**Should College Athletes Be Paid**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) inception in 1906 was based on running college games in favor of the sporting events organization and prohibiting professionalism. One of the central policies was the exclusion of college athletes being paid. However, the recent profits from college sports, mainly basketball and football, have fueled the debate on whether the students participating in the games should be reimbursed. The jury's decision in the case "National Collegiate Athletic Assn. v. Alston" granted the student-athletes the right to profit from their involvement in college sports without any school restrictions. This resolution permitted earnings from NIL (name, image, and likeness) contracts. The same trend has been observed across the rest of the states, requiring institutions to consider college students' compensation when engaging in tournaments that generate revenue. Colleges reimbursing student-athletes for their involvement in sporting activities at the college level, primarily those that earn the institution revenue, stand to benefit and hamper their academic life and career paths.

**Reasons for Paying College Athletes**

Since college institutions across the country profit immensely from college sports, many argue that student-athletes, who are the ultimate source of income, should get a share of the proceedings. Data from the NCAA depicting its revenues throughout 2017 tallies to about $1.07 billion (Kirshner, 2018). Other notable statistics include the president pocketing about $2.7 million in 2018 and other top officials in the agency earning more than $500,000 (Berkowitz, 2020). Based on these financial statistics, it seems biased to exclude college students from gaining from their hard work, dedication, and effort while participating in the games.

A majority of students excelling in college sports are from low-income families. Besides, very few would have an opportunity to work their way up into a professional football career. In this case, the financial gain from the NIL contract would be paramount in facilitating their college education and helping their families meet their basic needs back at home. Also, most college student-athletes take a considerable physical risk when participating in intensive sports. In the event of injuries, the students stand very little chance of pursuing other careers outside sports. This aspect can be a big blow to their future. Forster (2012) highlights that some student-athletes are directed to take non-challenging courses that are less lucrative in the job market. As a result, upon graduating from school, they have few opportunities to excel in fields other than sports, which in most cases, have minimal openings. Accordingly, it would be appropriate for the students to earn income from their involvement in sports to kick start their future careers or endeavors, for instance, investing their income in real estate or other profitable businesses.

**Reasons Against Paying College Athletes**

On the contrary, the opponent of student-athletes reimbursement argues that the act goes against the primary role of a college education. According to Maryville University (n.d.), colleges are meant to "provide students with a rewarding educational experience that prepares them for their professional careers." Hence, compensation such as scholarships is fair enough as it caters to any financial strain in their future education. Besides, rather than sharing the income with the student-athletes, the funds can be used to improve the sports facilities in the institution and cater to other financial needs of the athletics departments. Maryville University (n.d.) cites that the NCAA board grants college athletes more than 180,000, about $3.6 billion worth of scholarships, approximately $20,000 per student per year. This amount is enough to cover the tuition and accommodation fee for students according to the average cost of education for 2017-2018, $17,797 (Thompson, 2022). Therefore, granting students scholarships to elite colleges rather than paying them for participating in sports is more profitable for them as they stand to receive a valuable education. Still, graduating from the top universities increases their earning power in the job market.

Moreover, reimbursing college athletes eliminates the amateurism spirit that strikes the difference between college and professional sports. Notably, having a few students earn from sports while in school can split the scholars into those profiting from their learning and those wasting their time. This aspect can interfere with the student's dedication to their academics and lower their performance. Furthermore, some student-athletes focus on playing sports to qualify for scholarships to elite colleges to pursue careers outside sports rather than going pro. Introducing pay into the college sports system can reduce their chances of earning these scholarships, disrupting their career goals.

**Conclusion**

In summary, there are weighty arguments for and against student-athletes compensation for their participation in sports. The former neglects the NCAA's scholarship's value on the student-athletes academic and professional careers outside sports. It only focuses on the students earning more from their sports, excluding the fact that they are entitled to scholarships that would further their career prospects. The latter seems unfair to the student-athletes. They, too, are entitled to a share of the profits gained since they are the primary source of income. Accordingly, further analysis needs to be done on the debate to ensure the student-athletes interests are upheld with minimal interference in their career prospects.

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