

The perks of being a college athlete

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“ As I have said before, very few athletes grow up talking about how they want to play college football at a Junior College or college basketball at a Division III University.

It may end up happening that way but unless your parents work or coach at one of these schools, it is not likely something you aspire for. Instead, you dream about getting a chance to play quarterback for USC or point guard for North Carolina. You picture yourself being one of the top players in the with hordes of college coaches wanting to sign you. Because this situation rarely happens, we felt it was time to take a look at all levels of college athletics and talk about the pros and cons of each. And yes, there are even some cons in going to North Carolina or USC” (Recruiting-101).

As, previously stated, most athletes do not plan on going to a low level college to play sports. While the glory of playing at a Division One school may be fascinating, skipping college all together could be dangerous. “ In April 2013, the unemployment rate for college graduates over 25 years old was 3. 6 percent, compared the the 7. 5 percent for high school graduates” (ProCon). According to the online article, “ Is a College Education Worth it?” high school graduates have less jobs than college graduates.

A college education is important because although some jobs only require a high school diploma, an employer will choose a college graduate over a high school graduate. An employer recognizes that a college graduate has received a higher level of education, therefore hiring the college graduate over the high school graduate. Another reason to go to college is for athletics. For most athletes, an athletic career is not long term. An athlete

needs a rebound career for life after sports. The decision to become a student-athlete through college is beneficial because it gives the student an alternate career choice post their athletic career.

Being a student-athlete has greater benefits than skipping college to solely play sports. When an athlete goes to college, it provides an opportunity to choose an alternate career path. Choosing a “ backup” plan is important because there are many ways an athlete can lose his sports career. For example, there are many athletes that are injured while either playing their sport or doing extra-curricular activities. “ In Spring 2009, while playing in his final high school lacrosse game, Tommy Mallon headed downfield after a ground ball at full speed and collided with a player from the opposing team who was also going for the ball. Initially, the “ hit” did not appear to be anything out of the ordinary,? but Tommy did not immediately get up off the field.

He was experiencing slight numbness at the back of his head, but his impulse was to “ shake it off” and get back into the game. Fortunately, his teammate encouraged him to stay down while he called for help from the sidelines. Riki Kirchhoff, an on site Certified Athletic Trainer, did not permit Tommy to get up, despite his request to do so. Tommy was spine-boarded and taken by ambulance to a nearby trauma hospital. He was told that his neck was fractured and that one of his vertebral arteries had been dissected, which had allowed blood to leak out of the artery and caused a dangerous clot to form. He was lucky to be alive, but he was at serious risk of grave consequences from his injury.

He was transferred to the ICU and subsequently underwent months of challenging treatments and therapies. Although Tommy will never play contact sports again, the actions of his teammate and the certified athletic trainer made the difference between life and death during the final minutes of his high school lacrosse career. This experience inspired Tommy and his mother, Beth Mallon, to establish Advocates for Injured Athletes (A4IA). Advocates for Injured Athletes (A4IA) is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) charitable organization. The mission is to promote sports safety and to provide essential support, education and resources to help keep student athletes safe.

“ Another way athletes may have to stop playing their sport is the coach firing them for performance issues. While there is still a chance for the athlete to get back on the team, most likely the coach will find a new player. This leaves the athlete to choose a new career that they would be interested in pursuing. Along the lines of being fired, many athletes who have been playing a sport their whole lives tend to “ burn out.” Burning out refers to the athlete losing interest in the sport or getting tired of it.

College gives the materials needed to get a foot in the door for a new job. Besides choosing an alternate career path, an organization known as the NCAA insures athletes if they are injured while playing the sport. This insurance gives athletes a safe out to sports. Throughout this time, college allows athletes to mature. The four years of college provides an athletes a chance to grow in their sports and in their personal lives.

It also helps athletes meet new people and develop essential connections. While at the University, college students grow their mind through the class that they are enrolled into. As stated by the online article, "Are teens' brains fully developed?" "According to brain experts from Children's Hospital Boston, teens brains are only around 80 percent developed" (HowStuffWorks). Teens in college need time to grow their brains, which attending classes will help. Instead of jumping right into a minimum wage job, students can benefit by learning and expanding their minds. College provides the resources to study other careers alongside of improving in a sport.

College gives the necessities needed for the athlete to choose the right career path. Guidance Counselors aid students and athletes to determine which career they would like to pursue. Athletics encourage athletes to keep up their grades, which helps them study their career path. The NCAA requires at least a 2.5 grade point average to play sports in college. Keeping up their grade point average helps student athletes keep on track with their major.

According to the documentary, "Schooled: The Price of College Sports," "98.5 percent of men's athletics will not go pro. A college education presents the chance for a career outside of sports" (Branch). Most athletes will not play sports after college, allowing their college major to become useful.

While there is a slight chance to go pro, college students have an alternate choice as opposed to the athletes that skip college to try to make it in the pros. Although going to college has great benefits, other people would argue

that going to college is not worth the time and money. As stated in the online article, “ Is a College Education Worth It?” “ One in three college graduates had a job that only required a high school diploma or less in 2012, including more than 10, 000 parking lot attendants, 83, 000 bartenders, and 115, 000 janitors with bachelor’s degrees” (Procon). Despite the fact that college provides the items needed to receive a bachelor’s degree in a major, there are not a lot of high paying jobs available in today’s economy. Most jobs that are available don’t require a college degree, which is why some people say that college is not worth it.

On the other hand, research shows that college graduates make more money over their entire life, an average difference of \$500, 000 (Procon). Another reason people say college is not worth it is because of student debt. There is around one trillion dollars in student debt, and the numbers are still rising. Student debt can ruin a students life. Fortunately, there are financial aid programs for both athletes and students.

The financial aid helps student reduce their debt, and the job they receive in the field of their major can also help pay off their debt. In conclusion, being a student-athlete has greater benefits than not going to college altogether. A student-athlete has a chance to find a career path to pursue for life after sports. College provides the necessities to excel in the career field of the major of choice. Also, the NCAA provides athletic insurance for athletes playing sports through a college.

Athletic insurance provides a cushion for injured players. Student-athletes that graduate college are also more likely to find a job because college

graduates are more likely to be hired over high school graduates. Another way college benefits student and athletes is the four years that it allows the students to mature. Along with maturing, college helps the students meet new people and develop vital business connections. Athletes also have those four years to grow in their sport. While student debt may have its repercussions, the pros of college outway the cons.

Financial aid can help students shave off some of the debt, and working through college can also help. The choice to go to college and become a student-athlete has a greater outcome than not going to college and trying to play sports alone.