

Football Players Should Not Be Paid By The School/College

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Introduction

Sports have a very special and prominent position in the American schools and colleges. In the American academic culture, sports form an important part of extracurricular activities, and students gladly take part in it because playing sports is considered to be cool. Many of the students who participate in these sports activities, such as basketball, football, tennis, badminton, and so on, are extremely passionate about their games. They put their heart and minds into their games and work very hard to make their team win. Some of these players are very good as well, and it often happens that they end up pursuing sports as their career in the future upon getting out of college or school. Thus, suggestions are being put forward in many schools and colleges that the players of these sports, football in particular, should start getting paid by the schools.

This topic has been debated among schools and their faculties as well as in the academia by scholars. This paper argues that paying football players for their contributions towards the school/college teams is not only wrong but also not feasible for the institution. Doing so would deplete school funds that could be spent on other academic, much more important and productive things. In many ways, it is not fair to the other students who are contributing to other extracurricular activities of the school, such as running societies, conducting and acting in dramas, and the like. Football players should, therefore, not be paid because doing that would result in a number of negative consequences that the advocates of such a debate fail to foresee. These will be discussed in the following sections of the paper.

Depleting Funds

All private and public educational institutions have a limited amount of funds available to them. Thus, schools have to devise a budget very cautiously in order to get the maximum amount of work done using the fixed amount of money that is available. Schools already need a lot of money to cater to the needs of those students who require financial aid and who deserve scholarships. If schools start paying football players, a large proportion of their funds would be diverted towards the sports department, leaving little or no money behind for financial aid and scholarship students. This would be very unfair because those students deserve to spend money on a lot more because of their educational and academic handwork and success. (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2021)

Football already takes up a substantial amount of the school's money. A lot of money has to be spent

on paying the training coach for sports activities, maintaining fields, buying equipment and uniforms for the sports teams, etc. Paying the football players along with the coach would completely drain the school funds, and there would be hardly any money left to provide other students with scholarships in any of the other school departments. It would also clearly show that the school is biased towards football and prioritizes it more than any of the other school activities. Thus, a clear disparity between football and the other school programs and activities would emerge. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all of its programs are run as best as they can to the maximum of its potential. Diverting all the funds towards just one thing would not only be wrong and unfair but also highly unprofessional. (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2021)

Spending more money on football would take away from Honor's College, leaving an extremely small budget behind for Honor's College. In Pen State, for example, there was a huge gap between the funds for Honor's College and the funds for football. The money it had available for athletics was about ten times as much as the money that it had for Honor's College. This meant that a football scholarship over there cost around \$50,000, whereas an Honor's College scholarship was only worth \$45,00 (Gaul 26). This makes it obvious that athletics and sports at Pen State were valued a lot more than academics, which gives off a very poor impression of an educational institute at the outset.

Full Ride Scholarships

Providing the sports players, especially football (because football teams are very large, comprising about eleven players) with full-ride spot scholarships is also not feasible for the schools. Again, since schools have limited funds, they have to carefully decide what percentage of it is to be given to which department. If full-ride sports scholarships were offered to football players, the other school departments would suffer. It has been estimated that a full-ride athletic scholarship would cost around \$65,000 at an institution that has a high academic and tuition fee as well (Thelin 1). (Associated Press, 2024)

This might also cause them to not be as successful as they might have been had they been provided with more funds. Students might lose debating competitions, for example, because of a lack of a good debating coach that the school couldn't afford because it didn't have enough money. The school's plays and dramas might suffer because of a lack of good, well-trained actors and because they require more money. In similar ways, all of the other school departments would end up suffering as well. (Congressional Research Service, 2024)

It has been estimated that college graduates in the United States end up repaying their college debts for about fifteen, sometimes even twenty years after graduation. Average American college graduates with about a debt of \$35,000 take multiple decades to repay the money they owe to colleges (Cote 2). An additional scholarship or financial aid program for athletics and sports would ease things for college students during their undergrad years, but it would make matters a lot worse for them after they graduate. They would find themselves trying to repay their never-ending debts, which can be

very stressful.

Educational Interference

If football players in college start getting paid by their colleges, they would become even more motivated to spend their time playing sports. These students join sports teams because they are already very passionate about the sports that they play. Giving them money for being a part of the team and starting to pay them for doing something that they already love would only make them spend a greater amount of time playing sports. This would not only physically exhaust them but would also greatly affect their academics. Oftentimes, students end up not scoring well in their exams or not getting good grades because all of their time, energy and attention are diverted towards their athletic activities. These students would end up spending even more time playing sports if their college started paying them. This is not just harmful for their academics but also for their long-term future careers.

Most of these students, despite desperately wanting to, do not and cannot pursue sports as their career. They have to end up getting jobs in the corporate sector, something for which they have to rely on their academics. If they have bad grades in their courses or a moderate GPA, they run the risk of not ending up with good, well-paying jobs. Colleges and educational institutions need to encourage and motivate students to study hard and strive for good grades, not divert their attention towards other activities that might harm their futures in the long run. Though extracurricular activities are important, and students should be encouraged to actively engage in them, they must never act as a complete replacement for academics.

Sometimes, when students spend long hours training themselves or exercising, they become physically drained and exhausted. When that happens, they get very tired and often end up missing classes. Even when they do manage to attend classes, they struggle to pay attention during the lectures and oftentimes have trouble staying awake. This is another example of how their academics and grades suffer because of their athletic lives. For this very reason, football players try to take courses that require minimal effort and study. They prefer taking courses in which they know they would easily be able to score well without studying much. They take courses based on their levels of difficulty and do not really consider or care about what and how much they will learn from it. They thus greatly deprive themselves of all the educational learning that they could receive from their courses. Very often, football players choose really easy majors that they have no interest in for the sole purpose of being easier than other majors and requiring very little effort. Such majors also do not guarantee them a secure, well-paying job in the future. Thus, again, sports make their academic and career lives suffer in the future, which is why football players should not be paid. That would cause them to ignore and disregard their academics even more.

When teachers and professors are aware that a particular student is part of the school's sports team, they are more lenient towards them. They let go of their mistakes in exams and do not ask them

questions when they fail to attend classes like they do other students. Sometimes, they might even grade their papers more leniently, giving them more marks and better grades than they deserve. This makes these sports players even more laid back because they know that they do not really need to put in much effort in courses to get grades. This so-called “privilege” comes to them at the cost of their academics, and this once again presents us with an example of students often having to choose either their athletic lives or their sports lives. There are very few students who manage to do well in both disciplines.

Acceptance To Ivy League Universities

Since sports are given so much importance in educational institutions all across the United States, sports scholarships make it easy for sports students to get into really good universities after school, sometimes even Ivy League. Students who are active in athletics during their undergraduate years thus have an advantage while applying to colleges. They manage to secure admissions in really good colleges even if they do not have good grades, GPAs and SAT scores. One might argue that this is very unfair to those students who actually study a lot and work hard to score well in courses and to get a good GPA. Since good colleges have really low acceptance rates and a limited number of seats, and since there is very tough competition among the applicants, it is very unfair to other students if those having sports scholarships are given preference. Though Ivy Leagues and other colleges of the same or similar standard should value extracurricular activities, they should not do so at the expense of academics. The hard work of academically smart students goes unnoticed and undervalued this way, and their efforts go to waste. This happens especially in those cases in which a student with a sports scholarship gets admitted into a college, whereas another one with a really good GPA and grades does not. This is also very demotivating for those who study hard because they are made to think that their efforts are not to be valued and go to waste. They lose the motivation to put effort into their studies this way.

Students with sports scholarships might think that since they can get into good colleges, they are at an advantage. What they don't realize is that once they do manage to get admission into their dream colleges, they are put into separate classrooms because of their low academic grades and scores. This acts as another intellectual barrier to their academic learning. Moreover, when they graduate and apply for jobs, they are not really preferred in the job markets because of this. It appears on their transcript that they were studying separately from other students because they were not considered to be competent enough or as smart as the other students. The companies where students apply for jobs take this factor into account and prefer those students who are supposedly smarter. Thus, it has to be emphasized once again that sports should not be prioritized too much in schools at the undergraduate level. Football players already have enough motivation to work hard and do well for their teams because of their love for the sports that they play. They do not need to be paid for their athletic contributions towards the schools.

Conclusion

Both sides of the argument regarding whether sports players in colleges should be paid or not have been discussed and examined in this essay. It has been demonstrated through multiple arguments and examples that paying football players, in the long run, would only be detrimental to their future lives and careers. The students would suffer a lot in the long term future because of not ending up with a good enough job, not being put into the same classes as other students because of being considered as not capable enough, and not being able to learn and grow intellectually as compared to the other students.

Moreover, paying football players and sportsmen of other athletic school teams is also detrimental to the schools themselves because of many different aspects of budget issues. Since school funds are very limited, schools cannot prioritize certain departments over others. This would negatively impact not only their reputation but also the workings of the schools. The overall academic performance of the school would decline, and students would excel only in sports. This is very discriminatory because those students who are not good at sports or are not interested in it would be neglected and not be paid the attention that they deserve.

To encapsulate the entire argument of the essay, it can be said that paying sports students would be harmful to them, the other students, and the school itself. Therefore, this suggestion should be completely ruled out by the school's administration.

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