

The Effect of the NCAA on College Sports.

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The National College Athletic Association (NCAA) is the governing body that oversees most of college athletics in the US, and while there are other organizations like the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, no organization has come close to the amount of success, in terms of revenue the NCAA currently has. There are roughly 1,102 NCAA colleges in America, and each institution is able to gain the benefits of being a school under their jurisdiction. Specifically at the Division 1 level, colleges receive the opportunity to receive money for their games and improve their schools. This also benefits the Division 1 players, as the players in the larger sports are able to receive full ride scholarships to schools that recruit them, get free clothes, free meals, and a free room, when someone is playing either basketball or football. While other sports also have scholarships, they are more often than not split between multiple people on any given team, since they do not have enough scholarships for the people playing for them. For example, a D1 Men's track team has 12.6 scholarships, and since that Track teams can consist of around 50 players, schools are usually not able to give players on the team a full scholarship, and instead must split it with the people on the team. Even though few players in the world, are able to make it to the D1 level, the NCAA arguably is the best system to catapult someone into professional sports even

though only 2% of the 6%¹ of high school athletes who go to the NCAA are able to reach the professional level.

Despite all of the positives that come with the NCAA's system, it is still incredibly flawed, as it is affecting players ability to make revenue. NCAA rules are also having an effect on the world of sports. Many players are now opting to go overseas and play, where they will not be held down by the restrictions of the NCAA.²

The NCAA does not have an official definition on the term "student athlete" however a student athlete is just classified as a student who attends a school and is also an athlete for that organization. The term "student athlete" is important because it is the key reasoning behind players not being able to be paid money. The term originated in 1958 when Ray Denison died in a collegiate sports game, and his wife filed for workers compensation benefits. This case went to court, and it resulted in the NCAA creating the term "Student Athlete"³ The rules around being a student athlete have been backed up with the NCAA's definition of amateurism. The NCAA uses amateurism rules to restrict their players ability to make money. The official rule around amateurism is: "A student shall not be eligible for intercollegiate competition in a particular sport if the student-athlete (or parents/relatives): negotiates, signs or enters into any written or oral agreement with an agent; accepts or receives any extra benefits from an agent or anyone who wishes to represent the student-athlete;";⁴. While there are other

¹ NFHS. "NCAA Recruiting Fact Sheet." *NFHS*, Aug. 2014, www.nfhs.org/media/886012/recruiting-fact-sheet-web.pdf.

² O'Donnell, Ricky. "How Elite High Schoolers Are Skipping College to Get to the NBA." *SBNation.com*, SBNation.com, 8 Aug. 2019, www.sbnation.com/college-basketball/2019/8/8/20753788/nba-draft-college-basketball-recruiting-lamelo-b-all-rj-hampton.

³ Branch, Taylor. "The Shame of College Sports." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 17 Sept. 2020, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/10/the-shame-of-college-sports/308643/?single_page=true.

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restrictions on amateurism, the basic rule is that as an amateur, student athletes are unable to get money for their talent.

The problem with the NCAA's rules around student athletes lies in the fact that they are not treated like student athletes when it is most convenient for them. College basketball games are scheduled to be played when people will be watching TV. Unlike high schools where games are scheduled to be most beneficial to the students, schools will try to figure out when they can play, so that they are able to make the most money. This will require students to be away for certain holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving due to the fact schools are trying to make money. In certain conferences like; the American Athletic Conference (AAC), you have cases where Temple (PA) and Houston (TX) will be scheduled to play a weekday game against each other. This requires one of the schools to make the 1,548 mile trip to play a night game, and then be back for morning classes the next day. Overall, the problem with the student athlete definition, is that they are not treated like students. An example that is prevalent today happened when Gonzaga played Auburn in a college basketball game, where despite positive tests within Gonzaga's team, there was still a game⁵. This was a game shown on national television with a SEC school vs the #1 team in the country. This game was a case where revenue was put before player safety.

2020 has especially brought into the light the problem with the NCAA and their definition of student athletes. Recently in the Florida vs Florida State Basketball game,

"Key NCAA Definitions." *Office of Compliance*, 25 Apr. 2018, compliance.louisiana.edu/about-us/key-ncaa-definitions.

⁵ Wolken, Dan. "Opinion: Gonzaga Makes a Bad Call, Playing despite Positive COVID Tests: 'I Hope Nobody Gets Infected'." USA Today, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 27 Nov. 2020, www.usatoday.com/story/sports/college/columnist/dan-wolken/2020/11/27/gonzaga-makes-bad-call-choosing-play-auburn-positive-covid-tests/6443177002/.

Keyontae Johnson; the junior guard from Florida University and preseason SEC player of the year, suddenly collapsed on the court midway through the first half. He was transported to the hospital where he remained under a critical but stable condition, and was later put into a coma. Despite the shocking fact that a college player was in the ICU, this story failed to be a front page news story in sports, and even college basketball⁶. This example goes even further to show that the players for these schools are not viewed as students first. Overall players are working incredibly hard to meet the standards of playing at the collegiate level which can end with them in the hospital, a career ending injury, or dead in some cases, however the NCAA still shows a negligence to treat them as more than student athletes.

The NCAA's rules are beginning to hurt themselves as well. Many prospects are now taking the option to play overseas, where they will not be bogged down by the rules and the regulations of the NCAA. In the 2020 recruiting class, multiple players were opting not to go to college, and while some decided to stay in America others decided to go overseas⁷. The idea of college athletics is strictly an American concept⁸. Other countries do not have college sports like America, and this is causing players to start playing for a professional team in another country instead of actually playing in at a college. Players would be unable to go to college while playing for a professional team on the side. This makes it so that players have to choose between playing for the NCAA,

⁶ Dauster, Rob. "Monday's Overreactions!!!" *The Rebound*, The Rebound, 14 Dec. 2020, robdauster.substack.com/p/mondays-overreactions.

⁷ Wolken, Dan. "Opinion: NCAA Getting What It Wished for with New G League Program, and May Regret It." *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 17 Apr. 2020, www.usatoday.com/story/sports/college/columnist/dan-wolken/2020/04/16/college-basketball-risks-losing-top-freshmen-new-g-league-program/5146920002/.

⁸ Andrew Miller. "In Europe, You Don't Play High School or College Sports. Some Think U.S. Should Follow Suit." *Post and Courier*, The Post and Courier, 14 Dec. 2020, www.postandcourier.com/sports/in-europe-you-dont-play-high-school-or-college-sports-some-think-u-s-should/article_92ad84ba-a5c8-11e8-86ae-df88215ac3a1.html

or not going to college at all and then playing on a professional team. The NCAA is losing money due to their current policies and driving students away from college. When the NCAA, drives star players away from their teams, they naturally will lose some viewership. The ability to watch star freshman is a reason that people watch college basketball, as it gives them the opportunity to see the top NBA draft talent. Although the players end up getting none of the benefits that come with their name and skill until they leave college, which is why some are making the decision to skip going to college in the first place, so they have the ability to actually make money of their skills.

The solution to the NCAA's problems is to change their way of viewing players ability to make money fo their name, image and likeness. Currently the NCAA's rule is that "after student-athletes enroll at an NCAA school, they may no longer promote or endorse a product or allow their name, image or likeness to be used for commercial or promotional purposes."⁹ These rules prohibit students from making money off the fame that they have earned, and while the players do not get to make money of their name, nearly everyone else is. On an online shopping website people can currently buy a Jeremy Roach replica jersey. Jeremy Roach is currently a member of the Duke basketball team, and is unable to make money off his own name, however the creator of this jersey is able to prosper by selling replicas of his gear¹⁰. Dak Prescott, who is not the star QB for the Cowboys, did not sign autographs when he was in college, unless they were personalized. He did this so that his autograph wouldn't end up being on

⁹ "Amateurism." NCAA.Org - The Official Site of the NCAA, NCAA, July 2019, www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/amateurism.

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<https://www.ncaafootball.shop/jeremy-roach-duke-blue-devils-2020-21-equality-college-basketball-jersey-blm-social-justice-white-p20234>

eBay for hundreds of dollars¹¹. If the NCAA were to change their rules around name, image and likeness, it could benefit everyone, and not only players who are projected to be future stars. In “Don’t Put me in Coach”¹², a book written by Ohio State Walk-on Mark Titus, he describes his experience being a walk-on, on a D1 team, and the point of the book is the lack of minutes he got, and why that led him to start a blog about being a bench warmer called “Club Trillion” This blog ended up garnering attention, and ended with Ohio State arenas having thousands of fans wearing merchandise that was sold on the site. The only reason Titus was able to sell merchandise however, was because he had previously set up an agreement with the NCAA which had all the money going to charity. This is an important story because it shows that there is money to be made in college sports without being a super star. The NCAA has started to put plans in motion to change their rules around this subject, however there is no guarantee it will go anywhere. The NCAA had a “introduced concepts providing more opportunities for student-athletes into the 2020-21 legislative cycle.”¹³ This is not a guarantee that student athletes will be able to make money, what the NCAA has succeeded in doing however is helping their Press Relations. Overall the largest step the NCAA needs to actually help players to the fullest is expanding their rights to make money of their name.

¹¹ Russo, Ralph “Some Colleges Tell Players Not to Sign Autographs.” *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 16 Oct. 2014, www.usatoday.com/story/sports/ncaaf/2014/10/16/some-colleges-tell-players-not-to-sign-autographs/17356977/.

¹² Titus, Mark. *Don't Put Me in, Coach: My Incredible NCAA Journey from the End of the Bench to the End of the Bench*. Anchor Books, 2013.

¹³ Hosick, Michelle. “DI Council Introduces Name, Image and Likeness Concepts into Legislative Cycle.” *NCAA.org - The Official Site of the NCAA*, 14 Oct. 2020, www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/di-council-introduces-name-image-and-likeness-concepts-legislative-cycle.

The NCAA is an organization that has done unquestionably good things when it comes to helping it's players. It has provided a structured organization, allowing them too be seen on a more national stage, and sometimes catapult themselves into the pros. However the greed of the NCAA overtime has helped to destroy peoples trust in the them, after questionable definitions on amateurism, and punishing players for making money, they have started to convince players that maybe the NCAA is not the best option. The NCAA has reached the point where it can do more harm than good when it comes to affecting players careers. If the NCAA were to change their ways of thinking, not only could they bring back trust from the public and the players, but they could also help to launch people into careers that are not star studded athletes coming out of high school. Furthermore, with giving more power to the players, the NCAA can rebrand themselves and be an organization that the public can respect.