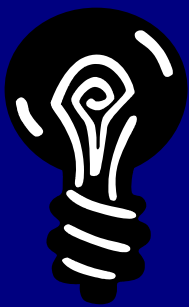


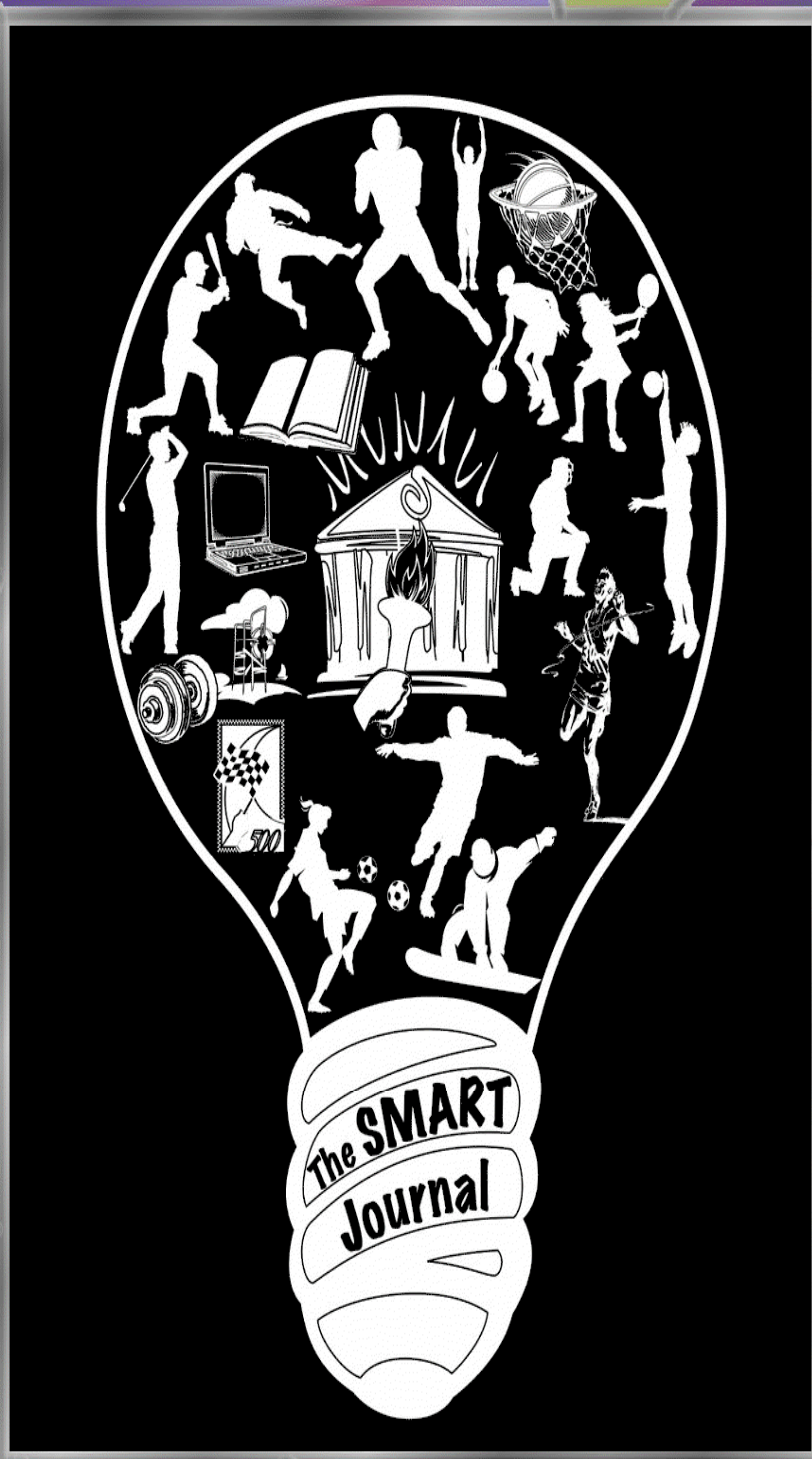
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# The SMART Journal



The SMART Journal



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## IS THE NCAA GUILTY OF PRACTICING *SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT*? AN ANALYSIS OF DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL RANKINGS, INVESTIGATIONS, INFRACTIONS, AND PENALTIES

Kadence Alexa Otto, Ph.D., Western Carolina University

### INTRODUCTION

Selective enforcement has been defined as targeting certain institutions for investigations while turning a blind eye to others who are violation of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and regulations (Byers, 1995). Critics (Funk, 1991; Gerdy, 1997; Zimbalist, 1999) have purported that the NCAA is guilty of selective enforcement by allowing the most successful programs to get away with breaking the rules. Wetzel (1999) found that institutions such as Louisville, Michigan State, Syracuse, Texas-El Paso, Clemson, and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas all had serious allegations of NCAA violations brought against them by the Committee on Infractions. Louisville, in the midst of serving its first season of probation for NCAA violations, was awarded a "partial reprieve when its post-season ban was suddenly lifted, clearing the way for the team to go to the NCAA tournament" (p. 80). Researchers (Davis, 1999; Goff, 2000) have reported that, in relation to rank, differences do exist in the NCAA's enforcement tendencies. While both agree that equity does not exist in NCAA enforcement, critics' claim that the NCAA protects the most successful programs (oftentimes hypothesized because of their revenue generating capabilities) and picks on the least successful programs. The NCAA, however, states that it is committed to fairness and as a governing organization it acts in an equitable fashion in relation to all of its members (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.01.1).

In order to determine whether there is evidence to support the claim of selective enforcement, this ten-year study (1990-1999) analyzed whether or not differences existed between the 'most successful' and 'least successful' NCAA Division I men's basketball programs in relation to the number of major violation investigations, the infraction rate, the penalty rate, and the severity rate.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE NCAA

Founded in 1910, the NCAA was originally created to curb the violence in football; however, over the years the NCAA expanded its role to the point of dominance over all of intercollegiate athletics (Lapchick & Slaughter, 1994). In its first constitution, the association stated: "Its object shall be the regulation and supervision of college athletics through the United States, in order that the athletic activities...may be maintained on an ethical plane in keeping with the dignity and high purpose of education" (Falla, 1981, p. 21).

By 1912, intercollegiate athletics had become too important to remain a student-run enterprise; a more appropriate level of institutional oversight was necessary (Smith, 2000). From 1911-1918 the NCAA branched out into numerous committees with each

committee representing a different sport; this structure threatened the NCAA's organizational integrity (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998).

In the early 1950's, Walter Byers became the Executive Director of the NCAA and had a profound impact on strengthening its enforcement division (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). As the scope of NCAA enforcement increased so did member school's violations. "From 1952 to 1985, the NCAA put more than 150 schools on probation for illegal recruiting, payments to athletes, or illegal benefits" (Lapchick & Slaughter, 1994, p. 11). Even though the NCAA had expanded its enforcement capacity in response to the commercialization and marketability of college football and men's basketball, critics alleged that the NCAA enforcement practices were unfair (Smith, 2000). In response to these criticisms, in 1973, the NCAA established the Committee on Infractions — a committee designed to divide the prosecutorial and investigative roles into separate groups (Byers, 1995).

A primary problem with the Committee on Infraction's ability to enforce its rules on member institutions was its inability to punish coaches for wrongdoings. While it was clear that coaches were giving monetary payments to prospective athletes, the Committee could only sanction the institution itself, leaving the coach free to move on to another college, thereby avoiding the sanctions altogether (Lapchick & Slaughter, 1994).

As a governing organization, NCAA rules and regulations have grown substantially in both number and scope over time. As a result of such growth, it has transformed itself from a legislative organization, into an organization that not only creates rules but also administers and resolves disputes in relation to those rules (Porto, 1985). "Critics have charged that flaws exist in the NCAA enforcement process" (Goplerud, 1991, p. 544). Stringency in measures of control imposed by the NCAA has led institutional members, individual athletes, and others to initiate lawsuits against the Association, challenging its rules and authority (Porto, 1985).

#### **NCAA ENFORCEMENT**

The mission statement of the NCAA enforcement program is "to eliminate violations of NCAA rules and impose appropriate penalties should violations occur" (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.01.1, p. 333). The enforcement staff investigates a member institution's athletics program if there is reasonable cause to believe that an institution's program may be in violation of NCAA rules (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 32.2.1). If the enforcement staff has adequate information concerning the possibility of a major violation occurring at a member institution's program a letter of official inquiry, containing specific allegations against an institution is sent to the institution's C.E.O. (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 32.5.1). Once the institution has responded to all allegations, a hearing date is established with the Committee on Infractions (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 32.8.5).

The Committee on Infractions has the sole authority to make findings and impose appropriate penalties; whereas, the enforcement staff actually does the investigating (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.1.3). The Committee on Infractions makes decisions based on the findings of the NCAA enforcement staff (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.1). Goplerud (1991) noted that, "on a broad scale, the relationship between the enforcement staff and the

Committee on Infractions may be too close to ensure fairness in the enforcement process" (p. 550).

The Committee on Infractions receives complaints, determines facts, finds violations, and imposes penalties (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.1.3). According to Robert Minnix, former NCAA enforcement investigator and current Associate Athletic Director at Florida State University, "The Committee does not have many hard and fast rules, but rather each institution's case is reviewed individually based on past precedents" (personal communication, November 3, 1999). As a result of the NCAA's inconsistency in its rulings, it is difficult to assess whether or not the NCAA acts equitably in its enforcement of the rules (Brody, 1982).

### **MAJOR VIOLATIONS**

The types of violations are two-fold; secondary and major. Penalties for secondary violations range from forfeiture of contests, fines, public reprimand, reduction in the number of financial aid packages awarded, and the suspension of the head coach or other staff members or competitions (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.5.1). A major violation may bring a minimum penalty of: two years' probation, one-year ban on television appearances, and postseason play, one-year prohibition on recruiting and a one-year suspension without pay for involved coaches and staff (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.5.2). Violations (termed, infractions) include, but are not limited to: unethical conduct, lack of institutional control, improper recruiting, extra benefits, and academic fraud (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19).

### **THE FINANCIAL FACTOR**

Currently, the NCAA is in the midst of an 11-year, six billion dollar television contract with Central Broadcasting System (CBS) for exclusive rights to air the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament (Hiestand, 1999). The NCAA's multi-billion dollar contract with CBS is proof that college sports are an "entertainment Goliath" (Gerdy, 1997, p. 51). The most notable revenue source for member institutions is postseason competition which produces millions of dollars in television contracts, concessions, and ticket sales (Ponticello, 1991). "If a university's athletic program is prevented from participating in championship events because of a sanction imposed by the NCAA...the school stands to lose considerable money and exposure" (Goplerud, 1991, p. 543).

### **THE PRESSURE TO WIN**

With millions of dollars to be had by institutions, the rewards for winning have multiplied and so have breaking the rules (Byers, 1995). Coaches are under pressure from the administration and alumni to produce victories. This pressure, along with the monetary rewards available for successful Division I coaches, are motivation enough to cause some to use any means necessary to recruit the skilled athlete (Funk, 1991). In 1984, Byers (1995) estimated, "as many as 30% of major sports schools were cheating—15% simply to win, the other 15% because they felt they must fight fire with fire" (p. 11).

### **INSTITUTIONS FOUND GUILTY**

A report showing institutions placed on NCAA probation between July 18, 1997 and October 2, 1998, provides support for the proposition that the problems of college athletics are not restricted to big-time sports and programs. At least 50% of the

sanctioned schools listed do not run what would be considered big-time intercollegiate athletic programs (Davis, 1999). In addition, the nature of the violations for which these schools were sanctioned was widely distributed among both revenue and non-revenue producing sports. Furthermore, in a recent study Goff (2000) found that "negative exposure due to NCAA sanctions may offset the gains made by past athletic success, but the evidence to date does not show that such negative exposure does more than negate the positive influence of past success" (p. 101).

Using data from 35 Division I-A institutions researchers found that the net income and total revenues of, "athletic programs that [got caught] violating NCAA rules during the 1980's are consistently higher than the programs that have not violated the rules" (Baumer & Padilla, 1994, p. 133). In a study of 85 big-time schools from 1953-1983, researchers found that the likelihood of being investigated correlated positively with the variability of a school's performance (Fleisher, Goff, & Tollison, 1992).

## METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLE

The sample ( $n=80$ ) consisted of NCAA men's basketball programs (40 most successful and 40 least successful) from the 20 (ten most successful and ten least successful) conferences who were charged with a major violation from 1990-1999. Programs were selected on the basis of their overall conference ranking and their individual ranking determined by the Sagarin Ratings.

## INSTRUMENTATION

### SAGARIN RATINGS

The Sagarin Ratings provide power and player ratings for numerous professional and collegiate sports. Sagarin ratings use difficulty of schedule and win-loss results to establish the rankings (Sagarin, 2000). Sagarin's college basketball rankings have proven their value to the NCAA (Sagarin, 1995).

Ratings, Win-loss records, and schedule strengths are based solely on games between Division I teams. The schedule ratings represent the average schedule difficulty faced by each team in the games that it has played so far. The schedule difficulty of a given game takes into account the rating of the opponent and the location of the game (Sagarin, 2000).

For the first few weeks of the season, the starting ratings have weight in the process 'Bayesian,' but once the teams are all connected, then the starting ratings are no longer used and all teams are started equal and the ratings are then done in an unbiased manner from that point on. (Sagarin, 2000, p. 1)

The Sagarin Ratings were utilized by taking the season end rating for each program and recording it on a spreadsheet for the designated ten-year period. The average rating was computed by dividing the ten-year total by ten to obtain the overall average. The Sagarin Ratings was determined to be valid and reliable by performing a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.



### NCAA INFRACTION REPORTS

NCAA Infraction Reports are official written reports filed by the Committee on Infractions regarding the specifics of each case. Two main identifiers were examined. First, the nature of the infraction. Infractions were divided into four categories: 1. improper recruiting; 2. extra benefits; 3. unethical conduct; and 4. lack of institutional control. The second identifier was the penalties imposed by the NCAA. The following 17 penalties were examined: death penalty, firing the head coach, letter of reprimand, required compliance seminar, compliance review, rules education program, number of years probation, reductions of permissible visits, monitor recruiting, repeat violator provisions, public reprimand and censure, prohibition from postseason competition, reduction in financial aid, forfeiture of contests, show-cause requirement, recertification of policies and practices, and prohibition from televising games.

### EXPERT PENALTY PANEL RANKINGS

A group of experts were selected to determine the severity of NCAA penalties. The panel was composed of eight experts in the field of NCAA enforcement. Each expert ranked the NCAA penalties and the level of severity of each penalty. In ranking the level of severity, panel members rated each of the 17 penalties by using a 5-point numerical rating scale which ranged from 5-most severe, 3-moderately severe, to 1-least severe (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, 1996). The ratings were totaled and averaged in order to determine the level of severity of each penalty; the range was also reported. The researcher confirmed the validity and reliability of the panel's assessments by performing a Cronbach's Alpha test.

*A group of experts were selected to determine the severity of NCAA penalties. The panel was composed of eight experts in the field of NCAA enforcement. Each expert ranked the NCAA penalties and the level of severity of each penalty.*

### RESEARCH DESIGN

For this descriptive study, the researcher utilized the Equality of Means and Independent-Samples *t*-Test ( $p < .05$ ). The researcher tested the null hypothesis regarding whether differences would be found between the most successful and the least successful Division I men's basketball programs in relation to the following: 1. number of investigations; 2. the infraction rate; 3. the penalty rate; and, 4. the severity rate. The following research questions were assessed: 1. Is there a difference in the number of times most successful programs versus least successful programs have been investigated by the NCAA? 2. Is there a difference in the infraction rate between the most successful programs and the least successful programs? 3. Is there a difference in the penalty rate between the most successful programs and the least successful programs? 4. Of the programs that the NCAA imposed penalties on, is there a difference in the severity rate between the most successful and the least successful?

### DATA COLLECTION

Data collection transpired in three stages. The first stage consisted of distributing the NCAA Penalty Rank questionnaire to the panel of experts. Stage two included gathering necessary rankings from the Sagarin Ratings. The final stage consisted of collecting the official NCAA reports.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Mean and standard deviation scores were calculated for the expert panel ranking questionnaire and Sagarin Ratings. A *t*-test was used to test the differences between the most successful and least successful programs in relation to the number of investigations, infractions, penalties, and severity of penalties.

## RESULTS

### SARARIN RATINGS

The Levene's Test of Equality of Variances for the Sagarin Ratings instruments yielded low probabilities of error in relation to the four variables tested; number of investigations ( $F = 19.99$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .000$ ), the infraction rate ( $F = 6.816$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .011$ ), the penalty rate ( $F = 9.526$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .003$ ), and the severity rate ( $F = 6.399$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .013$ ).

### EXPERT PENALTY PANEL RANKINGS

The severities of the NCAA's penalties were ranked based on the expert's responses by computing the total scores for each penalty and dividing each by eight. A Cronbach's Alpha was performed to test the inter-rater reliability of the expert panel's responses (.836).

### NCAA INFRACTION REPORTS

The number of major violation investigations by the NCAA from 1990-1999, regardless of sport, was 125 (12.5/year); sixty-three (50.4%) involved men's basketball programs (nearly 2 investigations/year). The number of investigations into most successful programs was 20 (31.7%); whereas, just 8 (12.7%) implicated least successful programs.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Equality of Means and Independent-Samples *t*-Test yielded significant differences amongst the four variables tested. The following are the results for each research question examined:

1. Is there a difference in the number of times most successful programs and least successful programs have been investigated by the NCAA?

Yes, ( $t = 2.76$ ,  $p = .007$ ). Most successful  $M = .50$ ; least successful  $M = .20$ .

2. Is there a difference in the infraction rate between the most successful programs and the least successful programs?

Yes, ( $t = 2.21$ ,  $p = .030$ ). Most successful  $M = 1.51$ ; least successful  $M = .70$ .

3. Is there a difference in the penalty rate between the most successful programs and the least successful programs?

Yes, ( $t = 2.52$ ,  $p = .014$ ). Most successful  $M = 1.01$ ; least successful  $M = .40$ .

4. Of the programs that the NCAA imposed penalties on, is there a difference in the severity rate between the most successful and the least successful?

Yes, ( $t = 2.19$ ,  $p = .031$ ). Most successful  $M = 1.23$ ; least successful  $M = .60$ .

#### DISCUSSION

Scholars (Gerdy, 1997; Goplerud, 1991; James, 1993; Ponticello, 1991; Raab, 1993) agree that justice and fairness in the governing process is not only important, but necessary, in running the most powerful governing body in intercollegiate athletics. Others (Byers, 1995; Funk, 1991; Zimbalist, 1999) have questioned the NCAA's system of justice; suggesting that the NCAA has strayed from its commitment to fairness (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 19.01.1).

It is important to note that the most successful and least successful programs accounted for less than half (44.4%) of the total number of investigations in men's basketball during the ten year time period. Fifty-five percent of investigations implicated programs who were not categorized as most or least successful; the majority of investigations were found amongst the programs ranked in the middle.

Granted, it is not possible to ascertain which programs are committing the greatest number of major violations, rather only those who are caught. Further, it must be assumed that the NCAA enforcement staff is probing for major violations in men's basketball programs at the same rate, regardless of rank. Since, the enforcement staff investigates a program only if there is reasonable cause to believe that the program may be in violation of NCAA rules (NCAA, 2003, Bylaw 32.2.1) it is, at best, doubtful that each program is being examined equally across the board. Therefore, in order to properly consider the question—Is the NCAA guilty of practicing selective enforcement?—one would have to assume each program is committing major violations at the same rate. It is only under this assumption then, that the results of this study would support the assertion that the NCAA has not acted equitably in the enforcement of its rules. However, the inequity uncovered in this study does not support the critics (Byers, 1995; Funk, 1991; James, 1993; Zimbalist, 1999) notions of selective enforcement either (i.e. the most successful programs are protected and the least successful programs are sought out). Rather, these findings show that the number of investigations, the infraction rate, the penalty rate, and the severity rate is higher amongst the most successful programs. Within the time frame of this study, the most successful programs were investigated more often (2.5:1), charged with a greater number of infractions (2:1), and received, not only more penalties (2.5:1), but a greater severity of penalties (2:1) than the least successful programs.

In analyzing the results of this study, it is important to note that the NCAA enforcement staff investigates a program only if there is reasonable cause to believe that the program may be in violation of NCAA rules (Bylaw 32.2.1). Accordingly, these findings do not necessarily substantiate that the NCAA is guilty of practicing selective enforcement. Rather, there may be a number of other variables at work that would explain why the investigation, infraction, penalty and severity of penalties were greater amongst the most successful programs. Possible considerations are: (1) Data regarding programs who commit major violations and do not get caught are not available; therefore, one might

conclude that all programs regardless of rank are committing an equal number of major violations, however only the basketball programs with a Sagarin ranking toward number one are being caught. (2) Programs with a top Sagarin ranking assume a high level of national visibility and media attention and therefore are more closely scrutinized. (3) It takes the best players to attain a top Sagarin ranking. In order to acquire such talent, programs commit major violations of NCAA rules. (4) Anonymous "tips" received by the NCAA regarding a potential major violation by a program may be reported by rival fans or coaches.

Future researchers should seek to uncover additional variables that may have an effect on explaining why the most successful Division I men's basketball programs are investigated more often, charged with a greater number of infractions, and receive not only more penalties, but a greater severity of penalties than the least successful programs.

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## COLLEGE ATHLETES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPHASIS THEIR COACHES PLACE ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GRADUATION

**B. David Ridpath, Ph.D., Mississippi State University**

### HISTORY OF COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Today, thousands of college students compete in intercollegiate athletics on varsity and junior varsity sports teams sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or other national governing bodies. Intercollegiate athletics have been a part of higher education and university life since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when athletics were made part of the curriculum at the Rugby School of England (Falla, 1981; Ridpath, 2002; Zimbalist, 1999). Intercollegiate athletic competition in the United States, albeit primarily unsanctioned, is traced back as early as the 1820s to crew competitions, football, and rugby games between Ivy League schools. (Falla, 1981; Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001). Competitive advantage has ruled from the outset. In 1898, faculty members from what would become the Ivy League met to create rules to prohibit practices that were undermining the role of sport in education (Sack, 2003). The Ivy League faculty concluded that the institutions were not there to make athletes, but only good citizens whose mental powers have been sustained and enhanced by athletic participation ("Report on Intercollegiate Athletics," 1898; Sack, 2003). Almost from the day that Rutgers and Princeton played the first official intercollegiate football game in 1869, educators and others have decried the overemphasis of sport as contrary to the mission of higher education (Deford, 2001; Ryan, 1989; Sack, 2003; Stone & Strange, 1989; Telander, 1996).

### DESIRED EFFECTS OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

At the university level, intercollegiate athletics can have a positive effect on university life and increase the quality of the overall educational experience for the college athlete, university, and local community, as well as for graduates and alumni of the institution. Athletics is an important part of life for undergraduates. It interests and fascinates an enormous number of citizens who claim no alma mater, but who love the color, the pageantry, and the sheer competition of sporting events ("The Crisis," 1990). Athletic participation during the college years can improve the individual's ability to get through the academic rigors of college and better prepare a college athlete for life outside of athletics in that it promotes growth in interpersonal skills, leadership abilities, and increases self-esteem (Richards & Aries, 1999; Ryan, 1989; Taylor, 1995). Coaches of athletic teams believe that sports develop certain desirable social values. The commonly listed traits are kindness, cooperation, truthfulness, courage, loyalty, friendliness, and character (Edwards, 1973; Frost & Sims, 1973; Gerdy, 2002; Kneller, 1965; Svare, 2004). There is the argument that, intercollegiate athletics have given a large number of college athletes the opportunity to attend colleges and universities who otherwise might not have attended. A proportion of these athletes from impoverished backgrounds have graduated from college and benefited society (Blackburn & Nyikos, 1974). Like other specialized educational pursuits, sports are environmentally cultivated and provide opportunities to satisfy the strong human drives for recognition and achievement which

in turn may motivate those to academically succeed (Gerdy, 2002; Gilbert, 1974; Ogilvie & Tutko, 1971; Svare, 2004).

Family members, peers, teammates, teachers, and coaches applaud a young athlete's accomplishments. Individual athletes with outstanding sports records are recognized and often honored for their achievements (Clarke, 1975; Gerdy, 2002; Svare, 2004; Underwood, 1984).

### **PROBLEMS OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION**

However, playing an intercollegiate sport can add an unexpectedly complex layer to student life. College athletes face all the challenges that non-athletes face in relation to the daily student routine, but college athletes also have their sport-related activities. College athletes constantly cope with balancing the roles of student and athlete (Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996; Martens & Lee, 1998; Street, 1999; Watt & Moore, 2001). Understanding the historical development of the popularity of college athletics can help one understand the breadth and depth of the conflict between the academic and athletic worlds of the college athlete (Watt & Moore, 2001).

Values in intercollegiate athletics have changed dramatically over the years. In the late 1800s, after intercollegiate athletics took a stronger foothold on campuses across the country, college sports were played for fun and leisure. The faculties and administrators in early higher education never planned for anything as frivolous as athletics (Sack, 2003). The concentration was solely on academics. Still, students gravitated toward recreational activities that college authorities saw as a method for the students to release pent up energies (Chu, Seagrave, & Becker, 1985). In the 1920s, many institutions requiring physical education courses emphasized the importance of physical activity in higher education. This combined with an increased emphasis on intercollegiate athletics, made physical education a big business on campuses of higher learning. The 1920s became known as the golden age of college sports. The students had new freedoms, new drives, and new searching's for emotional and physical outlets. College sports seemed to provide the one common denominator and rallying point for students, faculty, administrators, and communities (Sack, 2003; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Wilson, 1967).

From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century through today, intercollegiate athletics has become more commercialized, bringing in ever increasing revenue and stature to schools with winning teams (Sperber, 1990; Svare, 2004). Athletics have served a variety of needs for the institution and its various constituencies. College administrators have often felt the success and perception of intercollegiate athletics in the form of winning records and in attracted monies from the state and alumni (Chu, 1979; Underwood, 1984).

### **AN ACADEMIC CRISIS**

The words "student" and "athlete" combined have sometimes been viewed as an oxymoron (Broadhead, 1992; Cullen, Latessa, & Byrne, 1990; Naughton, 1996). Colleges and universities have recruited, trained, and exploited a seemingly endless procession of students for their athletic ability, casting them off when their eligibility ends.

Administrators and coaches often look the other way when a college athlete begins to fail academically (Wyatt, 1999). Intercollegiate athletics can be good or bad for the participants, dependent primarily on the goals and motivation of the coaches and the institution (Alley, 1974). The literature suggests the reasons for this are that sports are organized around the needs of frustrated adults, the commercialization of the games, and the emphasis on revenue and winning, rather than around the values and education of high school and college participants (Alley 1974; Tunis, 1958).

Over emphasis on athletics has led to an inevitable clash of academic integrity versus athletic success at institutions that sponsor intercollegiate athletics. In simple terms, a college athlete must remain academically eligible in order to compete. If one is not academically eligible and not making satisfactory progress towards a degree, competition for that individual is prohibited (*National Collegiate Athletic Association*, 2001). Thus many people such as students, boosters, academicians, alumni, and coaches, have tried, and in many cases, have succeeded in beating the system. The effort and business of superseding academic requirements to gain athletic success has been around since the beginning of intercollegiate athletics itself (Sack, 2003; Savage, 1929).

*Over emphasis on athletics has led to an inevitable clash of academic integrity versus athletic success at institutions that sponsor intercollegiate athletics.*

The abuse of academic requirements began to spread to the primary levels of education where outstanding athletic prospects existed. College and university personnel began to influence the education, or lack thereof, of prospective college athletes in high school by bending the rules primarily by falsifying transcripts and standardized admission test scores, to gain the prospect admission to the institution (Sack, 2003; Savage, 1929). Academic abuse for athletic success at the high school level never gave some individuals the chance to be successful in college, or many who were admitted to a university have not been prepared or skilled enough to go to college (Briggs, 1996; Underwood, 1984). If a prospective college athlete was not ready or prepared academically for the rigors of college level work, graduation became an almost unattainable goal. A high proportion of incoming freshman college athletes up until the mid 1980s fit this category (Chu, Seagrave, & Becker, 1985). College athletes are believed to be less academically able and usually enter college with lower high school grades and test scores. Prospective athletes who are poorly prepared for college level work have been found to disengage themselves from academic roles (Adler & Adler 1985; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Hanford, 1974; Hood, Craig, & Ferguson, 1992; Lorimer, 1972; Purdy, 1981; Stuart, 1985).

When athletic reform efforts regarding academic eligibility for intercollegiate athletics were created, colleges and universities were trying to protect the integrity of their academic mission and the intellectual environment while trying to allow the college athlete the benefits that both provide (Sack, 2003; Watt & Moore, 2001; Zimbalist, 1999). Later in the 20<sup>th</sup>, now 21<sup>st</sup> century, intercollegiate athletics has become more commercialized, bringing in ever increasing revenue and stature to schools with winning teams. It has served a variety of needs for the institution and various constituencies. College administrators have often felt the exploits of their athletic teams attracted



monies from the state, alumni, and through other factors like ticket sales and fund raising opportunities (Chu, 1975; Gerdy, 2002; Svare, 2004; Underwood, 1984). Thus the drive for winning and revenue generation has remained constant. Studies done over the years conclude that athletes are unprepared for and uninterested in academics and come to college primarily to advance their athletic careers rather than their future vocational careers; therefore, they have lower grade point averages, higher attrition rates, and lower chances of graduating than other students (Adler & Adler, 1985; Cross, 1973; Edwards, 1984; Harrison, 1976; Nyquist, 1979; Purdy, Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1982; Sack & Thiel, 1979; Spivey & Jones, 1975; Webb, 1968). For many years, colleges and universities turned away from academic requirements to allow under-prepared students who are blessed with athletic ability on campus just to participate in athletics while academics became a forgotten entity (Dodd, 1999).

#### **COLLEGE ATHLETES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF COACHING STAFF ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GRADUATION**

The coaching staff, particularly the head coach, usually provides the greatest impact on the academic success of any college athlete (Ridpath, 2002). A coach and/or coaches involved in the academic well-being, and the athlete relying on that guidance, of their college athletes and emphasizing the importance of academics can greatly increase the chance of a college athlete succeeding academically and graduating (Adler & Adler, 1985). This philosophy applies to both revenue and non-revenue sports. Revenue sports are defined as a team sport that can generate revenue to help support itself. Non-revenue or Olympic sports are those that typically generate little or no revenue and need subsidies to meet their operating budget (*National Collegiate Athletic Association*, 2004-05). The two most common revenue sports in NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics are men's basketball and football. These two sports in particular carry immense pressure for coaches to win and keep their high paying jobs. It is then reasonable to assume that the less pressure to win on a coach and coaching staff, the more focus they can put on the academic well being of a college athlete. Non-revenue sports coaches typically focus more on academics and are much more involved in the student's life outside of academics (Adler & Adler, 1985). In revenue sports, coaches are primarily hired and fired based on won-loss records, not for achieving high graduation rates (Ridpath, 2002). The pressure to succeed can detach a revenue coach from being involved in the academic success of their college athletes (Sperber, 1990). A revenue sport coach is likely to be excessive in his demands on the time of their athletes for athletic purposes and not for academic purposes (Purdy, Eitzen, & Hufnagel, 1982).

The level of the coach's involvement and whether that coach wants his or her students to graduate, or just stay eligible to compete, is an indicator as to whether a college athlete will graduate from college. According to Adler and Adler (1985), incoming college athletes in revenue sports normally feel idealistic about academics when entering college, as coaches tout academics during recruiting. However, this often changes when the pressures of athletics begin to be felt. Many college athletes are shuttled by their coaches into "professor friendly" classes and easy majors so academics will not interfere with their athletic responsibilities (Ridpath, 2002; Sperber, 1990; Svare 2004). If coaches are threatened with their employment, athletic success of the team will almost always take priority over the academic success of the college athletes (Ifill, 2005; Sperber,

1990). College athletes' academic performance is significantly affected by coaches' intervention in their academic lives (Adler & Adler, 1985).

College athletes are selected and recruited by coaches. These same coaches work with them and get to know them well while they are enrolled in college. If a college athlete runs into personal or academic trouble, coaches are usually nearby, ready, and motivated to help. In helping to advance their own careers, the coaches must recruit good athletic material and then guide these students through successful academic and athletic careers (Ridpath, 2002). A coach can be the strongest support person in the life of a college athlete (Petrie & Russell, 1995). Adler and Adler (1985; 1991) found that the varied sets of educational and life goals with which players entered college rapidly shrank to the single goal of winning games by a process they call "role engulfment" (Sack, 2003). They noted many factors contributed to this narrowing of aspirations, but found that the coach was the main influence in intentionally orchestrating the process of role engulfment away from academics in order to obtain the extreme loyalty from players he believed he needed in order to meet high performance athletic goals. Coaches can be an intended or unintended source of intense reinforcement for the role of a winning athlete but a lack of reinforcement for the academic role (Briggs, 1997).

Researchers have attempted to determine what non-academic variables might help to explain the college academic performance of college athletes (Adler & Adler, 1985; Ridpath 2002). The non-cognitive variables of a strong support person, involvement in the community, and positive self-concept positively predicted college academic performance. If influential role models do not care how the college athlete performs academically, the college athlete's academics will suffer (Broadhead, 1992; Petrie & Russell, 1995; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Sellers & Chavous, 1997; Young & Sowa, 1992). Many coaches themselves favor making the coach and athletic department responsible for the graduation rate of college athletes and stressing more the importance of education and graduation to the college athlete (Cullen, Latessa, & Byrne, 1990). The NCAA membership recently adopted an incentive/disincentive system tying academics to competitive equity. In short if a team and or athletic department does not meet a predetermined cut off score for graduation (50% or more per team), that team or department will be penalized in various ways. Penalties could include loss of scholarships or ability to participate in post season or NCAA championship events ("NCAA Division I Framework," 2005; Suggs, 2005). Critics have decried this system as an open invitation for more cheating and fraud since the culture of revenue generation and winning has not changed (Fitzpatrick, 2005; Suggs, 2005). Legendary Penn State football coach, Joe Paterno, sums up the new standards by saying, "If Whatsamatta U is told to graduate 50% of its players, then Whatsamatta U. will find a way to graduate 50%" (Fitzpatrick, 2005, p. A01).

It is that culture that forces many college athletes after being counseled by coaches to major in eligibility and not academic progress to pay less attention to their academic pursuits (Purdy, 1981). In the early nineties, several former college athletes at different California state universities and colleges claimed that coaches advised them to enroll in courses like physical education courses to protect their athletic eligibility (Gerdy, 2002; Maloney & McCormick, 2002; Svare, 2004). In some cases, students were instructed to

reenroll in courses they have already passed and coaches became upset when players took courses that were required for graduation instead of courses that helped maintain eligibility (Broadhead, 1992). In late 2004, The Washington Post exposed a scheme by several major college institutions that were granting excessive academic credit for athletics participation (Schlabach, 2004). To an even greater extent, colleges and universities have allowed rampant academic fraud to persist. One of the most egregious cases of academic fraud was that of the University of Minnesota in 1999 (Dohrmann & Borger, 1999; Southall, Nagel, Batista & Reese, 2003). To maintain its elite status in the sport of men's basketball, the University of Minnesota, led by then head coach Clem Haskins, took steps to insure the basketball athletes remained eligible for competition. The university authorized a separate academic counseling program for the team under the direct supervision of the coach (Dohrmann & Borger, 1999; Southall et. al., 2003). This arranged conflict of interest and intense desire of the university to have a winning basketball program erupted into academic scandal in which athletic academic tutor Jan Ganglehoff admitted she wrote over 400 papers for 20 different academic at risk basketball players, just so their competitive eligibility could be maintained. Haskins direct involvement underscores the importance and vital role that coaches have with regard to academic progress and graduation of college athletes.

The Minnesota case is extreme, but academic fraud cases are not uncommon in NCAA athletics. The Minnesota case does illustrate the amount of influence a coach can have on the academic progress of a college athlete. Revenue sport college athletes, such as University of Minnesota men's basketball players, typically take a downgraded curriculum often at the insistence of their coaches and designed specifically for them, which could significantly reduce the educational value of their time in college (Adelman, 1990; Adler & Adler, 1991, Briggs, 1997; Purdy, 1981). College athletes will often decide in favor of athletics when a conflict exists with academics (Adler & Adler, 1991) to please their coach who possesses the power to decide who starts in games and who is put on scholarship (Simons, Van Rheenen & Covington, 1999). In non-revenue sports, coaches typically do not put much pressure on non-revenue athletes to perform. Since winning in revenue sports appears to have a larger monetary effect, it is believable that those athletes are forced by coaches to accept a more severe tradeoff between academic performances relative to athletic achievements (Maloney & McCormick, 1992).

According to Adler and Adler (1998) and Briggs (1997), the goal toward which a coach rallies the athletes, and around which he forges their role identity until it becomes their central life interest, is extremely short term. As one ball player explains, "Coach's main goal is to keep producing quality basketball teams...His job is not to produce accountants or NBA athletes, it's to have a winning program" (Briggs, 1997, p. 412).

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Does the profile of the Mid-American Conference athlete created from the information gleaned from the survey confirm the characteristics presented in the literature with regard to college athletes' perceptions of emphasis placed on academic progress and graduation?

## METHODS

### DATA

To ascertain the effect of a college athlete's perception of his or her coach's emphasis on the academic progress and potential of graduation for a college athlete, the researcher self-developed a survey instrument to test the research question. To qualify as an NCAA Division I institution, an NCAA member must sponsor at least seven sports teams for males and seven for females, or six teams for males and eight for females. There are other criteria that must be met including home football attendance, number of scholarships given, and departmental budget amounts (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; NCAA, 2001). A mid-major athletic conference is a Division I conference that is not involved as a member of the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) in NCAA Division I Football (Suggs, 2001). The specific intercollegiate athletic conference analyzed for this study is the Mid-American Conference. The Mid-American Conference, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, was established in 1946 as a five-team league. It is the sixth oldest and fourth largest intercollegiate athletic conference in the NCAA. At the time the survey instrument was administered, the MAC consisted of 13 member institutions split into an eastern and western division with a total combined student enrollment of more than 275,000, including more than 5200 athletes competing in 23 sports (Hazel, 2000). Data were obtained from selected student athletes at the 13 schools in the Mid-American Conference. The data incorporated items from a survey instrument distributed to senior athletes at the 13 schools during the 2001-02 academic year. The population for this study included undergraduate student athletes in the Mid-American Conference that are currently in their senior year of NCAA eligibility, or in their fifth year of enrollment after expiration of their eligibility (N=1238).

These particular institutions, like others in mid-major conferences, are more likely than BCS conferences to admit academic at risk student athletes (Messer & Cherry, 2000). The Mid-American Conference is one of the few Division I-A conferences that allow admission of student athletes not academically eligible for competition during the initial year of enrollment (non-qualifiers), and admission exceptions for those student athletes who do not meet established institutional academic standards and are considered at risk academically (C. Peacock, personal communication, July 31, 2005; Messer & Cherry, 2000). Typically, the mid-major conferences will take the chance of admitting academic at risk student athletes on the basis of athletic accomplishments and potential so that they may be better equipped to compete, especially in the revenue sports (C. Peacock, personal communication, July 31, 2005; Messer & Cherry, 2000). Due to this phenomenon, student athletes in a mid-major conference, like the Mid-American Conference, present a diverse population along the academic spectrum to adequately assess the characteristics for graduation of Division I student athletes.

For purposes of this population, a senior athlete may not be a senior academically, but will be competing in their last year of competitive NCAA eligibility. Student athletes at NCAA Division I institutions are allowed four years of competitive eligibility within five years of enrollment (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2004-05). A fifth year college athlete is still enrolled at the institution and has not yet graduated, but has exhausted the four allowable years of NCAA competitive eligibility. All members of the population had yet to graduate from college at the time of distribution of the survey

instrument, but the predictors are assessed on the expectancy and predictability of graduation within a maximum of one academic year from the administration date of the survey instrument, based on analysis of responses completed on the survey and the percentage of degree completed by each individual. Percentage of degree completed is used as an NCAA standard to determine academic, not athletic standing of a particular student athlete (NCAA, 2001). For example, to be classified as a senior athlete by NCAA eligibility standards a student athlete must have completed 75% of their major degree requirements and only have one year of remaining competitive eligibility (NCAA, 2001).

### **ANALYSIS**

Distribution of a questionnaire was the survey method for obtaining the information to answer the research question. The instrument was distributed by the researcher to a contact in each of the athletic departments in the Mid-American Conference. The contacts handed out the questionnaires to a random sample of the selected members of the population at each school. Due to issues relating to The Family Education Right to Privacy Act ("The FERPA Answer Book," 2000), a cover letter was included with the instrument containing a guarantee of complete anonymity and that completion of the survey is voluntary. Questionnaires are regarded as an effective tool for measuring many different characteristics such as thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, and perceptions for research studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

### **SAMPLE**

The study used a proportional stratified sample of the population to complete the survey instrument. In proportional stratified sampling, the proportions in the sample on the stratification variable will be perfectly or almost perfectly representative of the proportions on that same stratification variable in the population (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The study examined 25% of the selected population (n=358). For example, Eastern Michigan University represented 157 students in the total population, or 11%. For the purposes of this study, using proportional stratified sampling, Eastern Michigan University received 39 surveys to distribute to selected athletes. The selected athlete's received the survey through a contact in each institution's athletic department. Upon completion of the survey, each individual returned the instrument to the researcher via United States Post Office mail in a postage paid envelope. The most popular method of distributing questionnaires is by mail (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Due to limited contact between the researcher and respondent, the response rate can often be very low and the public is often not willing to participate in surveys (Steeh, 1981). A response rate of 50% plus one (at least n=179) for this study is considered an acceptable statistical sample of the population (Kerlinger, 1986). Fifty-four percent of the surveys were returned for a total of 191 respondents included in the analysis.

To minimize issues of content validity, the self-reported survey instrument was developed through an extensive review of past and present literature, surveys, and questionnaires, approved by a jury of eight experts in the higher education and intercollegiate athletic fields, and trial tested through a pilot test of a like population. Of particular value to the development of the instrument were the American Institutes for Research Study of Intercollegiate Athletics (1981), The Reports of the Knight Commission on the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics (1991, 1993; "A Call to Action,"

2001), and NCAA Research Reports 91-04 (1991), 92-02 (1993), 96-02 (1997), 97-02 (1997), 97-04 (1999).

The survey instrument was presented to the jury of experts for professional review and assessment. The jury of experts conducted a readability analysis and approved the questionnaire for use in the data collection. These individuals were in the best position to critique and assess the potential of the instrument due to their knowledge of the subject, knowledge of research methods, and experience in higher education and athletic administration.

The survey was also trial tested through a pilot study with a like population to determine if any modifications need to be made. The survey was given to several Marshall University student athletes were not be in the population selected for the study. The researcher selected junior, by NCAA competitive eligibility standards, student athletes (N=20) to complete the instrument. This group was chosen because of its similarities to the sample frame and it presents an acceptable cross section of ethnicity, gender, sport played, and academic profile. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine if the data gathered presented an accurate assessment of the answers (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

#### DATA ANALYSIS

The method of statistical analysis incorporates descriptive statistics to confirm if the characteristics of the literature can be generalized to student athletes in the Mid-American Conference. All data gathered from the questionnaire, along with the research question, was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The demographic information also serves to allow post-hoc analysis as deemed appropriate along with analysis of any potential ancillary findings. Demographic information examined in this study includes gender, ethnicity, academic standing, expectation of graduation, college major, sport played in college, scholarship or non-scholarship, and score attained on SAT or ACT.

#### DISCUSSION

The literature note that coaches, in particular the head coach of a specific athletic team, can have a major impact on the academic success of the individual college athlete (Adler & Adler, 1985; Briggs, 1997; Petrie & Russell, 1995). An analysis of each question relating to college coaches' emphasis on academics was done using a descriptive statistics frequency cross tabulation by sport, gender, ethnicity, and answer given on the survey instrument. On the questions that covered recruiting of the college athlete prior to college enrollment, almost 50% of the athletes, representing all sports, who answered the question, said they believed their college coach made academics the number one priority during the recruiting process (Table 1). This corresponds with the literature in that most coaches do sell the academic importance of college and graduation to prospective college athletes, however according to previous studies and research, that goal appears to change to one of eligibility maintenance solely for competitive eligibility when the college athlete is enrolled in college (Adler & Adler, 1985; Sperber, 1990).

Studies indicate that the influence of coaches' emphasizing academic success and graduation among their college athletes is significant to the academic progress of a college athlete (Adler & Adler, 1985; Briggs, 1997; Petrie & Russell, 1995). The literature

indicates that coaches will strongly push academics and academic programs on prospective college athletes during the recruiting process (Adelman, 1990; Adler & Adler, 1991; Briggs, 1997; Purdy, 1981). The same studies also state that academic emphasis by coaches significantly decreases upon the prospect enrolling in college, specifically amongst revenue sports (Maloney & McCormick, 1992). The data presented from the college athletes in the Mid-American Conference is consistent with the literature on the subject of academics being emphasized during the recruiting process and that the emphasis decreases after enrollment of the college athlete, when the analysis includes sports in addition to football and men's basketball. Almost 90% of the respondents from all of the sports surveyed agreed or were neutral on the questions that asked about the level of emphasis on academics by coaches during the recruiting process. Less than 10 % disagreed with the questions.

The changes that coaches have with regard to emphasizing academics after college enrollment of their college athletes in the literature is also found in the data provided on the survey instrument by college athletes in the Mid-American Conference. While overall the student athletics in the Mid-American Conference said their coaches maintained the priority emphasis on academics and not athletics (almost 50%), only 31 percent believed that their coach was more interested in their graduating from college than their competitive eligibility (Table 4).

Overall, the Mid-American Conference coaches of the 27 sports, represented on the survey, stress academics and graduation more than athletic success. These research-based conclusions confirm that the results gleaned from the literature can be generalized to the Mid-American Conference when discussing overall impact of this characteristic on all college athletes and all sports represented on the survey. Using the recently released NCAA Academic Progress Rate Report Card the Mid-American Conference fared much better than athletic conferences that compete at a higher level of competition and monetary gain (i.e. BCS conference schools). Of the 13 schools in the MAC, only three schools fell below the overall institutional academic cutoff score of 925 ("Academic Progress Rate," 2005).

When college athletes' perceptions of college coaches' emphasis on academics is further broken down into the subgroups of revenue and non-revenue sports there are some different results. Over 50 percent of football players believed their coaches were more interested in keeping them eligible for competition rather than progressing academically. The men's basketball respondents differed from the literature and answers provided were very positive towards the coaching staff before and during college enrollment. Overall, there is no significance through statistical analysis of college athlete's perception of college coaches' emphasis on academics when comparing all teams through a one-way analysis of variance (Table 6), but there are differences noted in the sport of football as opposed to men's basketball. Table 3 shows that while 85.3 of the respondents answered agree or neutral to question 14, "After college enrollment my coach placed academic success above athletic success," there is a decline in agreement in the sports of men's basketball and football in comparison to the responses of non-revenue sport college athletes. Of 48 football respondents to the question, 21 agreed that academics were placed above athletic success, but 27 were either neutral or disagreed with the question. In men's basketball, the decline is similar versus the

perception prior to college enrollment. Seven out of the 11 men's basketball respondents were either neutral or disagreed with the question.

The findings related to the survey question, "My coach is more concerned with my graduation than my eligibility to play," are significant in that only 30.9% of the college athletes surveyed in all sports agree that their coach is more concerned with graduation than competitive eligibility (Table 4). Still a very high percentage (64%) stated (Table 5) their coach would be concerned with in their academic success once eligibility expired. This is in conflict with the literature in the case of revenue sports where research indicates coaches detach themselves from their college athletes once their eligibility expires and they know they can no longer assist them athletically (Adler & Adler, 1985).

The literature indicates that due to the high pressure put on coaches in revenue sports to win games, often the focus on academics becomes less (Adler & Adler, 1985, 1991; Briggs, 1997; Broadhead, 1992; Purdy, 1981). The data in this study are consistent with the literature on most of the questions in that the influence of the coach on academics and graduation can be influential to a college athlete. Responses to certain questions demonstrate that certain revenue sport coaches are more concerned with winning and keeping players eligible than with graduation. Over half of the football respondents to these questions believed that their coaches were more interested in keeping them eligible, than seeing them graduate. The majority of the football players also noted that they believed that their coach (es) would lose interest in their academic progress once their eligibility expired. It is important to note however that the majority of the men's basketball responses on the instrument were positive towards the coaching staff, which does not correspond with the literature. The data overall finds that almost all coaches in the Mid-American Conference emphasize academics during recruiting (Table 2). The academic emphasis appears to decline for students in the Mid-American Conference after college enrollment, especially in football, as it is presented in the literature for other college athletes in NCAA Division I.

#### SUMMARY

The data in this study support results presented in the literature that the perception of the college athlete with regard to coaches' emphasis on academic progress is important as well as significant. While overall there is not a significant difference between groups with regard to the perception of coaches' emphasis when statistically analyzed, the descriptive statistics showing specific answers by revenue and non-revenue sports demonstrate the differences between revenue and non-revenue sports with regard to the importance on academics v. athletics. As the literature shows, the athletes in the primary revenue sports of football and men's basketball, have a dramatically different view of the priority their coaching staffs put on academic progress and graduation when compared to their non-revenue counterparts, specifically all female teams. This study supports the literature in that it shows the priorities of winning and revenue generation, not academic persistence, are first and foremost in the minds of revenue sports coaches, even in a non-BCS conference.

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**TABLE 1**  
**COLLEGE COACHES' EMPHASES ON ACADEMICS, REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

My coach emphasized academics more than athletics while recruiting me.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	85	44.5
Neutral	82	42.9
Disagree	19	9.9
Total	186	97.4
No Answer	5	2.6
Total	191	100.0

**TABLE 2**  
**COLLEGE COACHES' EMPHASES ON ACADEMICS, REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

The coach made it clear to me about academics being more important than athletics during the recruiting process.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	115	60.2
Neutral	59	30.9
Disagree	11	5.8
Total	185	96.9
System	6	3.1
Total	191	100.0



**TABLE 3**  
**COLLEGE COACHES' EMPHASES ON ACADEMICS. REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

After college enrollment my coaches placed academic success above athletic success

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Agree	88	46.1
Neutral	75	39.3
Disagree	28	14.7
Total	191	100.0

**TABLE 4**  
**COLLEGE COACHES' EMPHASES ON ACADEMICS, REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

My coach is more concerned with graduation than my eligibility

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Answer	Frequency	Percent
Agree	59	30.9
Neutral	93	48.7
Disagree	39	20.4
Total	191	100.0

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**TABLE 5**  
**COLLEGE COACHES' EMPHASES ON ACADEMICS, REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

I believe my coach will be interested in my academic success when my eligibility expires

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Agree	122	63.9
Neutral	41	21.5
Disagree	28	14.7
Total	191	100.0

**TABLE 6**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE. REVENUE AND NON-REVENUE SPORTS**

College Coaches Emphasis on Academics

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	198.717	16	12.420	.860	.616*
Within Groups	2382.932	165	14.442		
Total	2581.648	181			

\*p < .05

APPENDIX 1

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC GRADUATION  
SURVEY MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

*Please check and/or answer as accurately as you can.*

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1. What is your gender? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ African American (Black)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian (white)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- 3. What is your academic standing? Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Do you expect to graduate? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. What is your expected graduation date (Month/Year)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. What is your college major? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. What sport or sports have you participated in? Main \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Did you receive an athletic scholarship for at least one academic year? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. What was your entrance exam score (One or both)? ACT \_\_\_\_\_ SAT \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. What was your high school Core Course GPA determined by the NCAA Clearinghouse? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. What is your current grade point average in college? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle best choice below.*

GENERAL ISSUES

AGREE NEUTRAL DISAGREE

- 12. My coach emphasized academics more than athletics during the recruiting process. 1 2 3
- 13. The coach made it clear to me about academics being more important than athletics during the recruiting process. 1 2 3
- 14. During college, my coaches placed academic success above athletic success. 1 2 3

	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
15. My coach punishes me for not attending class.	1	2	3
16. My coach cares that I succeed academically and graduate.	1	2	3
17. It is important to me for my coach to encourage and require good performance in class.	1	2	3
18. If I fail academically, my coaches try to find a legitimate way to keep me eligible.	1	2	3
19. My coach stresses the importance of getting a college degree.	1	2	3
20. When I entered college, getting a degree was more important than being a pro athlete.	1	2	3
21. My coach is assisting me in meeting my professional sports goals.	1	2	3
22. My coach is more concerned with my graduation than for my eligibility to play.	1	2	3
23. I believe my coach is interested in my academic success when my eligibility expires.	1	2	3
24. It is of great importance to me to get a college degree.	1	2	3
25. I feel I have control over my academic and athletic life.	1	2	3
26. I chose this school because of the coach.	1	2	3
27. My coach is the person who has the most academic influence on me.	1	2	3
28. It is important to my coach for me to graduate.	1	2	3
29. My sport does not interfere with my academic success.	1	2	3
30. I routinely practice no more than 20 hours per week.	1	2	3
31. I spend at least 10 hours studying per week.	1	2	3
32. I was redshirted in college.	1	2	3
33. The importance of academics was stressed in high school.	1	2	3

	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
34. I knew I had to meet minimum academic standards to compete in intercollegiate athletics.	1	2	3
35. I feel that I get special treatment because I am a student athlete.	1	2	3
36. I do not feel discriminated against because I am a student athlete.	1	2	3
37. I am regarded as a serious student by my professors/instructors.	1	2	3
38. Academics are my top priority in college.	1	2	3
39. I am satisfied with my athletic performance.	1	2	3
39. I chose this school because of its athletic reputation in my sport.	1	2	3
41. I have worked a job while enrolled in college and participated in athletics.	1	2	3
42. I have (check all that apply):			
_____ ATTENDED SUMMER SCHOOL TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE			
_____ ATTENDED SUMMER SCHOOL TO GRADUATE FASTER			
_____ REPEATED COURSES			
_____ BEEN ON ACADEMIC PROBATION			
_____ FOUND COURSES TOO DIFFICULT			
_____ RECEIVED AN INCOMPLETE AT LEAST ONCE			

SPECIALIZED ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

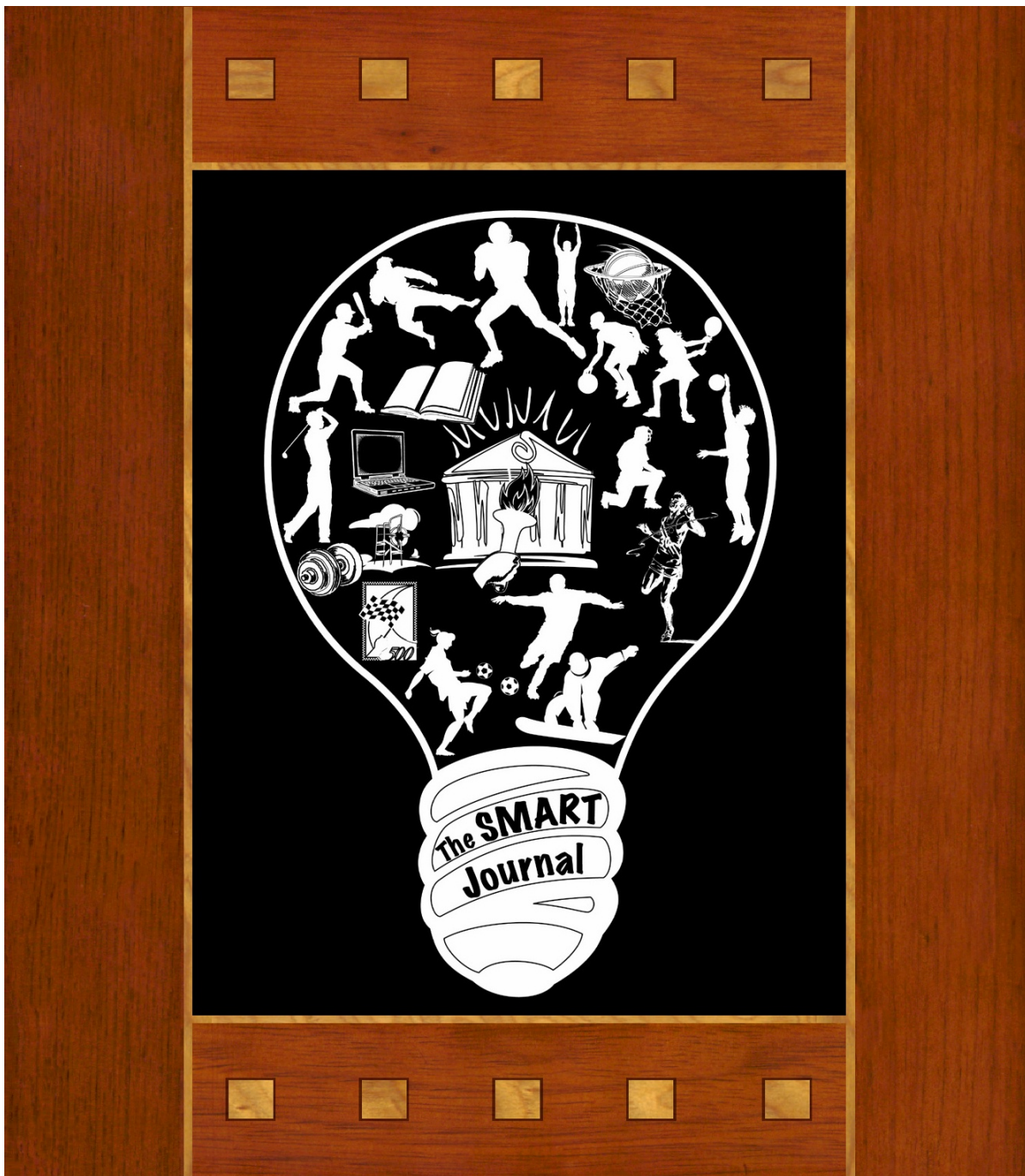
	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
43. I use special academic support services for student athletes on a regular basis.	1	2	3
44. Please check the services you use:			
_____ ADVISEMENT/REGISTRATION			
_____ TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE			
_____ MENTORING			
_____ COMPUTER LAB			
_____ STUDY HALL			
_____ STUDY SKILLS			
_____ LEARNING DISABLED SERVICES			

	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
45. I could not graduate without having used these services.	1	2	3
46. I do not need these services to graduate.	1	2	3
47. My coaches require me to use these services.	1	2	3
48. I use these services voluntarily.	1	2	3
49. The academic support staff stresses academic success above athletic success.	1	2	3
50. I feel academics are important and a degree is needed for me to be a success.	1	2	3
51. I am taking the major that I chose when I entered college.	1	2	3
52. I have changed my major to remain eligible.	1	2	3
53. I can choose the courses that I want to take.	1	2	3
54. I plan to pursue a Master's/PhD. degree in the future.	1	2	3
55. I chose this school to meet my academic goals.	1	2	3
56. The athletic academic advisors have the most academic influence over me.	1	2	3

*Please add any comments you desire in the space below.*

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY!!!!  
PLEASE USE THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND DROP IN THE NEAREST MAILBOX.**





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## THE PURSUIT OF TRUE LEGITIMACY—DIVISION I-A TITLE IX COMPLIANCE AFTER THE ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION OF PRONG THREE

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### INTRODUCTION

As sport enthusiasts, participants, and administrators know, Title IX is the legislation, which, through its 37 words has “changed the face of American sport forever” (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p. 3): *“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance”* (U.S.C. § 1681-1987). The purpose of this study is to explore the reactions of Division I-A athletic directors to the new additional clarification, gauge its current impact within Division I-A institutions, and address issues and misconceptions surrounding this addition to the Title IX regulation literature. The following pertinent landmarks in the history and evolution of Title IX law are critical to the understanding of the role that Title IX has played and continues to play in the actions of athletic directors, and the debate within the literature regarding the effect of this new guidance. The following discussion is succinct and non-inclusive and covers only those landmarks that directly impact the issues researched.

### RECENT TITLE IX DEVELOPMENTS

In June of 2002, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Roderick Paige, formed a Commission on Opportunity in Athletics—the first federal advisory panel to study Title IX. The commission was established in response to mounting debate surrounding several issues including (but not limited to) the lack of enforcement by the Office of Civil Rights, herein after O.C.R., throughout the life of Title IX, the decisions made by athletic administrators to terminate men’s teams in the name of Title IX, and the sky-rocketing expenses within football and the other major sports which make it difficult for administrators to expand opportunities due to financial constraints (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

Such was addressed by As stated by Carpenter & Acosta (2005) when they stated:

The 12-month period covering the life span of the commission was one of tumult and turmoil for anyone who was watching...Commissioners displayed their ignorance of the law and their failure to do their homework, biases surfaced, and votes occurred with illogical lack of consistency. Tempers flared, and emotions ran high (p. 191).

The final report, “Open to All: Title IX at Thirty,” was issued on February 26, 2003 and was greeted an unanticipated great amount of criticism (Suggs, 2003). It included 23 recommendations, with 15 approved unanimously by the commission. In an apparent attempt to assuage fears, Paige stated that the Department of Education would only move forward on the unanimous recommendations (Suggs, 2003).

Many stakeholders hoped that the commission and its further clarification report would end the Title IX debate. Thirty years after inception, the law hadn't changed significantly, and proponents were hoping that it would stay this way. The NCAA ran its story on the issuance of the 2003 letter under the headline "Department of Education Closes the Book on Title IX" (Hawes, 2003). But, as it appears, the NCAA assessment was overly optimistic.

To the shock of many and to the horror of others, one of the recommendations within the commission's report that did not receive unanimous approval was advanced on March 17, 2005 (Suggs, 2005a). James Manning, a representative for the O.C.R. and U.S. Department of Education issued a "dear colleague" letter, with an accompanying user's guide and technical manual that additionally clarified part three of the three-prong test. In order for the third prong to be satisfied, an institution must demonstrate that the underrepresented sex's sports programs fully and effectively accommodate the interests of female students and potential students (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Under this avenue of title IX compliance, "an institution may provide proportionally fewer athletic participation opportunities to one sex, as compared to its enrollment rate," and even continue to add more athletic opportunities for the overrepresented sex without any imposed limitations, "if the interests and abilities of the enrolled and admitted students of the underrepresented sex are being fully and effectively accommodated by the institution's current varsity athletics program" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p.3).

A major reason cited by O.C.R. for issuing the report is the belief that institutional decision makers may be unclear regarding the methods of compliance under the third prong, and may erroneously believe that this prong does not offer a "safe harbor" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The additional clarification, users' guide, and related technical report are designed to provide direction to schools that choose to comply with part three (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

The new policy places the burden of proof on students and government investigators to make a case that a college is not doing enough to accommodate the underrepresented sexes' athletic interests and abilities. An institution that chooses to utilize this method of compliance will use surveys to discover interest levels and will be found in compliance with this prong unless there exists a sport for which *all* three of the following conditions are evident:

1. unmet interest sufficient to sustain a varsity team in the sport(s);
2. sufficient ability to sustain an intercollegiate team in the sport(s); and
3. reasonable expectation of intercollegiate competition for a team in the sport(s) within the school's normal competitive region." (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. i.v.).

According to the additional clarification, universities can determine demand, and thereby satisfy the requirements of the third prong, by sending out a survey via e-mail. The O.C.R. provided a sample survey developed by federal government statisticians, a compilation of distribution tips aimed at achieving the highest response rate, and a plethora of technical advice designed to help guide athletic department survey

administration (U.S. Department of Education N.C.E.S., 2005). Institutions that choose to use the model survey, according to this document, have a solid basis of compliance. If the model survey demonstrates insufficient varsity team interest, O.C.R. will not conduct a compliance review of the institution's three-part test implementation. The athletic department will be presumed compliant unless the OCR finds "direct and very persuasive evidence of unmet interest sufficient to sustain a varsity team, such as the recent elimination of a viable team for the underrepresented sex or a recent, broad-based petition from an existing club team for elevation to varsity status" (U.S. Department of Education N.C.E.S., 2005 p. i.v.).

This clarification is being met with significant opposition, and cautious optimism. The intercollegiate athletics community has been very much split in response (Suggs, 2005a). Some denounce the "Dear Colleague" clarification letter and its accompanying model survey as a "legal loophole that would allow institutions to duck their Title IX responsibilities" (Hosick, 2005b), but others commend the OCR for aiding institutions in finding and presenting another, potentially better, way to comply with the anti-discrimination legislation (Hosick, 2005b).

The Senate Appropriations Committee said the U.S. Department of Education should rescind the guideline calling the survey results an insufficient measurement (U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, 2005). Representatives from the National Women's Law Center are hoping that grass-roots campaigns succeed in undoing the clarification, but if that is not effective, other strategies may be pursued (Hosick, 2005c). The NCAA's Division I Board of Directors and NCAA President Myles Brand urged NCAA members to ignore the additional clarification because the survey is an insufficient measure to adequately indicate young woman interest in collegiate athletics. Brand also predicted that this type of legislation could stunt the growth of women's athletics and reverse the progress made in the last 30 years (Hosick, 2005b).

Other parties applaud the guidance for collegiate athletic administrators. Within this camp are those who view the clarification as just that...a clarification—guidance to those schools that choose to comply with part three (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Eric Pearson, Executive Director of the College Sports Counsel views the clarification as a help in their battle against proportionality—the prong which has been a factor contributing to the discontinuation of many men's non-revenue sports (Hosick, 2005a). Similarly Mike Moyer, executive director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association, voiced his support:

The current interpretation [of Title IX], particularly the proportionality part, also discriminates against women. When schools do add a new women's sport, they typically pick a sport simply because of the size of its roster rather than a sport that actually has interest on its campus (Hosick, 2005b, ¶35).

Many of the clarification supporters are not anti-women's rights, but rather are anti-sport cuts, and hope that with this clarification more opportunities will become available to both sexes and that the logic that sports do not have to be cut to comply will prevail. Thirty-three years after the enactment of Title IX, the debate about interest and accommodation is still raging. Central issues within the additional clarification debate

involve the method and timing used by OCR to distribute the clarification, the scope of true measurement a survey can capture, and the fear that the survey will be an easy way out.

#### CLARIFICATION POINTS OF CONTENTION

The clarification was released in the wake of March Madness, when the sport enthusiasts throughout the nation were very much focused on the NCAA Division I men's basketball championships. This, coupled with the fact that it was not released for public input and debate before publication, has been a contentious issue (Hosick, 2005b; Suggs, 2005a). Current O.C.R. officials and previous representatives who worked within the Clinton administration have explained that because the clarification was only a further explanation of previous regulations, they believed it was unnecessary to warrant sending it out for comment. This approach, they contend, is very much in line with previous policies because it is simply additional guidance to help schools better provide equal opportunity (Suggs, 2005a).

A primary concern of many protestors to the "dear colleague letter" is the clarification's declaration that an unanswered survey can be calculated as a lack of interest (Hosick, 2005b). The clarification committee members addressed justification for this odd calculation procedure within the users guide. They explained that procedures for conducting statistically valid adjustments based on an analysis of nonresponse bias are complex and beyond the capacity of many schools. They thus concluded that the best method for dealing with nonresponse is to elicit high enough response rates that the nonresponse can safely be disregarded for the purposes of compliance (U.S. Department of Education, N.C.E.S., 2005). The assumption that nonresponse indicates no interest in future sports participation, the clarification explains, "is defensible if all students have been given an easy opportunity to respond to the survey, the purpose of the survey has been made clear, and students have been informed that the institution will take nonresponse as an indication of lack of interest" (U.S. Department of Education, N.C.E.S., 2005, p. 12). In order for the survey to be accepted as commensurate with the model, the school must conduct a census survey using a method likely to elicit a high response rate such as requiring students to fill out the survey as they register for courses.

Another pervasive argument is that the survey is inherently flawed because its use as an avenue of compliance presumes that a survey alone can accurately measure student interests. An NCAA News report begins with the statement, "the U.S. Dept of Education has made it easier for institutions to prove they are complying" with Title IX" (Hosick, 2005a, ¶1). The NCAA Division I board of directors urged member institutions to ignore the new guidelines because the rules pave a way for colleges to "to evade the legal obligation to provide equal opportunity" (Suggs, 2005b, p.A35).

The clarification committee is very clear, however, that survey results are not alone adequate to demonstrate compliance if other evidence exists that contradicts the survey results, such as a request for athletic teams. "If OCR finds direct and very persuasive evidence of unmet interest sufficient to sustain a varsity team, such as the recent elimination of a viable team for the underrepresented sex or a recent, broad-based petition from an existing club team for elevation to varsity status," (U.S. Department of

Education, 2005, p. iv-v), the presumption of compliance established by the surveys can be overcome.

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The purpose of this study was to explore the reactions of Division I-A athletic directors to the new additional clarification, gauge its current impact within Division I-A institutions, and address the concern for misuse among this population. The contentions addressed toward this new addition to the Title IX literature are generally based on the supposition that athletic directors will utilize the surveys to simply satisfy the legal demands of Title IX—to achieve legitimacy, and not necessarily strive for equality of opportunity. Responding to this widespread criticism levied at potential misuse of the clarification, legitimacy theory has been juxtaposed with athletic director survey responses.

Recent organizational theory has provided a potential explanation of organizational decision-making that seems to be consistent with many of the vocalized qualms set forth by those who oppose the recent additional clarification of prong III (Scott, 1998).

A definition of legitimacy theory states: “organizations continually seek to ensure that they operate within the bounds and norms of their respective societies, that is, they attempt to ensure that their activities are perceived by outside parties as being ‘legitimate’” (Deegan, 2000). An athletic department may thus choose to use this new method simply for the purposes of legitimacy, which could be accomplished by showing external (and potentially superficial) compliance through the use of the surveys. To conform to the demands inherent in Title IX law, an institution may select a compliance method with little concern about what the result might be simply because the act of selecting that avenue in and of itself provides justification and validation for their actions. The athletic department does not necessarily need to have chosen the method that would truly achieve equality of opportunity best as long as its compliance method achieves legitimacy in the eyes of the governing bodies (Datnow, 1999).

According to this theory, an athletic department may choose to utilize the model survey because it is the most similar to the current method of compliance the school is using; thus requiring little change. The compliance choice is not chosen because of an informed calculation of the ability to achieve true equality of opportunity through a particular choice, but rather is based on a concern for preserving the status quo (Suchman & Edelman, 1997). According to this theory, a school would choose the method of compliance that would be the simplest to perform in terms of ceremony, without following through in actual practice. Thus they can present “structural elements that conform to institutionalized conventions, and at the same time, preserve some autonomy of action” (Scott, 1998, p. 212).

Most of the criticisms levied against the clarification are tied to the belief that the surveys will not be a true indicator of equality of opportunity, and athletic administrators will utilize them as an “easy way out” of Title IX compliance—a route toward legitimacy. The empirical inquiry that follows was designed to explore these issues through specific research questions:

1. What is the reaction by Division I-A athletic directors to the new additional clarification?
2. What actions are Division I-A athletic departments taking in response to the clarification?
3. Why have the Division I-A athletic departments chosen their course of action related to compliance?

#### METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted through the use of surveys. This method was chosen because the survey is "advantageous when the research goal is to describe the incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon or when it is to be predictive about certain outcomes" (Yin, 2003, p. 6). Widespread quantitative data was secured via two online surveys from Division I-A athletic directors (See Appendix A for a complete list of questions utilized within this study). Data collected via the surveys included information regarding whether or not the athletic departments would adopt the clarification guidelines as a primary method of Title IX compliance, views regarding reactions to the clarification, and reasons why or why not the individual athletic departments have chosen to adopt the use of student interest surveys.

The first athletic director survey which is being used as part of a larger study (Weight, 2006), was sent via email to the 41 athletic directors of Division I-A schools that currently have a wrestling program, and the 8 Division I-A athletic directors who have dropped their university's wrestling program within the last 10 years. The initial response rate was 14 (34%) responses from wrestling-sponsoring schools, and 2 (25%) from wrestling-dropped schools. Follow-up emails were sent to the athletic directors who did not respond to the email, and an additional four surveys were completed to make a final response rate of 20 athletic directors, 41%. Although the window of possible response was left open for a three-month period, all of the athletic director survey responses were collected between July 26 and August 17 of 2005.

The second survey was generated specifically for this study to gain a more widespread response to the new additional clarification. This survey consisted of a condensed version of the first and contained just six questions (see Appendix A). It was sent via email to athletic directors and associate athletic directors from the remaining 69 schools within Division I-A. Associate athletic director responses were accepted when the athletic director of the institution was unable to complete the survey. Only one survey per institution, however, was accepted. In one instance, a newly retired athletic director of the institution familiar with the issues discussed completed the survey. The initial response rate was 23 (33.3%). Follow-up emails were sent to the athletic directors who did not respond to the email, and an additional seven surveys were completed to make a final response rate of 30 (43%). As with the previous survey, the window of possible response was open for a three-month period, however all of the athletic director survey data collection was completed between August 30 and September 13 of 2005. The total response rate was 50 out of 110 distributed making a total response rate of 45.45%.

The sample of Division I-A athletic directors was specifically chosen because Division I-A includes the institutions that compete in collegiate football at the highest level, it is the most visible and widely publicized NCAA category, and within the last decade the bulk of

men's sport cuts have occurred within this category. Data from the NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Report reported a net loss of 239 men's teams within the Division I category (the only division to report a net loss); with 137 of those terminated teams falling from the Division I-A category (2003). Despite the news of an overall gain within the NCAA men's participation numbers, a net loss of 239 teams within this division represents a significant amount of loss and is undoubtedly a large source of program termination upheaval. These figures and the associated protest is perhaps one reason the clarification was issued.

Because of the rigorous schedule of this hard-to-reach population, the survey questions were kept to a minimum in hopes of getting a large response. For this reason, fundamental reliability tests were not included within the survey. The survey's validity was a concern, thus before piloting the instrument; its content was reviewed by a panel of experts including three athletic directors, four coaches, two survey specialists, and three sport management professors. In designing the study, rigor was sought by adhering to strict survey methodology.

## RESULTS

### CLARIFICATION REACTIONS

In question two, the athletic directors were asked to explain their reaction to the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys. The reactions were split. After coding responses 37.8% (n=17) responded positively with gratitude and support for the clarification. These positive responses included phrases such as: "A helpful tool, a good idea, very positive, makes sense, a valid method." Forty percent (18) responded negatively delineating opposition to the clarification and responded with phrases such as: "Ridiculous, a way out, flawed method, unfair, terrible, dismay, not an accurate test, not a valid tool." The remaining 22.2% (10) expressed uncertainty, no reaction, or stated that it would not affect the school because they were already in compliance or chose to use one of the other two prongs as their method of compliance.

#### *Gratitude & Support for the Clarification (37.8%)*

Of those who expressed gratitude and support for the clarification, three main categories emerged: 1) those who believed the clarification is a valid method and helpful tool to aide athletic administrators to better assess and provide equal opportunities for both sexes, 2) those who believed it is a helpful clarification of previous methods—that it is not a significant change from previous guidelines, and 3) those who reported that they appreciated the guidance from OCR, but thought the surveys would be best utilized as part of a multiple method approach.

#### *Opposition to the Clarification (40%)*

The athletic directors who opposed the guidance issued in the clarification explained their opposition in two main categories: 1) disagreement with the methods outlined, believing it is not a valid way to measure interest, and 2) conviction that it will be a way for athletic departments to ignore inequities that exist in intercollegiate athletics.

#### *Uncertainty/ No Reaction to Clarification (22.2%)*

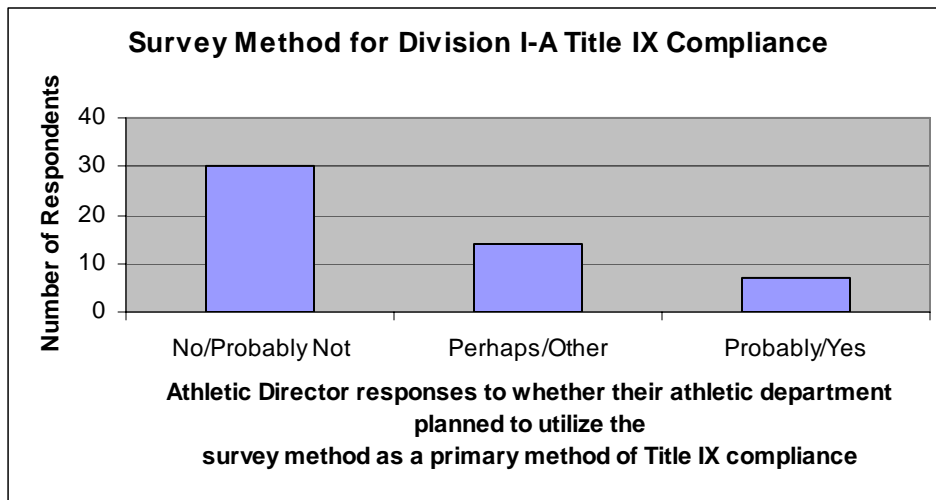
Of those who reported uncertainty, many expressed their interest in the survey results, and interest in the clarification's affect to the Title IX compliance landscape. They



however did not know enough about the clarification to verbalize a reaction, did not feel strongly for or against the clarification, or already had a method of compliance and did not intend to change.

**MODEL SURVEY UTILIZATION AS PRIMARY COMPLIANCE METHOD**

Respondents were asked whether their athletic department planned to use the survey as a primary method of Title IX compliance. The vast majority of respondents (48%, 24) responded “no”. Twelve percent (6) answered “probably not,” 12% (6) entered “perhaps,” 4% (2) answered “probably,” and 10% (5) reported “yes, they planned on utilizing the government-issued survey as their primary method of compliance.” Sixteen percent (8) of the respondents entered “other.” Of those who entered “other,” the majority wrote that the primary method had yet to be determined, and they did not know if the survey method would be utilized. Others reported that it would be used, but not as the primary method—the survey would be one part in a multiple-method approach to compliance.



**ACTION DETERMINANTS**

When asked *why* they have or have not chosen to utilize the surveys outlined in the new guideline as their university’s primary method of Title IX compliance, the respondent’s answers varied substantially. Of those that responded “yes,” and “probably” to the question whether they would use the surveys as a primary method of Title IX compliance (13.5%, 7) reported very situation-specific answers.

One athletic director answered:

We have football on a predominately female campus. Our institution is known for nursing and pharmacy programs, which attracts more [female] than [male] students. I feel we meet the current needs/interests of our student’s; however... continued awareness of the interests of our ever-changing enrollment target and recruitment areas will help us be successful. Some sort of survey will be planned however, perhaps not the means by which the government has permitted (Respondent 16).

This was a common theme. Many of the schools had already used prong three and the use of surveys prior to the release of the clarification.

Many of these Division I-A schools had previously developed a system that they believe to be superior to the model survey developed by the government. The following is one athletic director's response:

We will continue to use surveys in assessing effective accommodation, however, we will not solely rely on e-mail surveys. We will provide hard copies of surveys through our incoming freshman orientation process, and we will continue to evaluate the sports offerings of the [area] High School Athletic Association. We will also evaluate the sports offerings of Division I institutions regionally and in our conference as well as Olympic Development Programs and AAU programs. A final piece of our assessment is to provide an open forum for members of our student body to address their interests in the sports offerings at our university (Respondent 42).

Other athletic directors applauded the clarification for its intuitiveness and ability to communicate with the students. "It allows students a direct line of communication to the athletic department administration" (Respondent 18). "It's an easy interpretation to implement and say we comply" (Respondent 27). "It makes more sense than any other method out there and is the greatest avenue available to reach ALL students" (Respondent 41). Another responded that his institution intended to use it "because it's the only thing left that might work" (Respondent 51). These athletic directors generally expressed frustration directed toward past and current accepted compliance options, coupled with hope toward the new avenue of compliance.

Those that answered "perhaps" (12%, 6) or "other" (16%, 8) to whether their department planned to use the surveys as a primary method of compliance, generally expressed an interest in and gratitude for the additional option, but either had not yet decided whether to utilize the option, were using it as a part of a multi-method approach, or were hesitant to comply due to the opposition expressed within the media and parts of the athletic community. The majority (8) had yet to decide. One athletic director expressed that "I would prefer to see other options" (Respondent 17). Three answered it was "one tool, but not the sole tool" (Respondent 13), that "[the surveys] will be one step in a multiple step approach to ensure we have established the right answers" (Respondent 19). Two athletic directors expressed skepticism that even if they complied with the outline prescribed; it may not stand in court. "We will attempt to comply under the three prong test as outlined by the courts" (Respondent 39), one athletic director expressed.

The majority of respondents responded "no" (n=24, 48%), or "probably not" (n=6, 12%) to whether their department planned to use the survey as a primary method of Title IX compliance. Reasons for this response were split into two groups. Many answered that the reason they would not utilize the guidance issued in the clarification was because it was not a true indicator of Title IX compliance, based on the nonresponse issue or survey method issue that has been a source of contention with the clarification. The majority of respondents who answered within this category, however, indicated they would not be using the surveys because they already had a method of compliance that was working for

them. "We prefer the law the way it is without the recent clarification. We have managed very well with the current law with a broad-based program" (Respondent 33).

"We believe that our current survey tool is a more accurate depiction of the interest of our students and will be more beneficial to us in determining the needs of our students and compliance with Title IX" (Respondent 37). "We're in compliance because equestrian balances football and the NCAA allows more scholarships in all other similar women's sports like Track & Field, women's basketball, softball, etc." (Respondent 48).

### DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Based on the data collected, the theory of legitimacy is in some ways sustained, but for the most part not in the manner that critics fear. Only in a few instances did athletic directors report a plan to switch to the method outlined by the clarification with a fundamental belief that it may simplify their compliance with Title IX.

As mentioned in the opening section, much of the recent debate surrounding Title IX has been spawned by non-revenue sport cuts. Athletic directors often have found themselves pinned between the escalating financial demands of big-time college football and basketball, and the need to increase opportunities for women to comply with the first or "proportionality" prong of the three-part test released in the 1979 Title IX policy interpretations. The proportionality prong provides the option to comply with the participation requirements of Title IX by providing participation opportunities substantially proportionate to the ratio of males to females in the student body.

Many administrators have viewed this prong as their only compliance option because they have found it difficult to meet the terms of the other two prongs (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). The U.S. Department of Education's guidelines have designated a numerical balance to be a "safe harbor" regarding gender equity concerns (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). When faced with the choice of reducing funding to the potentially profit-making sports to fund a female unprofitable sport, athletic directors often choose the road of profit-maximizers and cut a men's unprofitable sport to even out the numerical balance between male and female athletes. Thus, many have expressed hope that the clarification will decrease the tendency for athletic departments to make these opportunity-decreasing decisions.

The data revealing that many athletic directors reported that they already have a method of compliance that is working well for them, and do not intend to explore the option because it would be unnecessary further supports the legitimacy theory related to this phenomena. Most who reported they planned to utilize the method as outlined by the clarification did so because they were already utilizing prong three and would continue to do so. A few took their stance a bit further and explained they would not utilize the method because it required additional work for the department. One athletic director explained they did not intend to utilize the survey method because of "time and resources questions, and we are doing a fairly good job without needing to do the survey" (Respondent 49). While both of these justifications are certainly logical from an administrative point of view, they follow very closely with the theory that an institution may "choose a model with little concern about what the outcome might be, but simply because the act of choosing a reform in itself provides rationale and justification for

their actions. The [athletic department] does not necessarily need to have chosen well as long as its choice achieves legitimacy in the eyes of [the governing bodies]" (Datnow, 1999, p.5).

In response to the idea that the new additional clarification model survey method is, as many of its critics have vocalized, an easy way out, the findings within this study indicate that the theory of legitimacy does not appear to be an accurate representation of reality. The most compelling evidence to support this conclusion comes from the fact that the strong majority of athletic directors voiced their intent not to utilize the survey method as outlined by the clarification, with the largest segment of the population opposing the clarification because they did not believe it was a valid measure of interest.

Data gathered from this study contradict the notion that athletic directors are simply attempting to achieve legitimacy by conforming to the demands imposed by the letter of Title IX legislation. Those who supported and intended to utilize the survey did so generally on the premise that it was a good way to communicate with the student body and truly provide the type of athletic opportunities that were desired on their campus, not because it was the easiest route to compliance. The opposition to the legislation based on invalidity concerns also supports this notion. However, an alternative way to view the theory is from the eyes of society. As mentioned earlier, a definition of legitimacy theory states: "organizations continually seek to ensure that they operate within the bounds and norms of their respective societies, that is, they attempt to ensure that their activities are perceived by outside parties as being 'legitimate'" (Deegan, 2000).

Perhaps because of Title IX history, court rulings, and the significant public outcry associated with issues surrounding the legislation, athletic directors are becoming more aware and concerned with achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the public at large. Among the athletic directors who did support the clarification, there was an expressed hope that it will be a better measure of actual interest and will provide equal opportunity to both sexes as is desired by the student body. Another strong segment that expressed interest in the method reported that their institution planned on utilizing it as part of a multi-method approach—with an expressed desire to comply with the spirit of Title IX legislation.

Apparently, if this new clarification is truly an "easy way out" of Title IX compliance, the majority of Division I-A athletic directors do not want to take this route of legitimacy in the eyes of legislators, because perhaps this route will not achieve legitimacy in their eyes of the public.

#### LIMITATIONS & IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A key limitation of this study was the newness of the legislation. The study was conducted just six months after the release of the "dear colleague letter," and as such, there were many athletic directors that had not yet determined their schools actions relative to the clarification, or did not know enough about the legislation to voice an opinion. Future research would be helpful to portray changes in the surveyed sample's

opinion in addition to capturing the position of those who were unsure or unaware when the survey data was collected.

Another potential limitation is related to common survey methodology limitation. Perhaps due to the heightened opposition to the release of the clarification, answers expressed within the survey may embody a bit of caution due to the need for athletic directors to be politically correct. In order to protect survey answers from this, athletic directors were assured anonymity.

A final limitation was that this study examined only the opinions of Division I-A athletic directors. Positions of other divisions relative to this clarification would be another possible avenue of research in the future to gage whether there are significant differences between populations, and explore reasons for similarities and differences.

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**TABLE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

<p>Athletic directors within this sample were split as to whether they supported or opposed the new additional clarification.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gratitude and support for clarification (37.8%, 17)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Opposition to the clarification (40%, 18)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Uncertainty / No reaction (22.2%, 10)</p>
<p>The vast majority of athletic directors within this sample do not plan to utilize the surveys as a primary method of compliance.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, will not use (48%, 24)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Probably will not use (12%, 6)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Perhaps will use (12%, 6)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Probably will use (4%, 2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, will use (10%, 5)</p>
<p>Athletic directors that reported they planned to use the survey method as outlined by the clarification did so because it worked well for the institution, they were already utilizing prong three and would continue to do so, or they believed it was an excellent way to communicate with the student body and truly provide</p>
<p>Those who do not intend to utilize the survey method did so because they were opposed to the method as outlined by the new clarification, or they are already in compliance or have a method of compliance that is already working for the institution.</p>
<p>Athletic directors in the perhaps or other categories as to whether they would utilize the survey did so for three reasons: they had not yet decided whether or not the method would be used, they planned on using it as one method in a multi-method approach, or they were skeptical whether it would stand in court.</p>

**APPENDIX A**  
**New Additional Title IX Clarification Reactions**

1. The information you give within this survey is confidential. Please provide the following demographic information for the researcher to keep track of respondents.

Years as Athletic Director at this University:  
University:

2. Please explain your reaction to the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys to aide athletic department compliance with the third part of the "three part test" (effective accommodation of the interests and abilities of male and female student athletes)?
3. Do you believe that the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys will decrease the amount of men's non-revenue sports being cut?

1 Yes  
2 Probably  
3 Perhaps  
4 Probably Not  
5 No  
Other (Please Specify)

4. Does your athletic department plan to use these surveys as a primary method of Title IX compliance?  
1 Yes  
2 Probably  
3 Perhaps  
4 Probably Not  
5 No  
Other (Please Specify)

5. Why has your athletic department chosen this course of action referred to in question 4 regarding the usage of the new additional clarification?





## PERCEIVED MARKETING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ELITE DISABLED SPORT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

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### INTRODUCTION

The nonprofit sector is big business within the overall economy in the United States. Drucker (2001) noted that nonprofit organizations are the nation's largest employer. A study of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) reported that nonprofit organizations hold more collective power and influence in corporate America than any other business sector in our nation (Sommer, 1998). However, amongst the most overlooked nonprofit organizations are disabled sports organizations.

Elite disabled sport organizations (DSO) provide programs for outstanding athletes who have certain disabilities. Presently, there are seven disabled sport organizations recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) that represent over 1.6 million disabled sport elite athletes (Miller, Veltri, & Combs, 2002). These elite disabled sport organizations must demonstrate that they can incorporate their programs and the way they do business into USOC programs and not be a financial liability. They must be capable of developing fund sources for grass-root and entry-level athletic programs and events. Disabled sport organizations are obliged to continue to seek new and innovative methods to secure financial stability and build a relationship of support. To accomplish these goals disabled sport organizations must effectively market their products, otherwise known as programs within nonprofit terminology, as a tangible service.

*Presently, there are seven disabled sport organizations recognized by the United States Olympic Committee that represent over 1.6 million disabled sport elite athletes.*

In order to successfully develop a program, the organization should possess a clear comprehension of the characteristics of clients as well as how to meet their needs. The understanding of a client's characteristics and needs comes from the conduction of an effective marketing analysis (Higgins & Lauzon, 2003). A marketing analysis provides a problem-structuring tool that can help decision makers ask the appropriate questions about the agency's mission, programs, and interaction with the external environment (Bryson, 1988). When executed properly, a marketing analysis can assist in recognizing the organizational strengths and weaknesses, thus allowing nonprofit executives to focus and evaluate results and assist in implementing successful marketing strategies.

Nonprofit organizations depend on the external environment for their survival. Therefore, to successfully create or obtain the needed operational assets, a nonprofit organization (NPO) leader must be familiar with ways to develop a strategic plan that best fits into the NPO's political, economic, and social environments. Because NPO's are usually embedded in larger political, economic, and social systems, NPO leaders should study and anticipate such environments and assess their current positions in future

options, particularly their potential funding opportunities. Strategic planning is a significant planning and management tool for an organization's existence and to fully adapt to its changing environment.

For this investigation, strategic planning is defined as the organized activity through which an entity prepares for its future. "Environmental scanning" and "SWOT analysis" are two popular methods of strategic analysis and planning that were first developed by Ansoff (1965), but later refined by Porter (1985). Slack (1996) reported that strategy, whether planned and deliberate, may emerge as a stream of significant decisions or be some combination of both. In either case, organizational decision makers base their choice of strategy on their perceptions of opportunities and threats in the environment and internal strengths and weaknesses of their organization. As a result of the strategy decision makers choose, an appropriate strategy is instituted (Slack, 1996).

Limited investigations regarding disabled sport organizations have been conducted (Angelica & Hyman, 1997; Corbin, 1999; McMurty, Netting, & Kettner, 1991; Miller, Veltri, & Combs, 2002), no research has been done regarding the marketing strategies of elite disabled sport organizations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived marketing strengths and weaknesses and the related opportunities and threats of elite disabled sport organizations.

#### **ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF SWOT ANALYSIS**

An integral component of an organization's strategic plan should be an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. According to Kearns (2000), SWOT analysis presumes that goals and strategies surface from the juxtaposition of opportunities and threats in the external environment and strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment, thus providing a SWOT matrix. A SWOT matrix requires administrators to picture their organization working together with factors in the dynamic external environment that can either assist or hamper development for the mission of the endeavor (Hackbarth & Kettinger, 2000).

Bryson (1988) reported that when conducted correctly that a SWOT analysis can assist nonprofit executives to better recognize and clarify basic choices that may be faced by the decision. The SWOT analysis can provide a way for the agency decision-makers to ask the correct questions in relating the agency's mission and programs to the external environment. According to Kearns (1992), SWOT analysis represents the theoretical and practical foundation of strategic planning by focusing attention on environmental trends that could impact the mission and policy of the agency. A SWOT analysis can be either an effective management device or a cursory or insincere exercise. A large amount depends on the attention with which decision makers incorporate their analyses of internal and external factors affecting the future of the organization. As such, to meet goals and objectives, organizational planners must continuously reassess their organization's mission, purpose, basic values, capabilities, overall performance, and future orientation and vision (Mixer, 1993).

Kearns (1992) recommended that the external environment, represented by the opportunities and threats, be analyzed prior to the internal environment or strengths and weaknesses. The logic is that the organization must respond to the external

environment, not vice versa (Espy, 1986). For example, decision makers should focus more intently on strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment. Doing so will expand the preliminary list of strengths and weaknesses generated in the first step of the SWOT analysis. Basically, the value of this second iteration is to stimulate additional reflection on the preliminary lists of external and internal factors. Decision makers then should emphasize the process of identifying external factors as being closely coordinated with the identification of internal factors. Thus, by identifying each opportunity or threat, decision makers could immediately begin the process of integration. This leads to the third step in the SWOT analysis which constitutes a "matching" exercise. The objective is to identify salient links between internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (Kearns, 1992).

Bryson (1988) discussed two categories of external environments: societal and task. The societal environment is composed of political, economic, socioculture, and technological (PEST) factors. The range of specific forces within PEST categories is quite extensive.

In general, the societal environment includes "macro" factors and trends such as life-style changes, inflation, and legislative initiatives that may positively or negatively affect the agency's mission and goals. The task environment, on the other hand, is context specific and is composed of factors and trends directly related to the agency's missions and goals or to those of competitor agencies (Kearns, 2000). Porter (1985) stated that:

Forces in the task environment include, among others, competitive rivalry among existing agencies, the potential threat of substitute products, and changes in the power or perceived need of specific groups of stakeholders such as clients, suppliers, interest groups, or donors (p. 6).

These "micro" factors and trends are unique to organizations that produce similar services. Their analysis is sometimes called an "industry analysis" (Kearns, 1992).

Two primary observations emerge from organizations implementing SWOT analysis (Kearns, 2000). First, decision makers often are victim to one or several pitfalls that can be traced to the failure to carefully, and in an iterative manner, examine the relations among external and internal factors. As a result, the SWOT analysis can degenerate into a superficial and misleading list-generating exercise. Second, quality and rigor of the SWOT analysis improve when decision makers introduce a simple, yet powerful, organizing framework. This framework evolves from repeated observations of the internal and external factors of the organization. Through extensive analysis and initial difficulties encountered in applying SWOT methodology can create positive marketing results from decision makers who use it (Kearns, 2000).

## **METHOD**

### **INSTRUMENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

The researchers developed a forced-choice questionnaire that addressed potential strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats of non-profit organizations. To determine reliability, the questionnaire was sent to ten non-profit organization experts. After completing the questionnaire initially, the experts were asked to complete the questionnaire after a one-week interval to ascertain test-retest reliability. The reliability

coefficient was determined to be at .84, an acceptable level when interpreting responses from individuals (Patten, 2000).

Since a survey with acceptable reliability may have low validity, the researchers sent the questionnaire to five non-profit experts, other than had previously helped to determine reliability, to determine validity. Content validity is when a question adequately reflects the underlying behavior or body of knowledge (Patten, 2000). Content validity was established after having all of the experts read, evaluate and agree that the questionnaire items were relevant and valid.

#### **POPULATION SAMPLE**

The participants in this study were selected from the seven national disabled sports organizations that are recognized as United States Olympic Committee (USOC) member organizations. These organizations were the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), Dwarf Athletic Association of America (DAAA), United States Cerebral Palsy Athletic Association (USCPAA), Wheelchair Sport USA (WSUSA), Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA), Special Olympics International (SOI), and the USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF).

Two administrators per organization were contacted by phone and/or email asking them to partake in the investigation. All fourteen accepted the invitation and were sent the questionnaire survey. The respondents from each of the disabled sport organizations held the titles of president, chief executive officer, executive director of the respective organization, or were a member of the organization's Board of Directors. To obtain the information, the respondents, as representatives of their respective disabled sport organizations (DSO), were granted anonymity on the return envelope provided to the respondents. Thus, the researchers could only identify the organization by the designations DSO1, DSO2, DSO3 and so on. Within two weeks of the initial mailing, all respondents had returned the survey.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **STRATEGIC MARKETING PROCESSES OF THE DISABLED SPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

All disabled sport organizations reported that they had established a strategic market plan through a predetermined process (Table 1). Seven of the organizations reported that their organizations possessed a four-year strategic marketing plan. However, one organization revealed that their strategic marketing plans were conducted on an annual basis, thus providing a comparatively short ranged strategic marketing plan.

Categorically, respondents from DSO1, DSO3, DSO4, and DSO5 reported that their organization followed a four year strategic marketing plans that was the result of internal development by the board members and executive directors. DSO7 also indicated that they too followed a four year strategic marketing plan; however, it was externally developed using USOC guidelines. DSO2 was the only disabled sport organization to adhere to a one year strategic marketing plan.

### **DISABLED SPORT ORGANIZATION STRATEGIC MARKETING SWOT ANALYSIS STRATEGIC MARKETING STRENGTHS**

Table 2 identifies the strategic marketing strengths of the disabled sport organizations as perceived by the respondents. Six of the seven organizations identified celebrity endorsements of the organization as the most commonly cited strength. Celebrities were chief executive officers of major corporations, athletes, or entertainers who provided name association between organization and celebrity. Five of the organizations acknowledged name recognition as and helping other nonprofit organizations as perceived organizational marketing strengths. Four of the disabled sport organizations revealed that being affiliated with the Olympics as a strength. Three of the organizations identified the marketing expertise of their board members as a strength. Three nonprofits recognized their staff as a professional strength while only two perceived their ability to obtain corporate sponsorship as a marketing strength. Only one of the disabled sport organizations in the study reported that market studies were an organizational strength.

By organization, DSO1 was the only disabled sport organization to report possessing all of the previously identified marketing strengths such as professional staff, Olympic affiliation, experienced board members, ability to help other disabled sport organizations, conduction of market studies, name recognition, and the ability to attract corporate sponsors as well as celebrity endorsers. DSO1 was the only disabled sport organization that conducted market studies. DSO2 reported having seven of the strengths identified by the consensus, missing only the conduct of market studies. DSO3 and DSO4 indicated that they each possessed four of the identified strengths; however they were somewhat different strengths. DSO3 revealed their strengths to be a professional staff, helping other disabled sport organizations, name recognition, and celebrity endorsers. DSO4 identified marketing expertise of board members, helping other disabled sport organizations and celebrity endorsers as their strengths. DSO5 reported two items as strengths: their affiliation with the Olympics and helping other disabled sport organizations. DSO6 identified their affiliation with the Olympics while DSO7 indicated board member expertise as their respective strengths

### **STRATEGIC MARKETING WEAKNESSES**

Six of the seven disabled sport organizations cited low public awareness of the Olympic affiliated disabled sport organizations as the most prevalent weakness (Table 3). This finding is illustrated as one individual stated that approximately 3000 out of 100,000, or 3% of the population in an area which they were conducting an international contest for athletes with disabilities, were aware of the athletic competitions available to disabled athletes. Five of the disabled sport organizations perceived both poor fundraising and collaboration with other disabled sport organizations as marketing weaknesses. Three of the respondents identified that poor market value was an organizational marketing weakness while two of the organizations reported poor donor tracking unsophisticated marketing techniques were perceived as marketing weaknesses.

Table 3 also identifies by organization that DSO7 reported that they possessed four of the acknowledged weaknesses. DSO2, DSO3, DSO5, and DSO6 reported three of the weaknesses while DSO1 revealed one marketing weakness, while one disabled sport organization reportedly possessed no perceived marketing weaknesses.

### STRATEGIC MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Six of the organizations cited the ability to educate the public about disabilities as the most important opportunity (Table 4). Collaboration with other disabled sport organizations was identified as a strategic marketing opportunity by 4 of the respondents as was the ability to collaborate with non-disabled organizations. Werther and Berman (2001) reported that nonprofit organizations should take advantage of their uniqueness and attempt to form alliances with other for-profit and/or nonprofit organizations with similar missions. For example, since all of the disabled sport organizations in this study had a parallel theme, they could pool their resources to increase public awareness. This could potentially increase their ability to influence public opinion, thereby legitimizing and marketing value of their respective organizations.

Two of the respondents revealed that the opportunity to target federal sources as well as conducting more events were important opportunities for their organizations. Conducting more events was indicated by two organizations as well. Two of the organizations indicated that joint marketing development with other organizations as an opportunity.

### STRATEGIC MARKETING THREATS

All of the organizations perceived competition with other disabled sport organizations as their primary threat. All seven organizations identified not having enough funds available as the second most cited threat. Marketing myth, relating to the perception of the public as to who receives the money, was cited by 4 of the organizations. Two of the responses perceived that the fragmentation of the disabled sport organization was a definite threat. Not having a qualified staff was revealed for 2 of the 7 organizations. Interestingly, only one of the organizations perceived a bias against the disabled as a threat.

Table 5 reveals the responses by the respective disabled sport organizations. DSO5, DSO6, and DSO7 identified the greatest number of strategic marketing threats with four. DSO1, DSO2, and DSO3 reported 3 marketing threats to their respective organizations. One disabled sport organization, DSO4, stated that they had only 1 of the specified threats to their strategic marketing. The reader should note that this is the same organization that reported no organizational weaknesses. Perhaps it is because this disabled sport organization conducted an annual strategic marketing plan, possessed the largest number of athletes, and sponsored the greatest number of sports that they perceived minimal or no weaknesses or threats.

Since the key to success of a nonprofit organization, particularly disabled sport organizations, is the ability to produce results, there is an increased expectation to view outcomes as being visible, measurable, and relevant to the vision and/or mission of the organization (Werther & Berman, 2001). For this expectation to occur, the decision maker(s) must be able to identify their respective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats on a continual basis. By identifying weaknesses and threats, the leaders can

*Disabled sport organizations are not unlike other nonprofit organizations that should give attention to their marketing strategies to help take full advantage of potential funding and support.*

prepare the organization to make the most of the circumstances when they arise and avoid adversity when it strikes (Ray, 1997).

## DISCUSSION

Strategic marketing analysis and planning is critical for the success of any organization (Beilefield, 1994; Stevens, Loudon, Wrenn, & Warren, 1997). Disabled sport organizations are not unlike other nonprofit organizations that should give attention to their marketing strategies to help take full advantage of potential funding and support (Wenham, Stephens & Hardy, 2003). While all of the disabled sport organizations used strategic marketing plans to help develop and reach their goals, only one conducted their strategic marketing plans on an annual basis.

It should be noted that there is a danger in conducting long-term strategic marketing plans as organizations may find themselves behind the times (Maranville, 1999). Strategic market planning on an annual basis may help the organization look at itself differently by revealing how every element of a business affects its potential success. The leaders would then be forced to establish a definite mission with a corresponding plan on how to fulfill the mission in accordance with the time frame established (Ray, 1997). Though each organization is unique in its' planning due to different values, history, and culture, the majority of nonprofit organizations should have at least a one-year plan (Werther & Berman, 2001).

It is interesting to note that the smallest DSO in the study had developed a 4-year plan by adopting the USOC guidelines. Therefore, it may be inferred that a smaller disabled organization, without multiple marketing strengths, may rely on an external agency (USOC) for guidance. However, this situation can only be effective if the organization possesses the same personnel and commitment as the external agency it is following. If this is not the case, the decision makers may have a difficult time relating DSO's mission, programs, and interaction to it's' employees and constituents.

The greatest number of marketing strengths was reported by the two biggest disabled sport organizations. Conversely, two of the smaller disabled sport organizations indicated the least number of strengths. Thus, it may be inferred that the perception of marketing strengths may be directly related to the size of the disabled sport organization.

In this study, size reflects the number of athletes within the organization, the number of sports sponsored, and the annual income of the disabled sport organization. This may perhaps be the result of a greater annual income attracting professional staff members, corporate sponsors, and celebrity endorsers. In the past nonprofit organizations relied exclusively on the rich to fund their causes. Today more nonprofit organizations are incorporating the use of celebrities. However, celebrities and their effectiveness require marketing strategies to provide public awareness as well as provide enhanced credibility and appeal to your event. Marketed correctly the celebrity can increase exposure, boost attendance, and strengthen the marketability of the event (Veltri, Kuzma, Stotlar, Viswanthan, & Miller, 2003).

Also, by having a greater number of disabled athletes and sponsoring more sports, a disabled sport organization may have a better chance for name recognition from the

general public. The smaller sized DSOs may have not possessed the economic means to attract professional staff members, corporate sponsors, or celebrity endorsers. They may need to rely on their affiliation with the Olympics or appeal to die-hard aficionados of their sport to serve as a board member. Thus, size may significantly matter regarding to the perceived strength of a disabled sport organization in this study.

Interestingly, one of the disabled sport organizations indicated that they did not possess any marketing weaknesses. The researchers' question whether this report was a realistic assessment, however, due to the anonymity provided the researchers could not address this aspect directly to the source. It would seem that any organization that does not perceive weaknesses might not be able to react to potential threats, i.e. loss of position, until it is too late. The belief that the organization possesses no weakness could also create stagnation in regards to future marketing methods marketing segments shift (Stotlar, 2001).

The overwhelming majority of organizations in this study cited low public awareness as a weakness. The findings support Wolf (1999) who found that although disabled sport organizations actively sought to legitimize sports competition and training for people with disabilities within the United States, legitimacy was lacking because of poor awareness. This lack of awareness may have also been critical in identifying poor market value and poor fund raising as marketing weaknesses. This would confirm Drucker (2001), who reported that the general public ties the market value and ability to raise funds of a non-profit organization to the level of awareness of the service or product.

It is ironic to consider that most of the disabled sport organizations reported collaborating with other disabled sport organizations as strength and a weakness. Perhaps it is this confusion that creates the low public awareness afflicting the disabled sport organizations in this study. Werther and Berman (2001) reported that nonprofit organizations should take advantage of that characteristic and attempt to form alliances with other nonprofits with similar distinctions. However, collaboration may be very frustrating for nonprofit leaders as it requires the executives to carefully consider with whom they really want to serve (McNamara, 2005).

By developing marketing strategies that would incorporate collaborative processes, the disabled sport organizations may be better able to reach out to the unaware nonconsumer. Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2000) identified taking the unaware nonconsumer of a service to becoming a consumer as the first step in the attendance/participation frequency escalator. Once this first step is accomplished the effective marketer should attempt to make the aware nonconsumer into a consumer to whom the marketer can communicate the benefits of competing, training and attending disabled sporting events. Eventually, as the consumer becomes more aware of the benefits of the disabled sport organization, he/she may escalate to the point of being a heavy consumer or supporter of the organization.

Once this first step is accomplished the effective marketer seize the opportunity to make the aware nonconsumer into a consumer to whom the marketer can communicate the benefits of competing, training and attending disabled sporting events. Eventually, as the consumer becomes more aware of the benefits of the disabled sport organization,



he/she may escalate to the point of being a heavy consumer or supporter of the organization. This should increase the opportunity for the organizations to potentially increased its' market value and ability to raise funds.

Werther and Berman (2001) reported that nonprofit organizations should take advantage of that characteristic and attempt to form alliances with other nonprofits with similar distinctions. For example, since all of the disabled sport organizations in this study had a similar theme, they could pool their resources to increase public awareness. This could potentially increase their ability to influence public opinion, thereby legitimizing and marketing value of their respective organizations.

## CONCLUSION

Because of their unique characteristics and mission, disabled sport organizations should be able to flourish but information about them is not nearly as obvious as private or other philanthropic organizations. While the daily television and other media coverage of the most recently completed Olympics in Athens, Greece can be considered a marketing bonanza, elite disabled sport organizations are not as fortunate. They must make certain for future purposes that they will not be a financial liability and will be capable of developing fund sources for grass-root, entry-level athletic programs and events as well as the internationally attended Paralympic Games.

Strategic marketing can validate the impact on the constituents and fine tune the delivery of program services thereby saving cost and time. This affords the organization an opportunity for excellent client testimonials that can be used for public relations and credibility when applying for funding. (McNamara, 2005). However, to successfully accomplish this, strategic marketing evaluations should be conducted by disabled sport organizations on a regular basis. By doing so they will be able to determine if the programs are reaching their goals, achieving their outcomes and if they are doing so in an efficient manner.

Disabled sport organizations are in competition with other nonprofit organization to secure financial recourses, thus posing a potential threat to each other and they must develop and hone competitive skills to compete. However, as they conduct a marketing analysis and implement marketing strategy, each disabled sport organization decision maker should consider the process of collaboration to enhance their services for several reasons. First, an increasing number of funders are requiring evidence of collaboration planning from nonprofits applying for funding. Secondly, in working together, there's an economy of scale, or sharing of resources, that lowers costs and focuses more resources on serving clients. Thus, successful collaboration allows for two or more organizations to work together in human and economic synergy. Finally, appropriate collaboration increases the organization's market value and its ability to raise funds. For example, since all of the disabled sport organizations in this study had a similar theme, they could pool their resources to increase public awareness. This could potentially increase their ability to influence public opinion, thereby legitimizing and increasing the marketing awareness of their respective organizations.

Nonprofit organizations such as disabled sport organizations must make certain for future purposes that they will not be a financial liability and will be capable of developing fund

sources for grass-root and entry-level athletic programs and events. As they conduct a SWOT analysis, each decision maker should immediately begin the process of integration to enhance their services (Paley, 2001). By doing so the organization may better be able to develop its' strengths, overcome a weakness and prepare itself for any future opportunities or threats.

The authors are hopeful that this investigation will contribute to disabled sport organizations source of marketing awareness and future viability. The authors' caution against generalizing the results to other non-profit organizations due to the relatively small number of disabled sports organizations in this investigation. However, it is important to note that these are the only DSOs recognized as United States Olympic Committee (USOC) member organizations. To expand this area of study, the authors encourage investigations in the SWOT analysis of state affiliated disabled sport organizations such as Special Olympics.

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TABLES

**TABLE 1**

**DISABLED SPORT ORGANIZATION STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN METHODS**

	DSO1	DSO2	DSO3	DSO4	DSO5	DSO6	DSO7
Low Public Awareness	X	X	X		X	X	X
Poor Market Value	X	X			X		
Poor Donor Tracking			X				X
Unsophisticated Marketing		X				X	
Limited staff							X
Poor fundraising	X	X	X	X			X
No weakness				X			
Collaborate with other DSOs	X	X	X	X		X	

**TABLE 2**

**DISABLED SPORTS ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIC MARKETING STRENGTHS**

	DSO1	DSO2	DSO3	DSO4	DSO5	DSO6	DSO7
1 year plan		X					
3-4 year plan						X	
Own 4 year plan	X		X	X	X		
USOC 4 year plan							X

**TABLE 3**

**DISABLED SPORTS ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIC MARKETING WEAKNESSES**

	DSO1	DSO2	DSO3	DSO4	DSO5	DSO6	DSO7
Professional Staff	X	X	X				
Affiliation with Olympics	X	X			X	X	
Board Members	X	X		X			
Collaborate with other DSOs	X	X		X	X		
Market Studies	X						
Name Recognition	X	X	X	X			X
Corporate Endorsers	X	X					
Celebrity Endorsers	X	X	X	X	X		

**TABLE 4  
DISABLED SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES**

	DSO1	DSO2	DSO3	DSO4	DSO5	DSO6	DSO7
Educate Public	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Joint Marketing		X			X		
Market Appeal to Disabled	X			X			
Collaborate with Non-Disabled	X				X	X	X
Collaborate with other DSO's			X		X	X	X
Target Federal Sources						X	X
Conduct More Events				X			X

**TABLE 5  
DISABLED SPORT ORGANIZATIONS MARKETING THREATS**

	DSO1	DSO2	DSO3	DSO4	DSO5	DSO6	DSO7
Competition with Other DSO's	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bias Against Disabled						X	
Lack of Qualified Staff					X		X
Not Enough Funds Available	X	X	X		X	X	X
Fragmentation					X		X
Marketing Myth	X	X	X			X	

**SMART BOOK REVIEW****THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS: TEXT & CASES ON STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT**

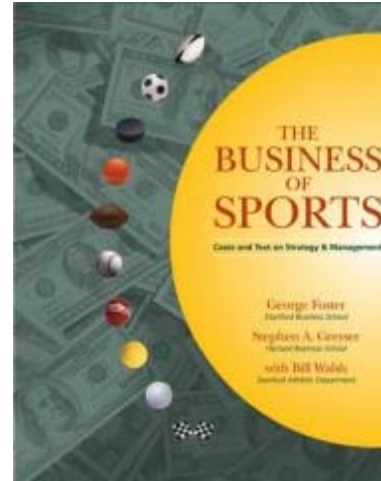
By Foster, G., Greyser, S. A., &amp; Walsh, B. (2005).

Publisher: South-Western College Publishers

Hardcover: 512 pages

ISBN: 0324233841

**Review by Jong-Chae Kim, Florida State University, Doctoral Student in the Sport Management Program**



*The Business of Sports* provides readers insight pertaining to key decisions and directions made by managers in the sports business. The authors try to cover many aspects of sport environments to stress the diverse nature of the decisions and directions involved. Each section is accentuated by well updated and designed cases which introduce the readers to a broader and deeper understanding of the business side of sports.

The first section presents the views underlying “Business of Sports” courses built up at Stanford Business School and Harvard Business School. Specifically, section one introduces both areas of commonality and areas of differentiation between management in sports industry vis-à-vis other industries from Stanford. In addition, as a case study section one provides both a model of the world of the business of sports and the foundation of the business of sports world from a perspective of Harvard.

Throughout section two to section ten, specific topic areas (leagues, clubs, players, college sports, sponsorship, club marketing, broadcasting/media, stadiums, and valuation/profitability) are covered. A specific topic area of section two is about sporting leagues. In this section, the authors emphasize value creation and value sharing issues in the business of sports, including analysis of different models of ownership structure of leagues (i.e., single-entity ownership model, distributed club ownership model, and visible conflicts with alternative models). The concept of competitive balance, one of the biggest concerns of the sports administrators of many leagues, is defined at multiple levels - the league, game, and national team levels. This section briefly emphasizes some key strategies for understanding initiatives and challenges at the league level. This is strengthened by through the use of several related case studies under the topic of sporting leagues (e.g., NBA, MLS, WNBA, NRL) are introduced.

Section three discusses clubs in sports industry. The authors introduce the equity owners of a sporting club. Equity owners of sporting clubs have different objectives in their clubs. A valuable component of this section was the section that explained about the importance of working with the media for these organizations.



Players/Athletes and Agents are the subjects of section four. One of the issues is team sporting leagues differ in their reliance on “free market” (e.g., the English Premier League and the Spanish Primera Liga) versus structured constraints such as salary maximums or minimums on clubs or individuals as regards player salary determinations.

The authors address topics such as the assumption that clubs with the highest payrolls have a higher likelihood of on-field success, and historical considerations regarding strikes and lockouts in professional sport.

The focus of section five moves to collegiate sport. This section draws a selection of topics that stress some of the complexity of the issues on the business side of college sports. In the beginning of this section, the authors introduce the National College Athletics Association’s (NCAA) significant role in the administration of college sports. Moreover, Title IX is addressed as one of the explicit guidelines of the NCAA rules. One of the interesting topics in NCAA is about rules on compensation for student-athletes. Also, the NCAA rules on “amateur status” mean that individual star athletes who are major contributors to college revenue creation are not able to capture any meaningful amount of that revenue. This section details implications of revenue in the form of case studies on topics such as compensation for student-athletes (Jeremy Bloom) and issues relating to Title IX.

Section six highlights the issues of advertising, sponsorship, and endorsements in the area of sport marketing. The authors stress that sporting bodies need to recognize the economic impact of their marketing, sponsorship, and advertising (partners). Company sponsorship programs should articulate the objectives of their sporting sponsorships to facilitate both before-the-decision informed choice and after-the-event informed evaluation of success. Several case studies (e.g., Nextel’s NASCAR sponsorship decision, Volvo International Tennis Tournament’s event sponsorship, and Visa Olympic sponsorship marketing) are summarized to solidify the idea of advertising, sponsorship, and endorsements in sport marketing.

Section seven examines club marketing, branding, and fan avidity in the area of sport marketing. Clubs are exploring ways to capture additional rents from high demand events. In other words, club marketing covers the related challenges of local revenue enhancement and club brand management. This section includes three parts: (1) local revenue enhancement and ticket pricing, (2) promoting fan satisfaction, and (3) branding challenges at the club and player levels. The branding of clubs and players are identified as key elements of club management. Case studies coagulate the idea of ticket pricing (Minnesota Twins), fan satisfaction (Boston Red Sox), and branding challenges at the club (Atlanta Falcons).

The subjects of broadcasting, media, and sports are in the center of section eight. Broadcast, cable, radio, Internet, and print media play many roles in sports. Notably, media is part of the publicity machine promoting sports. Media also shapes sports and the analysis of the business side of the media/sports interface is essential to an understanding of the business of sports. Television coverage of sports, including considerations on television sports rating and alternative contacting models are



identified. Lastly, the authors address the meanings and significance of cable sports networks and regional sports networks. Case studies related to the television contract (e.g., NHL and NFL) and regional sport networks (e.g., YES network) are presented as well.

Section nine examines the issues on stadiums and arenas of the business of sports. Stadiums and arenas are an essential component of the business of sports, and they are a major revenue source. They also play an important role in the economic revival of cities and in attracting major events to those cities. To help the readers understand these issues, two cases (i.e., San Francisco Giants and PacBell/SBC Park, Dallas Cowboys and financing a new stadium) are properly added.

Section ten (the last section of the book) highlights the financial valuation and profitability issues in the business of sports. Financial valuation and profitability is a key goal of many parties in the business of sports. In this section, the authors examine topics related to how owners and investors have been able to capture part of that value creation.

In general, *The Business of Sports: Text & Cases on Strategy & Management* is well arranged and complemented with a variety of examples in the sports industry. Specific topic areas (leagues, clubs, players, college sports, sponsorship, club marketing, broadcasting/media, stadiums, and valuation/profitability) are thoroughly explicated throughout the text. One thing that the book needs to supplement is to add more information and examples on the international sports business. Overall, because the growing number of people in the many facets of the sports industry, *The Business of Sports* could be a wonderful resource and information for those who want to know/experience the many varied facets of the business side of sports.



Look for other informative and entertaining *Insider's Perspectives* in upcoming issues of *SMART*.



## INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE:

**Joe Gilligan- CEO, Akadema**

**Interview by: Jason W. Lee, University of North Florida; Editor, *The SMART Journal***

**JL:** Please identify the origins of the Akadema company, including the development of the company name?

**JG:** In 1994 my brother and I started a training facility (Academy of Proplayers). Since we also worked full time jobs we took all the money we made from Proplayers and put it back into our company.

In 1997 we started selling baseballs and equipment for major brands such as Rawlings at our training facility. It was a success and we created Academy Equipment. The next year, my brother found some of his drawings of concept baseball gloves he sketched during his minor league days with the St. Louis Cardinals. He suggested that we sell the unique ideas to a major manufacturer. I suggested we start our own company. We called it Academy gloves.

The original 12 gloves were not radical like my brother's drawings but we knew we needed to start slow and gain some credibility.

In 2000, we were served notice by Texas retailer to change our name. We simply made the c to k and the y to an a, Akadema. I quit my Logistic Manager position at Sony Corp and Lawrence quit his job as a salesman for Coke. The same year we released our first patented glove, The Reptilian, and our first Major League Players, Clay Bellinger & Anthony Telford endorsed our products.

**JL:** Please identify your position, as well as the various roles in which you are involved in with your company?

**JG:** My position is CEO. I oversee the factories and raw material sourcing, financial, marketing, operational facility management, domestic and international logistics, human resources and benefits, legal, licensing, computer support, and accounts payable.

One minute I could be working on the company website, the catalog or the finish touches on a product. The next minute on the bank with a letter of credit, or I could be negotiating raw material supplies or an agreement with UPS on freight rates. I may also work with our tech support on designing a new wood bat into our CNC lathe or designing a program that may allow a vendor to furnish seamless inventory, invoicing, or tracing data to their customers.

My brother serves as the President. He concentrates on sales, product development, endorsements, customer service, accounts receivable and is the spokesman for the company.



Pictured Above: The Founders of Akadema  
Joe (left) and Lawrence (right) Gilligan.

**JL:** What is it like starting up a company with your brother?

**JG:** We both have different interests in the company. It's like we are driving the same road side by side in different cars. We vary rarely disagree on ideas and when we do we just drop it. My youngest brother Dan now runs Academy of Proplayers, the training camp that started the company.

**JL:** How big is your company now in terms of size, revenue, and employees?

**JG:** We are in the top ten baseball manufactures in the USA but of course there is a big gap between us and say Nike, Rawlings or Wilson who are or part of billion dollar multinationals. When you break their baseball component out of their corporate umbrella, most large baseball brands are only about 75-150 million. In relative terms, when I worked at Sony Corp, our transportation budget was 150 million. So baseball is not a very large part of most athletic companies' portfolios.

We also like to think we are in the top three or four family owned baseball equipment companies.

Akadema and its subsidiaries are under four million dollars. It employs fifteen full time employees. It also hires about a dozen temps during our peak seasons.

**JL:** What is the corporate philosophy that drives Akadema?

**JG:** Beat the competition with Innovation, quality and service. It's the only way a small company can distinguish themselves and survive.

**JL:** What five words do you feel best describes the culture of your company?

JG: Young, energetic, creative, counter brand, guerrilla

JL: **Additionally, what would you say are the three most important keys to your success and growth?**

JG: 1) Innovation: Akadema is associated as the innovators in the baseball glove market. With six patents for gloves and one for a wood bat, we are leading our industry in changing designs that are not gimmicks but are functional products made to improve play. Our other competitors have spent most of their R&D on metal bats. We took on the market that had not been changed in a generation, the baseball glove.

2) Quality: People are looking for quality and love when their expectations are met or exceeded. Our products in each market segmentation are better than our competitors. We do this by studying our competitors' products and instead of figuring ways to make a better profit margin we try to improve the quality. For example, the girls fast pitch line, our competitors use cheap lace to cut costs. We use the same quality lace as we do for our pro baseball players. Costs more but girls softball gloves are some of our best selling gloves.

3) Micro or Counter Brand power. Today people are looking to be original or innovators. Akadema is a small innovative brand worn by pros not because Akadema has the most money to spend on pros....the pros believe in the product and want to be different. A 13 year boy or girl has the same feeling. People who buy Akadema don't want grandpa's glove or a glove made by a sneaker company. They are looking for their own brand that sets them apart.

Combined Innovation, Quality, and Micro Brand appeal and you have a company that can take on billion dollar companies in the market place or at least carve its niche.

JL: **Looking at the Akadema website and other promotional materials, it is apparent that Akadema seeks to distinguish its brand over its competition through attention to quality and detail. What else allows Akadema products to stand out from the rest of the pack?**

JG: Innovation and counter brand culture. Akadema continues to lead the pack when it comes to design of baseball gloves. Our Praying Mantis Catchers Mitt accounts for 20% of our sales of gloves yet only 1 in 9 players on the field use a catcher's mitt. The reason for our success is that the mitt is so advance from our competition that it has taken away their market share. Half of our gloves sold carry our patents on them. Not bad considering the traditional culture that permeates in baseball.

JL: Included in Akadema's list of product endorsers are various individuals, including a mixture of legends and future stars. Could you list some of the endorsers and detail why that are appropriate endorsers for your company's products?

JG: We have a three prong pro marketing approach: 1) Major League Players: (about 15-20 players) Manny Ramirez, is one of the most popular and recognizable players in the game. As he wears our glove, the logo is splashed throughout the USA and the world. We also have many players that are scene at the local levels. Mike Myers, of the Yankees, Todd Williams of the Orioles, JJ Rodriquez of Cardinals, Brian Sweeney of the Padres, Willie Eyre of the Twins, Dan Johnson of the A's, Damon Hollins of the Devil Rays...all these players are getting TV appearances that introduce the brand to millions of young players and fans. We also see Crystl Bustos providing the same support in the girls and women's fast pitch market.

2) Cooperstown Legends (4 living, 3 deceased) Ozzie Smith, Gary Carter and "Yaz" all have been a big help with designing product. They also serve another propose since these players are known to parents ages 30-50 who are buying their child his/her first baseball glove. Bob Feller (living), Lou Gehrig, Mickey Cochrane, and Dazzy Vance (deceased) are endorsements/estate licensing deals for our old fashioned vintage line. Akadema now owns trademarks of some of the oldest brand names such as Reach from 1880 and Ken-Wel from 1916. Akadema now can boast that its brands are as old as our competitors.

3) Minor Leagues (about 200-300 players): So many players coming out of high school and college now use Akadema. We usually have about 15% the top round draft picks in the amateur draft. These first-rounders usually become Major League prospects. We have found that these players tell their Minor League teammates to use Akadema which increases our player pool. Minor League players are local heroes and usually they spread the word at the baseball camp they may workout during the off season or a young fan asking for an autograph. The Minor Leagues also help showcase our wood bats.

JL: I saw one of your advertisements with the slogan "The end of an error!" and I thought that it was quite clever. To date what have been some of your most successful advertisement campaigns?

JG: The best campaign was Darwin's Theory of Glove Evolution. We had two monkey-like men holding gloves from the 1940's and 1950's and a caveman holding a glove competitor's glove. The modern man had an Akadema glove. The caption was "The game is evolving. Shouldn't you?"

JL: In addition to the aforementioned marketing endeavors, Akadema has a strong presence in collegiate athletics. What schools are included among your current college endorsement deals?

JG: BYU is our biggest name. We also have UC Riverside, Liberty U, East Tennessee, Hofstra, and many more D1 schools. We also do well with the smaller schools.

These sponsorships are primarily to provide a showcase for our aluminum bats. Colleges such as University of California- Riverside and Liberty had very successful offensive numbers this year using our Xtenion Metal bat.

JL: Akadema is a company that stresses quality and uniqueness. Could you explain the concept behind the following products or product lines: a) your custom glove building program; b) the Amish craftsmanship utilized in your wooden bats; and c) the Hoboken Collection gloves?

JG: The custom gloves program was started this year which gives amateur players a chance to create their own glove. About 3% of our gloves are now personalized. We think that number will triple in the next two years. We also hope to add a wood bat program for the general public.

The Amish Bat line is in transition. From 2000-2005 we used the Amish exclusively to cut our wood bats. Unfortunately the Amish could only cut a few bat profiles and pro and amateur players wanted more variety. This year we invested over \$200,000 to start our own wood bat shop in house. Currently the Amish supply most of our stock bats. Our shop has been doing many of the amateur and professional specialty bats. So 50% of the bats are cut without electricity on 100 year old lathes and 50% are cut on a CNC lathe that uses computer technology and is a year old.

The Hoboken Collection is a vintage line of baseball gloves. The idea started when we examined old designs during the patent process. The gloves were fascinating and we thought why not reproduce them. They have been used in some interesting ways. The National Hall of Fame and the Yogi Berra museums use them in their hands on education exhibits, they are bought by glove collectors that don't want to pay \$1000 for the real item, executives buy them to place their favorite autograph ball in, and pro teams use them as a drill for better hands. They are also used by old-fashioned baseball teams who play by 1880 rules.

JL: In terms of future considerations, what direction do you see your company's involvement in baseball over the next 5 years? 10 years?

JG: In five year we hope to fill in the baseball product gaps where we are not servicing. Catcher's equipment, balls, more accessories, more options for footwear.

In ten years, we hope to either will expand into other team sports equipment or soft goods such as more footwear and apparel for the mass market.

JL: Regarding global presence, what aspirations does Akadema have and what actions have been enacted to meet your international aspirations?

JG: Our biggest exports are to Canada. We have done well in Europe considering how small baseball is in the EU. In Latin America, Mexico, and Central America we have done well with the professional players. In Asia and Australia we do some small sales but nothing great to speak about.

I think Japan and Korea are the two big markets we have not had any meaningful dealings with. That has been disappointing since we know some of the Japanese players buy our gloves and ship them to Japan. We will continue to explore ways at accessing these foreign markets.

JL: Finally, what words of advice do you have for any potential consumers that have not been converted to Akadema users yet?

JG: Its a simple pitch. Try it, and you tell me why we have been able to convert hundreds of thousands of players.



Joe Gilligan, CEO of Akedema

Visit Akadema on the web at:  
[www.akademapro.com](http://www.akademapro.com)





## SMART RESPONSES

## WHAT IS THE STRANGEST (MOST BIZARRE) OCCURRENCE THAT YOU HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED IN A CLASS ENVIRONMENT?

COMPILED BY: Jason W. Lee, University of North Florida; Editor, *The SMART Journal*

For this issue we asked, "*What is the strangest (most bizarre) occurrence that you have ever encountered in a class environment?*" We solicited personal recollections pertaining to various occurrences, including:

- An unusual occurrence that has taken place in the classroom
- A unique happening during a presentation
- Student excuses
- Problems encountered
- And so forth.

The following details responses given:

*Here is my most bizarre experience.*

*This incident occurred when I was a graduate student many years ago. I was one of 5 or 6 graduate students sitting in a classroom waiting for the professor to arrive to administer and proctor the final exam in a sport psychology class. When the professor arrived he informed us that he could tell that we were all very anxious and needed to relax a little more. He exclaimed that he had the solution. He brought in a large trash can and asked us all to gather around the trash can, close our eyes, hold our arms out over the top of the trash can and relax by performing the repetitive yoga mantra of "ohm." The professor then took the lid off the trash can and asked us to open our eyes. In the trash can was a fairly large snake he had found in his garden that morning. It certainly startled us. I am not sure if it had the desired effect but I was pleased with my score on that particular exam, although I am not sure I would recommend that particular meditative technique.*

*John Vincent, PhD  
University of Alabama*

*I once had a student leave class and return with a brick trying to attack another student. We stopped him from entering the classroom, but he waited until after class and tried to jump on the student from a tree - breaking his own arm.*

*Dan Drane, PhD  
University of Southern Mississippi*

*I once had a student turn in a paper that was clearly plagiarized from the internet. When confronted, the student asked, "How did my paper get on the internet?" After further discussions, he said he would appeal the grade of "F" I was giving him since the same paper was good enough for the professor who taught another sport management class. The class I was teaching was Sport Ethics.*

*Warren Whisenant, PhD  
University of Miami*

*Timber the Seeing Eye Dog (Example #1)*

*I had a student who had a self trained his seeing eye dog, Timber. I must say the Timber was not well trained. He consistently sniffed the students as they entered the classroom. Timber frequently roamed around the class and would even leave the room and walk down the hallway. On one occasion a student put a snack on the floor beside his desk and Timber walked over and helped himself to the student's snack. Timber left much to be desired in a seeing eye dog.*

*The Classroom Snack (Example #2)*

*One day while showing a film in class, I sat in the back of the room while the film was playing and heard a noise that sounded like someone opened a soda can. I then noticed that there was some kind of commotion going on around this student. About that time I detected a horrible smell and the other students were moving away from a student. When I positioned myself to see what was going on, I discovered that she had opened a can of barbeque Vienna sausages and was stabbing them with a butter knife and eating them like popsicles. When I asked her what she was doing she said that she always had a snack when she watched a movie.*

*Dr. Jeff Lee  
Troy University (Criminal Justice submission)*

*I got a call from a student's mother who was concerned about her son's class performance. She said that he had not declared a major and wasn't sure which class he was taking (which made me wonder why I was getting the call). But the situation was this - the son had been accused of plagiarism and had been told he would fail the class. The mother told me that her son had NOT plagiarized; that he had had someone else write his paper for him and THAT person had plagiarized. Since it was not her son who plagiarized, the mother reasoned, it should not be held against him.*

*Bill Grantham, PhD  
Troy University (Anthropology submission)*





## Submission Guidelines

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Authors are to submit articles following the proceeding instructions:

- Paragraph Text: Paragraphs are to be in block format (no paragraph indentations) and single spaced with a blank line between paragraphs.
- Titles and Headings: The use of headings is expected. Titles, subtitles, headings and author names are to be left justified and in ALL CAPS.
- Reference Citation: All references are to be cited within the text and at the conclusion of the text on a reference page in accordance with APA 5th edition guidelines.
- Length: Articles should be clear and to the point. There are no word limitations or maximum word requirements.
- Audience: Articles should be written with sport management (and peripheral areas of study) students, academicians, and practitioners in mind.

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