Joshua Yopp 2/21/13

Should College Athletes be Paid?

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) revenue is broken down into six different parts. Based on 2011-2012, NCAA revenue was $871.6 million. 81% comes from television and marketing rights fees. The remaining 18% mostly came from championships and that was mostly ticket and merchandise sales. Television ratings are key to this because many people watch these college football and basketball games. Chris Smith, a Forbes staff who covers business sports says “CBS over $770 million every year for the rights to the three weeks NCAA Tournament”. Coaches who coach a top 25 team in college basketball or who coach at a big school such as University of Connecticut, and the University of Kentucky gets paid at least 6 figures or higher. Rick Pitino coach of Louisville received over $6 million from the 2010-2011 season to the 2011-2012 season. Did you know that college coaches get bonuses if they make the Final Four and bowl games? Rick Pitino received $175,000 if Louisville were to win it all he will receive $325,000, but who makes the coaches have an outstanding season to put his team in the top 25 rankings or even make it to the NCAA Tournament? The players. Based on the NCAA rules, “Players cannot accept special benefits or money from schools for anything other than scholarships or books”. Tim Tebow, University of Florida star quarterback, set records and won championships. Tim Tebow brought millions of dollars to his school but didn’t get any of it, not even a penny. That money went to the coaches, the staff, and the athletic department. Many star players deel with this. University of Connecticut star point guard, Kemba Walker, lead his team to the Final Four and won University of Connecticut a championship, but Kemba Walker didn’t get any money out of it. These athletes bring so much revenue to their schools. Should college athletes be paid? Yes, college athletes should be paid because they bring so much revenue to their schools and they are helping the school get money.

Student reporter Adele Birkenes says “College football and men’s basketball generate revenues of more than $6 billion every year”. None of the players, who play on a team, can take a dollar out of that. If a player takes money from the school, that isn’t related to a scholarship or towards their books, then consequences occur. University of Southern California (USC) star running back Reggie Bush suffered consequences. In 2010, the NCAA sanctioned the University of Southern California after they determined the Reggie Bush family had received improper benefits when he was playing at USC. These benefits came from sport agents who wanted Reggie Bush as their Client. The benefits that the family received were free airfare and limousine rides, a car, and a rent free home in San Diego. As a result, the Bowl Championship Series stripped USC of their 2004 national title. Also, the Heisman Trophy that Reggie Bush had won in 2005 was returned. Another player, Cam Newton was in a similar situation. Cam Newton’s father had used a recruiter to ask up to $180,000 from Mississippi State in an exchange for his son’s matriculation there after junior college back in 2010. Coaches can even get in trouble for letting players get money under the table. A very successful head coach of the Ohio state Buckeyes named Jim Tressel resigned his coaching position after the NCAA alleged he had violated the NCAA rules. At least 28 players on the team throughout 9 seasons according to Sports Illustrated had traded autographs, jerseys, and other team historical items for tattoos, or cash in Columbus at a tattoo parlor.

These student athletes don’t have time to have a side job because of the sport they play. Adele Birkenes says “Many college athletes receive scholarship money, but the average amount of funding in an athletic scholarship does not even cover all of a student’s tuition.” Students who attend a college and don’t play a sport have time for work-study programs. (A work-study program is an educational plan in which students alternate between paid employment and formal study). Student athletes cannot work part time jobs, because the athletes have training, practices, and games. Also, student athletes are full time students who need passing grades to stay eligible to keep playing and to stay in school. Student reporter Akash Bagaria says “College athletes already receive numerous benefits. Many get scholarships, which help pay for their tuition, supplies, housing, and sporting equipment”. There isn’t any difference in that than an academic scholarship. An academic scholarship can help pay tuition, supplies, and housing. Also students who have an academic scholarship have an opportunity to work on campus part time to help out on other payments. Athletes don’t have time to have work on campus. According to Gregg Doyel who wrote “College athletes really owe schools money? Then they must be paid”.” According to a study by the National College Players Association and Drexel University, the average all-expenses-paid scholarship doesn't pay all expenses, after all. Turns out, according to the study, the average college football or men's basketball player owes more than $3,000 - $3,222 to be exact - from his own pocket. Per year. Multiply that by four, and the free ride given to college athletes isn't remotely close to free.” So basically these college athletes aren’t even getting a full scholarship at their school. That means that these college athletes don’t go to school free. They focus on two things and try to get the school money by winning as many games as they can and these college athletes still have to pay the school back at the end of it.

Most of the revenue for these schools comes from two main sports, football and basketball. People who pay to watch these student athletes perform, whether it’s at the arena or stadium or even at home. People are watching the players play the game. So all the revenue coming from the television and merchandise sales are because of the players. In 2011-2012 the revenue for television and marketing rights fees was $705 million. If the school wins a championship or does really well during their season, the more money they get and it goes to the school. According to “Let’s start paying college athletes” by Joe Nocera of The New York Times, the 15 highest-paid NCAA football coaches made $53.4 million meanwhile, the 13,877 Division I players made $0.

The percentage of a college football athletes that will go pro is 1.7%. The percentage of a college basketball athlete that will go pro is 1.2%. So the 98.3% of college football athletes and the 98.8% of college basketball athletes that won’t go pro spent 4 years in college playing their sport and played to win as many games as they can. Say an athlete from the University of Alabama played football last year and won the BCS National Championship Bowl Game. That athlete didn’t go pro and helped his team give their school another National Championship Game, which means the University of Alabama gets more money based on the revenue and the championship game. All of that money will add up to more than a million dollars. The coaches get paid, the staff gets paid, and the athletic department gets paid. What about the player who didn’t go pro? He doesn’t get anything out of it. The player doesn’t get any money just a championship ring and that’s all. Yes, it is a memorable moment winning a National Championship but wouldn’t it be nice if throughout the 4 years that player attended school and played football to get some money? Every player isn’t guaranteed a spot to go pro and make millions, These athletes who don’t go pro at least should have a backup plan, but these players are already digging themselves out of a hole. The average college football or men's basketball player owes more than $3,000 - $3,222 out of their own pocket and that’s per year. In 4 years, these college athletes who don’t go pro have to pay at least $12,000 - $12,888 once they get out of college. Now the college students who attend school on an academic scholarship can get a side job because they have enough time for a job. College athletes can’t get a job because of the sport they are participating in and don’t forget that these college athletes are playing for the school to earn money. So at the end colleges get money from these athletic programs that play to win championships. Coaches, staff, and the athletic department gets paid but the players who play to win these championships don’t. It would be fair if the colleges at least gave these college athletes some money so the college athletes who don’t go pro can at least have some money in their pocket.

Don Curtis, a UNC (University of North Carolina) trustee, said that impoverished football players cannot afford movie tickets or bus fare home. “I think we should pay these guys something”. The NCAA makes millions off of these athletes, but only college football and basketball athletes should be paid because they have the most revenue. You never see a college soccer game on a national program such as CBS, ESPN, and ESPN2. They would probably be on the local channel and those local channel ratings would never be as high as CBS, ESPN, and ESPN2 ratings. College football and college basketball are the two main sports that should get paid. It’s only fair that these players get something because these players are what make the school even more popular and makes the school gets even more money. This is good for other students that attend the school because there is a chance where the cost at the school would be less than other colleges that aren’t really good in basketball or football. Akash Bagaria says “Paying college athletes would take away college budgets that could be used to invest in research, to hire better staff, or to renovate facilities and technology. If colleges are going to invest more money in a program, it should be in academics, not sports”. These college athletes are helping the school to get more money. The more money the school gets the better the technology will be, the better staff will be hired. These athletes are the reason why schools are getting more money. It wouldn’t hurt to pay these players after their hard work.

In conclusion, college football and basketball athletes should be paid. These athletes are helping the school by having revenue mostly from television and merchandise sales. These athletes are working every single day to manage to go to school and get good grades and play a sport at the same time. It’s only fair that these athletes get some money so when they are out of college athletes wouldn’t have to worry about digging themselves out a hole. These athletes should get paid a certain amount every month so these athletes wouldn’t have to worry about getting money from family or even trying to get a job. It’s just only fair if these athletes can get paid.

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