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Should Athletes be Paid or Should not be Paid?

**Introduction**

When it comes to the argument that should athletes be paid or not, there are going to be people on either side of the pole. Everyone has their own opinion when it comes to the world of sports at the college level. People who say to college athlete students being paid they have the thought that the name and images of these pupils are used in various advertisement and products. The money that is generated with all of this endorsement done on the base of the students, they deserve to get some amount of the profit. There are other people who say that college students should not get paid as they receive scholarships as a form of payment for their skills. Then there are certain other things that need to be kept in mind as well, that are the athletes to be paid based on the sports that they play? How can the value of the sports team of the school measured, especially in the case when the team Is very popular and is attracting a lot of new students? How to even generate that amount of money? It is a fact that the debate on whether athlete students should be paid or not can go on and on, through this paper I will be shedding light on both the sides with the help of these questions and giving my personal opinion on the issue.

**Discussion**

Why Athletes should get paid

It is a known fact that being an athlete in college is a full-time job. It can be exhausting bouncing between classes, weight room, and court. One always has to be on their toes. The sports that are played on a college level are said to be extracurricular activities, but the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournaments are very demanding. They require an extended period of attention and determination in which the student-athletes have to skip on school. If that is not enough, they have to be absent form nationally televised games as well which generate a lot of views and money. The people who believe in the fact that the student-athletes need to be paid are making that claim based on the fact that the games that they play especially the championship games generate a lot of money for their team and college. In such a case the student-athletes are entitled to receive a small amount of money. It should also be kept in mind that the money that they will be getting will also vary on the sport and the college that they play for. If they get more screen time and are a popular sports team, obviously the amount of money that they will be receiving will be more. On the contrary, if the team that is playing is not very known or popular the amount of money received can be much smaller.

The sports that generate the most money on a college level are men's football and basketball team. A lot of people might deem this to be unfair, but it is all depended on what the consumer wants. They are the deciders of the fact that what is fair and what is not. Even in this regard, the team popularity matters on a great degree. It should also be put into consideration that these sports support a lot of other games, which do not pool in a lot of money on their own. There is another factor that needs to be acknowledged, that student-athletes are the ones who are sweating blood in the field and putting in all of their effort for the game, but the coaches are the ones who get paid more. Coaches get bonuses on various occasions like; reaching a milestone, hitting a record, reaching the offseason, and aiding in winning the big games. While the coaches do have a big influence on the teams, but it should not be forgotten that the players are putting in a lot of effort as well and they need to be acknowledged and given incentives equally. The majority of the profit that is earned by the college athletics does not go towards academia; it either goes to the coaches, administers or directors. This fact really pinches as the main hard work is put in by the athletes. It is not necessary that the athletes receive huge salaries like their coaches, but they could be given a substantial amount of money in regards to how much the program makes (Tucker et al., 27). Scholarships mostly do cover the books and various expenses of the college athletes, but even a few hundred dollars a year can make a huge difference and compensate for them as they do not have the time to go do a part-time job which would probably give them the same amount of money.

Another thing that should be kept in the mind is the fact that these college athletes are not just part of the college sports team; they are also inclusive in the advertisement team of the college. The example of the "Flutie effect" can be taken. The term can be described as the rise of college admissions followed by a big sports win. This term was named after the Boston College quarterback "Doug Flutie." He won the Heisman trophy, and after that triumph, there was seen a rise in the admissions of the college. Even today, universities and colleges use their athletic triumphs to entice the new students in order to pool in as many admissions as possible. The student-athletes need and deserve to be paid for this and all the other advantages that they provide for their colleges and universities. It is a known fact that college sport is a billion-dollar industry which is built on athletes that do not get any compensation for their dire hard work. Whatever the solution, but it is clear that the status quo needs to be changed. It is a sad reality that needs to be changed. The parents and institutions throw their children into the field like it is a gladiator’s arena and watch children putting in their sweat and blood while they munch on snacks. It is like the old days, something similar to child labor. Young children were sent to the coal mines to do massive work, what difference is sending them to the field has? They put in the same amount of physical effort here as well. Further, in the three weeks of march madness basketball that was held last year, NCAA earned a whooping 900$ million dollars. There was a shocking 9.2 billion that was gambled on the outcome. That is a lot of money, now let us talk about how much money did the actual athletes who performed got? Not even a single penny.

There are going to be many people out there who will think that being a part of the sports team is all rainbows and sunshine. The life of an athlete is carefree and amazing and they pretty much role in money. While it might be true for the students who come from a rich background, but the students who came to universities on scholarship and belonged to blue-collar working families, the picture is very different. They do not party all night; they spend most of their time in the dorms as they cannot afford to hang out a lot. They have to keep their expenses in check and balance. While there is nothing wrong in staying back in the dorms as it helps focus studies but studying and working seven days a week in the gym can be very tiresome. For athletes their practice is their 9-5, the only difference is that it can be more but not less, and they are not getting paid a single penny for it either. Trying to maintain studies and practice can be very difficult as practice is very physically demanding. There are many athletes out there who talk about their hardships. They have to go through a robust practice session, move around the country for matches and have to maintain their grades at the same time. They bring in millions of dollars for the institution but get nothing in return. They like other scholarship students are not allowed to get a job during semesters and game seasons. The only time that they get to do a job and earn is usually in the summer break. The money that they earn in that time is what helps them get by the rest of the season. The life of an athlete is very difficult and is mostly sugar coated.

Why Athletes should not get Paid

In accordance to a survey, it was found that paying the student-athletes other than the scholarship will cost more as opposed to other scholarships that are given to students based on academia. There are more thoughts that suggest that scholarship be taken out of the picture and the student-athletes be given salaries. This scenario might seem like a good deal, but it is not. If the athletes are given salaries, there are going to be tax deductions. This means that they will hardly have enough money left to cover the tuition after the tax has been deducted. Other benefit of the scholarship is that there is no question to what the scholarship money is going towards. Further, if the athletes are given salaries instead, the money that is given to them will probably go for wants as opposed to needs. It is a good thing that they get a scholarship as they will not be putting the money in for things that are not necessary. This will also avoid the student-athletes from going into debt that they will not be able to afford. Another fact that is greatly debated is the point that paying the student-athletes will change the nature of college athletics. It is a known fact that earning a position in the sports college team is very difficult, only 7% of students earn the scholarship and move on to the bigger stage, while a small 2% of the athletes reach Division level.

If there were payments involved athletes would opt to go to a college that would give the highest offer. By any chance, if in the next season there is a school that offers more, the student might shift to that school. This will make the entire thing a business. This new business can also become a reason of downfall for other programs. The money that will be being paid to the athletes will have to come from somewhere, in order to do so, the colleges will probably cut the least popular programs. This will be unfair to other students who were looking forward to joining those programs. So, paying athletes will not only bring an issue in the whole structure but will also have an impact on the college experience of other students. Additionally, even though these student-athletes might be playing at an advanced level, they are still not playing on a professional level. It is a fact that it is not their job to play, they are playing to pursue higher studies and in order to participate in extracurricular activities. The student-athletes are mainly going to college to learn; they are lucky enough to gain a scholarship and do it on a lower cost as opposed to other students who have to strive hard to pay their fees. It is also thought that if these student-athletes will be paid, their motives might change. It is a privilege that they got to go to the college that they wanted to go to and as a bonus get to pursue their dream of playing sports.

While we were all to busy looking forward to the football Saturdays, the United State Court of Appeals for Ninth Circuit delivered a presiding in the antitrust suit against NCAA. The decision was very intense for both the sides (Cook). The court's decision was in the favor of the athletes. It is still a fact that people do not agree with. It is thought that the essence of college sports needs to be understood. Sports and all the extra curriculum activities are part of the educational structure. Sports help nurture the students and aids in their growth and creativity. The value of sports in education needs to be understood; it is necessary that it is not made a means to a business. The value of sports can be seen in many athletes who pour in their hearts in the sports that they play without the hope of going pro. It is also claimed by the biggest sports that they are not professional. The value can also be seen in the fact that many NCAA teams that play are more popular than the professional teams, the example of the Michigan Wolverines can be taken. Fans of all these athletes not only look at the fact that they play sports, but they also look at them as students just like them who have to walk the same halls and attend the same classes. If a student chooses Michigan not for is tradition, quality, and an amazing campus, but for the amount of money that they are willing to pay the essence and value of sports will be lost.

When did college sports become a matter of money? Back in the say, it was all about the passion that was attached to joining a sports team. It was seen as an honor by both students and as well as the parents to be part of the school’s football, basketball, lacrosse or so on team. The students were not in it for the money, they were in it, so they could share the passion of the athletes who played before them. Getting a scholarship was just an added bonus for the amount of effort that they put in while in the field. Additionally, no student is ever forced to join a sports team; they do it based on their own will. Other than that, these sports teams pave a path for success for students who are not from a privileged background. It was witnessed that a lot of students from the African American community join the sports teams, so they can have a shot at gaining a scholarship. Sports in schools and colleges are also a means of an opportunity for students who cannot afford to go to college but at the same time have the skills and IQ to achieve wonders. So, sports at an academic level should not be looked at as a means to make money and start a business, but rather an opportunity to thrive further.

**My Opinion**

After considering and putting under perspective both the viewpoints, it is safe to say that there can surely be a middle ground to both the situations. The question is what should or should not athletes at a college level be paid? My answer would be, yes. I am not saying that they get paid a lot of money or all the time. As discussed above, these athletes bring in a lot of money for the colleges and are often used in the advertisements as well. That is one of the reasons the NCAA case was filed as well, due to the use of the photos of athletes in their advertisement. The things should be looked at from both the sides. The students should not be paid in general, but when there is an advertisement involved, and a great sum of money is generated, they deserve to receive a small amount for it. This will settle down any legal problem. Further, the schools and colleges other than advertisement money will not be responsible for paying any money to the athletes. This will also create a balance in which the essence and value of sports will not be lost either. The athletes are playing for themselves at the end of the day, and that spark should never be lost. If colleges start paying the athletes full time, it will disrupt the values that academic sports have. Students will start going for schools based on the amount of money that they will be receiving, that kill the essence of sports being part of the education. The whole idea is to invoke creativity and enhance the learning process, not make it a business. However, they are entitled to the money that is gained via advertisement as their pictures and clips are being used. This also depends on the amount of money that the college will be receiving. If, money other that will be given to the athletes it will be unfair to other students who are on scholarship as well. The expenses that are bared by the sports scholarship are already enough; any more payment will be putting the grant out of balance.

**Conclusion**

Whatever the payment that is to be paid to the student-athletes is an ongoing debate during the championship season, more specifically basketball postseason and the football playoffs. Will college athletes ever have a salary is a decision that is up to the NCAA to decide. It is a constant debate that NCAA needs or does not need to walk away from the recent college sports model that they are following that; the young men and women who are participating in the court or field are students first and athletes later. It should also be kept in mind that these students have not stepped into the professional world yet and nor were forced into joining the sports team. They joined the teams based on their own will and passion. It is necessary that this stays intact as on an academic level we need people to take part in extracurricular activities for fun, not everything needs to be career oriented. Having said that, of course, there are going to be people who would want to pursue sports as a career, but it should be done out of passion, not the money involved.

**Work Cited**

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