-

timillion-dollar television contracts helped usher college football into the strategic business model it currently enjoys. The NCAA college football television broadcast dominates the local and cable sports networks. The ability of cable networks to provide coast-to-coast coverage of all the major collegiate teams has created a massive movement.

When universities entered television markets to highlight their college football programs, they began to truly see the revenue opportunities presented. At one time, the only major Division I university with a television contract was Notre Dame; it remains one of the few with a major television network which, in this case, is NBC.

The television network NBC Sports Group has structured the deal with Notre Dame to extend a 10-year contract in order to televise Notre Dame football games with them until 2025. The NBC and Notre Dame contract was reported to be worth approximately \$15 million annually. In systematic adoption fashion, other universities began to secure lucrative television deals.

Division I college football and basketball coaches essentially create a "farm league" for professional teams.

Universities realized the true financial potential by understanding that the television model of brand awareness further promoted and extended their brand to an audience they would not normally reach. In 2012, the South Eastern Conference (SEC) expanded its conference to include Texas A&M and Missouri. Alone, that decision generated \$420 million from TV and radio rights deals (Talty, 2017).

On average, most university athletic programs' television revenue generates upward of \$15 million annually for football teams in the major NCAA conferences. Television revenue has provided a growing number of universities with financial stability. This success has driven universities to seek more avenues to use media outlets for further revenue to support their athletic departments, and often, the football program is key to that strategy.

Money is the primary driver behind college football and TV having such great success and continued growth. The various television networks have enabled universities and their college football programs to enjoy nationwide coverage, which has fostered the increasing popularity of the sport. This popularity has led to programming more and more college football games at all levels of the sport because of consumer demand.

According to the National Football Foundation, more than 216 million viewers watched the NCAA football regular season with an additional 126 million watching the college bowl games. Also, college football had over 48.9 million fans attend games in person. Figure 3 shows the attendance statistics provided by the National Football Foundation.

The growth of football and the ever-increasing revenue stream for the universities has had many sports experts challenging whether student-athletes should

be paid or otherwise compensated for their athletic performances on the field. When assessing the economics of the college athletic program, such a proposal seems quite logical.

## An Assessment of the College Athletics Industry Utilizing the Porter Five Forces Model

According to Porter, the main influences that directly impact rivalries among firms in an industry are (Porter, 2008):

- Mature-markets
- Evenly stable competitors
- High fixed costs
- High exit barriers

When analyzing the NCAA Division I landscape, the author has realized that all of these dynamics exist in participating athletic programs. The several consumers of NCAA College Teams are:

- Student-athletes
- Alumni
- Fans
- Media outlets
- Corporations

All of the consumers listed above have bargaining power, however, some are more powerful than others. The level of power diminishes as the hierarchy of power trickles down to the student-athlete level.

The goal of using Porter's five forces is to identify the influences that directly impact the level of competition within the NCAA colleges and universities. We look at the core factors to determine if they are forces that can dictate if the NCAA has a cap on its overall profitability. Furthermore, we ask the question: Could the factors serve as an evolving potential threat to the NCAA, causing it to become less

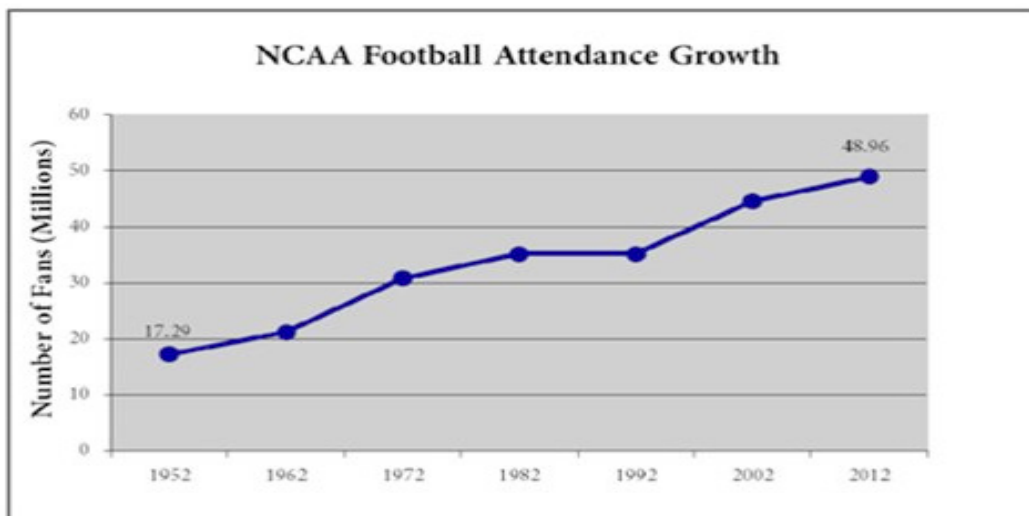
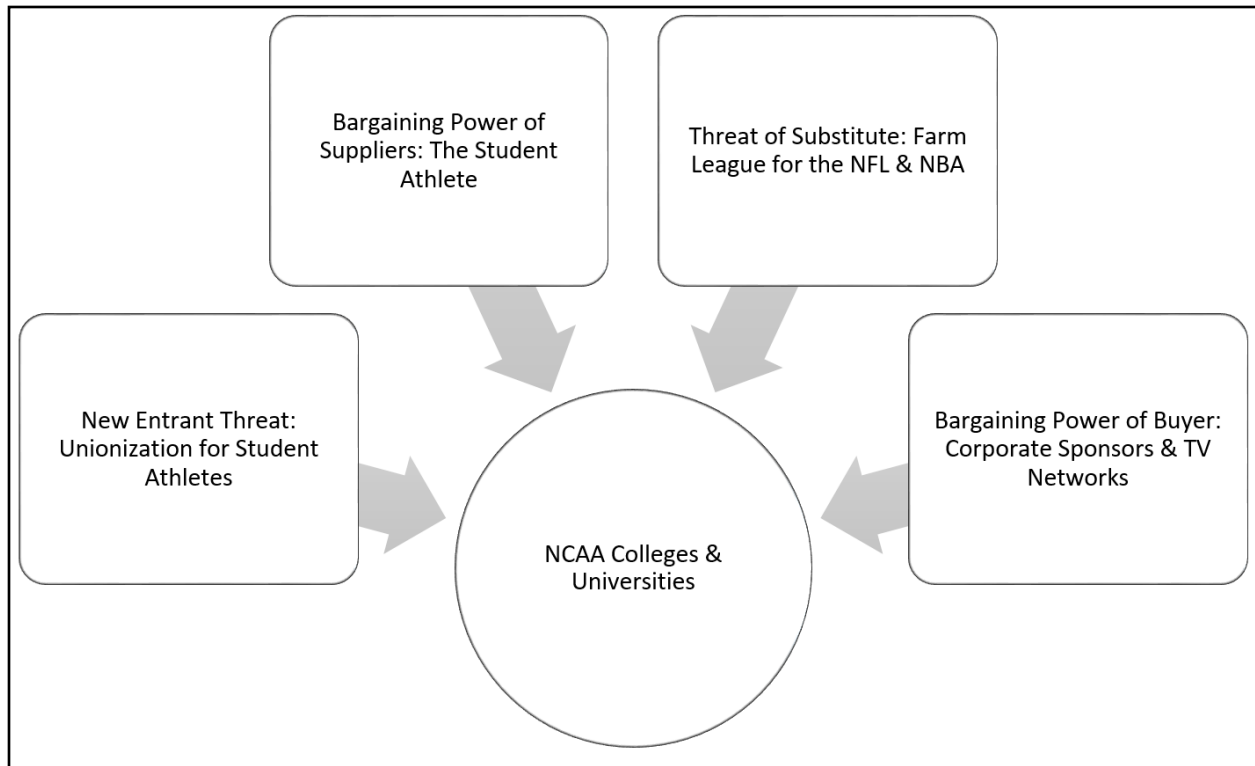


Figure 3: Attendance Statistics Provided by the National Football Foundation



**Figure 4: Threat of New Entry: Unionization of Student-Athletes**

attractive in terms of future profitability due to more lucrative, profitable threats by its consumers (see Figure 4)?

### Threat of New Entry: Unionization of Student-Athletes

As discussed earlier in this analysis, players from Northwestern University pushed to unionize the football team. The goal was to have the players recognized as employees, which would entitle them to employee benefits and compensation. When this proposal was reviewed by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the NLRB unanimously voted against the athletes being considered as employees of the University. According to transcripts of the case, the NLRB rule was not against the question of employee status, but rather the NLRB chose not to extend its authority to college football.

However, the Northwestern players made a strong argument. In the case of student-athletes, the number of hours needed for them to be considered employee labor accumulates quickly. Players dedicate hours to athletic and academic preparation that are equivalent to those of a full-time job. College athletics and related activities take up to 40 to 50 hours a week throughout the season and 50 to 60 hours a week throughout training camp in the spring and summer. These hours do not include any academic coursework required for the student-athlete to maintain his eligibility.

The intent is to not put additional financial debt on the student, so it may be less likely that the athletes will receive salaries in return for playing on a Division I football team. A reasonable compromise could possibly be to allow the student-athlete to receive an increase in financial stipends or the ability to seek part-time employment during the off-season.

### Bargaining Power of the Supplier: The Power of the Student-Athlete

Many experts, economists, sports journalists, and athletic enthusiasts argue that student-athletes should be compensated in some form. When assessing the power of student-athletes, one opportunity for using their power is not available to them; that opportunity is the ability to help create NCAA legislation.

Division III allows its students to vote on policy changes, even though these athletes are not on scholarship. However, the Division felt compelled to allow the athletes to have a voice in their athletic future. Division I athletes are only allowed to provide input. What is alarming is that the NCAA has known for years that without the student-athletes on the field on Saturday, playing and mesmerizing millions of college sports fans with their athletic abilities--the billions of dollars of revenue generated for these colleges and universities would not exist.

The on-field success of college athletes helps encourage millions of students, alumni, and fans to buy

season tickets for games, sign-up for cable network providers' sports packages, increase jersey sales, and expand licensing of college-themed consumer products.

A group of approximately 30 student-athletes represent the broader population of college athletes as a "voice" in the NCAA. This committee is known as the National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and is comprised of members from the 32 Division I conferences. While this group has made some contributions to the direction of policies for the NCAA, it has not made any impact regarding the fair treatment of the student-athlete.

Some athletes have gone on record and reported their coaches have stated they would be kicked off the team for not attending "voluntary" activities. From the perspective of the student-athlete, players should be able to threaten to leave their college and university if they are not provided with the ability to find alternative ways to pay for college expenses that their scholarships do not cover. However, student-athletes threatening to stop playing college football is not likely to happen. The reality is thousands of other student-athletes would be willing to replace them for a Division I scholarship opportunity.

### **Threat of Substitute: The Creation of the NFL Farm System or Development League**

What would the financial impact be to Division I schools if the NFL or another organization adopted a development football league that would allow young athletes to avoid college and begin making a living playing football? What if there was no need to worry about amateurism or having to wait to go pro?

Some significant research studies and economic models have been performed by a private group to understand the viability of creating a developmental league. While the NBA has a development league that young athletes can try out for, the NFL does not have an affiliated developmental league. However, football playing student-athletes may not have to wait much longer for the "what if" scenario; the idea of a development league could potentially become a reality.

Some speculations have been made about a group that has been seeking to start a professional league to launch in 2018 or 2019. From recent reports, the group has stated that it does not intend to compete with the NCAA; however, it becomes a threat to the talent pool. The proposed plan for this pilot is to tar-

get 200 players to play on four teams during the NFL off-season.

The average salary of each player would be approximately \$50,000 a year with a benefits package that includes the ability for each player to seek endorsements and performance contracts for his likeness to supplement and maximize profitability. If players are allowed to forgo college and begin making a living immediately, it's easy to see where the impact could be significant.

While many student-athletes easily may opt-out of a league such as this and elect to play at an elite Division I college or university and potentially earn a four-year degree, the reality of this concept has the NFL considering its approach for addressing the dilemma. The NFL also has gone on record with considerations of creating a developmental league; it has presented viable options to the competition committee that would create a system for young players to develop.

### **Bargaining Power of the Buyer: Corporate Sponsors and TV Networks**

The benefits of the corporate sponsors and TV network partnerships to the colleges and universities are consistent revenue streams that can be forecasted accurately. Sponsors and other entities contractually obligate themselves financially to the school's athletic department in exchange for

the rights to license and market the athletic department's brand.

Most Division I schools base their budgets on these revenue streams. The NCAA and universities rely on these organizations for financial support that allows them to sustain their programs at a high level. As documented on the NCAA website, Turner Sports and CBS Sports are listed as having the "exclusive" rights to license and market NCAA logo merchandise and tickets and use NCAA taglines in commercial promotions ([www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com)).

These companies contribute significant amounts to the NCAA and the colleges and universities in terms of yearly revenue. The NCAA-sponsored "March Madness" men's college basketball tournament makes over a billion dollars each year, and none of the players in the tournament receive any compensation for their participation or the success of the event. As discussed earlier in this industry analysis, the NCAA Tournament will be shown on CBS/Turner through 2032. Both parties signed an eight-year, \$8.8 billion extension with the NCAA for

While the NBA has a development league that young athletes can try out for, the NFL does not have an affiliated developmental league.



the broadcast rights to the men's college basketball tournament.

The Industry Buyers (corporations/tv networks) have more power than the Industry Suppliers (student-athletes). These major corporations have dictated the athletic paradigm that exists today, but what stands in the way of balancing the inequality of this collegiate athletic cultural business model is greed.

The essence of greed has tarnished many corporations from behaving ethically with some sense of a moral compass. In a *Journal of Business Ethics* article, the author speaks of greed. Major corporations will never sacrifice their bottom line to benefit a student-athlete who, through his athletic talents, is making billions of dollars for his institution, the NCAA, and the corporate sponsor (Stieber, 1991).

The potential threat exists, but it is not financially rational for the various major corporations to permit the athletes to benefit from their profits. The hard question that remains unanswered is: Is a college football scholarship an adequate and appropriate form of compensation when a college football player is required to do more for the university and its athletic department than play football?

Research studies indicate that most Division I college football student-athletes are unlikely to make graduating with a degree their primary goal. According to Mangold, Bean, and Adams, "It is not unreasonable to expect that highly integrated social communities may compete with learning communities, particularly if the nature of the social interaction is in conflict with the goals of the learning community" (Mangold, Bean, & Adams, 2003).

## Conclusions

What is more important to the individual student-athlete: seeking a professional football career or an education with the benefit of playing football? There are positive stories of athletes being successful through both decision paths. However, more scenarios exist where the athlete has been the victim of making the wrong decision and choosing the wrong path to professionalism.

Ultimately, the decision belongs to the student-athlete and the supporting people within his circle. This decision can be very difficult to make and can have lasting impact on his adult life. The athlete needs a strong foundation of support and knowledge about the options available and circumstances that come with each choice of academics or professional sports. As the parent(s) introduce their child to sports, it is

important that they restrain their personal desires and dreams for their child, which can constrain their son's ability to choose what he feels is best for him, an academic or athletic career. The parent(s) must not let the child's journey be defined by their self-gratifying expectations.

Many student-athletes will continue to struggle with the dilemma of retaining the student-athlete life versus declaring eligibility as an underclassman for the NFL draft. Could the unionization of student-athlete players actually change the monetary chase to play professional football? These student-athletes must demand a stronger voice in the NCAA! To truly invoke a cultural change and reform within the NCAA, an industry threat must be introduced to force the organization to rethink its approach to student-athletes in the United States.

The critical decision of remaining a student or deciding to leave college early to play professional football will be at the center of the student-athletes' thought process, and the supporting people within his circle can either provide reasonable, logical thinking or be the demise of the athlete's career. Making the wrong decision can have a lasting impact on his adult life.

Being able to discern the disparity of perception versus reality will enable the athlete to make logical choices in life.

What if CBS/Turner Sports and ESPN mandated that student-athletes were required to be paid a portion of the proceeds

if they remained in school or had reached the end of their eligibility? Would the NCAA comply or find another brand/network to partner with to retain all profits?

Athletics first, academics optional is the culture that has been adopted by the majority of these Divisional I universities because collegiate athletics has become a business. In examining the threats to the NCAA industry, the introduction of a development league would gradually impact the bottom line of universities over time. The NCAA's quality of play and eventual profitability would be impacted as adoption of a new product could diversify the talent pool and revenue streams.

## Appendix

### NCAA Members:

**College Presidents** – These are the leaders of the participating Division I and II schools and include the NCAA president.

**Athletic Directors** – These are the heads of the athletic departments at their perspective schools; they

Research studies indicate that most Division I college football student-athletes are unlikely to make graduating with a degree their primary goal.

provide oversight and guidance to the athletic staff and enforce policies and NCAA guidelines.

**Faculty Athletic Representative** – This position is designated to bridge the two university departments of academia and athletics.

**Compliance Officer** – This position communicates and manages the various rules relating to student-athletes on their campus.

**Conference Staff** – These positions are the various principal groups that create the competition amongst the various conferences in the NCAA.

**Academic Support Staff** – These positions are employees tasked with preparing athletes academically for the future.

**Coaches** – These positions are the individuals hired to recruit, train, strengthen, and coach the student-athletes for competitive sports.

**Sports Information Directors** – This role serves as the keeper of records and statistics to document the players' statistical accomplishments as well as those of the team.

**Health and Safety Personnel** – These positions are the hired medically trained personnel responsible for the overall health and well-being of the student-athletes ("What is the NCAA?" n.d.).

## Discussion with a Division I Football Student-Athlete

In a conversation with a Division I student-athlete football player, he stated that at one point during his sophomore year in college, his position coaches pulled him aside and told him that he had NFL quality skills that would transcend into NFL league quality traits. He was somewhat stunned that he was considered an NFL quality player by his coach's evaluation since he was a partial scholarship athlete.

He stated that he wanted to get his degree for his

mom, but the thought of going to the NFL lingered in his mind. From that day, every practice, every film day session and every snap, his goal was to put great game film together for NFL scouts to see. Midway through his sophomore year, he said that his academics were put on hold; he explained that he knew deep inside his talents were not of NFL quality. The student-athlete admitted that his team had guys who were 10 times faster and stronger--they also had a higher football IQ. Oddly enough, he said, it made him push even harder.

## Confessions of a Missed Opportunity

A few years ago, a three-year defensive tackle from the University of Tennessee was interviewed by a journalist about his college career and present realization due to his decision to declare himself eligible for the NFL early. The young man stated that he was full of regret; he passed up his senior season because, he said, an agent convinced him he would be a middle-round draft pick.

This young man was never drafted and is home in New Orleans, hoping to get an opportunity to audition with an Arena Football League team. He stated, "I made a bad decision. A lot of guys like me are sitting at home wishing they had that degree" (Kelto, 2015).

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**Table A1: Alabama's Assistant Football Coaches' Compensation**

Type of Assistant Coach	Name of Football Coach	Compensation
Outside Linebackers	Coach Tosh Lupoi	\$950,000
Co-Offensive Coordinator	Coach Mike Locksley	\$1,200,000
Tight-Ends/Special Teams	Coach: Joe Pannunzio	\$375,000
Offensive Line	Coach Brent Key	\$400,000
Running Backs	Coach Burton Burns	\$490,000
Defensive Backs	Coach Derrick Ansley	\$405,000
Defensive Line	Coach Karl Dunbar	\$575,000
Strength and Conditioning	Coach Scott Cochran	\$535,000

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## Review

This article was accepted under the **constructive peer review** option. For further details, see the descriptions at:

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Carl E. Gilmore, Jr. was a previous football student-athlete and Division II college basketball coach. With his lived experience, he developed a passion to educate future student-athletes and parents on the world of college athletics and the commitment it demands. A seasoned IT professional with 20 plus years' experience across several industry sectors, he has been responsible for the execution, strategic planning, technical design, development, and deployment of multi-million dollar projects including utility and Smart Grid Program initiatives. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Lane College in Jackson, Tenn., Masters of Business Administration from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida and his Doctor of Business Administration at the University of South Florida.