Sports and Education

Why are sports programs such an important feature of education in the U.S.?

Focus on sports at two educational levels

- Interscholastic (high school)
- Intercollegiate (college)
Interscholastic Sports

Consequences sports programs for:

- Schools
- Communities
- Individuals
Questions About the Benefits of Interscholastic Programs

- Do sports improve the overall academic climate?
- Are sports elitist?
- How are sports programs funded?
  - Are corporate sponsorships the answer?
    - Commercialization
    - “redshirting”
    - year-round competition
Intercollegiate Sports--Big Business

Chasing the money

✓ NCAA benefits
✓ Universities benefit
✓ Coaches benefit

Negative consequences

✓ Reduced sports programs
✓ Scandals
✓ Education secondary

Characteristics of “Big-time” I-A Programs

✓ Primary emphasis on football and men’s basketball
  - Expensive
  - Frequent travel
Challenges for Collegiate Athletes

Division I
- Time and energy commitments to sport are exceptionally high
  - Academic detachment is a commonly used coping strategy among male athletes

Division II & III
- Most play without athletic scholarships
- Time and energy commitments vary greatly depending on coaches and sports
- Less likely than “big-time” athletes to be separated from the rest of the student body or used to promote the school
Graduation data are confusing because there are many different ways to compute statistics.

- Graduation rates among all varsity athletes slightly higher than rates for all students.
- Graduation rates in many big-time revenue sports are low.
- Women athletes have higher graduation rates than men athletes.
- Race is a factor.

Information on grades must be qualified because of

- Course and major clustering.
- Entrance requirements.
Two Key Issues

- Enforcement of “Amateurism”
  - lower costs for universities
  - tax-free status
  - NCAA hypocrisy?

- Restrictions of Athletes’ Rights
  - Letters-of-intent—benefits favor university over students
Indirect Benefits of Intercollegiate Programs

- High profile sport teams can be used in connection with fund raising efforts
- Sport teams may attract attention among potential students
- Sports provide on-campus social events and occasions
Indirect Costs of Intercollegiate Programs

- Maintaining sport teams and recruiting athletes may compromise academic standards in admissions and classrooms.
- Academic matters are given low priority in the “culture of sport” on many campuses.
- The lives of athletes are increasingly separate from the lives of other students.
- Sports may take resources away from other extracurricular activities.
Potential Directions for Future

- Increasing age of U.S. population
- Increasing egalitarianism
- TV will dictate direction of professional and big-time intercollegiate sports.
- Rude, disrespectful, uncivil behavior