

Should college
athletes be paid?



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\$112, 142, 961(Doughty). That’s the amount of revenue that the University of Nebraska football team generated during their 2015-16 season; and not a dime went to any of the players. Why is this? The biggest controversy against paying college athletes is that many of them are receiving free or reduced tuition. With tuition prices being so expensive nowadays, that seems pretty fair. Majority of people fail to understand how much time and effort goes into being on a college sports team. Playing for a high-level division one program is similar to a full-time job since academics are not always the top priority. While the market for college athletics boosts in popularity each year, the concept of compensating the athletes is much more likely.

In relations to the major division one college sports over the past 10 years. During the 2016-17 school year, the NCAA generated over \$1B in total revenue, which is worth noting. Back in 2010, the NCAA signed a deal with CBS/Turner Sports worth \$10. 8 billion over 14 years; so that’s approximately \$771 million a year from 2010-24 (Shaw). The following year, “ ESPN and NCAA extended their TV rights deal through 2023-24 for \$500 million, allowing worldwide multi-media rights to 24 NCAA championships for numerous sports and exclusive rights for the Men’s March Madness tournament”(Shaw). It’s safe to say the NCAA has become more profitable than we could ever imagine, so it’s time to re-evaluate how the total revenue should be dispersed.

In order to asses a fair perspective, this issue is more vital from an athlete’s standpoint, rather than a fan’s. SB Nation published an article in 2015 that showed the daily rituals for a football player at the University of Florida. The

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day starts at 6 AM and ends at 9 PM. Of those 15 hours, 6 of them were dedicated to football (Hutchins). The daily activities include injury lifting, practice, and film. To put that into perspective, these athletes spend a third of their day on football, which accumulates to 30 hours from Monday-Friday, excluding a scheduled game every Saturday (Hutchins). As a fellow student, the mandatory responsibilities and long hours seem more like a day job. Regardless of your interests, spending 6 hours daily is time-consuming and tedious. From an unbiased perspective, you certainly want compensation for an activity that occupies a majority of your time. One of the benefits of paying college athletes would be receiving equitable compensation for their time.

As unethical as it may seem, some NCAA Division one programs are more superior than others, which require more effort and commitment. A notable downfall of compensating college athletes would be the amount in which each player would receive. Due to the enormous revenue generated from football and men's basketball players, it's widely known that they should be compensated at a higher rate. " While the average Division 1 school generates nearly \$30 million in football revenue, the next 25 sports combined generate less than \$25 million combined" (Gaines). As a Division one non-football/ basketball athlete, I would feel irritated that these students receive more money. In theory, paying college athletes based on revenue generated would create a sense of disbelief and unfairness.

Depending upon the size of the program, most of these schools are able to generate enough revenue to pay their expenses, as well as athletes.

According to the article Nebraska's Non-Revenue Sports Lost a Combined

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\$17 Million, in the fiscal year of 2015, the University of Nebraska football team's revenue outweighed their expenses by about \$31 million (Doughty). It's crazy to think that such a big university does not even pay a small fraction to its players. If you factor 1% of the total revenue to the 100 players on the team, that's \$3, 100 per player. Men's basketball generated \$2. 3 million, which consisted of only 15 players. 1% of the total revenue to each player on the team would be just over \$1, 500 per player (Doughty). Other sports in the Nebraska program, such as men's golf and baseball lost nearly \$1. 3 million combined (Doughty). Needless to say, all these other programs lose the University money, so paying them seems illegitimate. Undoubtedly, these big Universities thrive off of there football/basketball programs because of the fortunes they make; so paying them a few thousand dollars is only fair.

Even with the continuous growth of the NCAA, they've dealt with many legal situations. Sports video games create lots of turmoil when it comes to the NCAA. In 2014, Former UCLA men's basketball player Ed O'Bannon partook in the lawsuit against the NCAA and EA Sports (Communication and Sport pg 285-286). Throughout the lawsuit, there was clear evidence that EA Sports customized the players on each team to best suit their actual stature and skills. EA Sports and the NCAA failed to compensate its college athletes. Some of the notable violations correspond with the Sherman Antitrust Act as well as the right of publicity. O'Bannon and other college athletes won the settlement against the NCAA and EA, which forced them to pay approximately \$42. 3 million, as well as there ability to produce college

sports games. It was a step forward for college athletes, as more than 4, 000 athletes received compensation (Communication and Sport pg 285-286).

Most people would argue that academics would be even less accounted for than they already have been with added compensation. One of the most publicized, hysterical incidents occurred less than 10 years ago. In 2009, The University of North Carolina had a few players who received grades for work and class they never partook in (Beard). Imagine all of the other times throughout history, in which major Division one college athletes cheated their ways through school. The clear explanation is that these students are lazy, but their workload is much more than the average student's. School is always the first priority, so paying student-athletes money would only worsen their academics. Implementing compensation for sports will increase student-athletes' interests while reducing their academic priorities.

One thing that is definitely worth noting on this topic would be how much the NCAA benefits off of the athletes. According to Business Insider, the average NCAA Division 1 football player is worth \$163, 087(Gaines). It was not until 2006 when high school basketball players weren't required to attend college. The NBA installed a rule that enforced high school players to attend at least one year of college basketball before being eligible for the NBA draft. There have been hundreds of college freshman who have dropped out of college to pursue their NBA dreams. In the 2018 NBA Draft, 8 of the first 10 picks were a freshman (NBA. com). Each freshman had chosen the “ one-and-done” method as they decided to sacrifice their education, for professional sports. It seems improbable to forfeit a full-ride education, but it's very difficult to pass up millions of dollars as an 18-19-year-old kid (NBA. com).

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Despite the everlasting controversies, this is still a very complex topic. There are so many factors that correspond with the question “ should college athletes get paid?” The NCAA will continue to grow and fund off student-athletes. Due to the hundreds of millions of dollars these athletes generate, there’s going to be “ pay for play.” The NCAA operates as a business (Pay for Play), so when they’re facing more lawsuits and disparities between athletes, the only options will be to compensate there players or shut down.

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