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FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT-ATHLETE
CHOICE OF INSTITUTION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Edward G. Howat

May 1999

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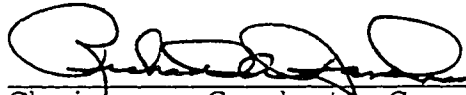
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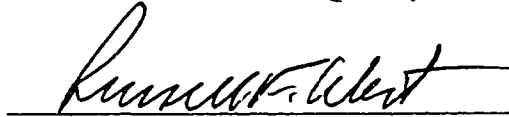
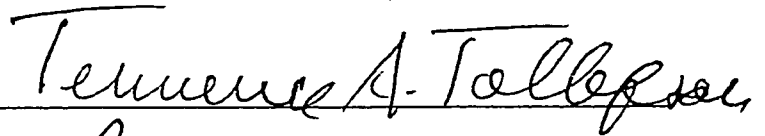
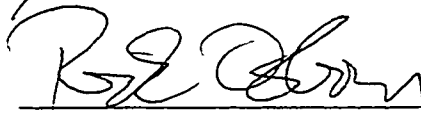
met on the

1st day of April, 1999

The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.



Chairman, Graduate Committee



Signed on behalf of
The Graduate Council



Dean, School of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT-ATHLETE

CHOICE OF INSTITUTION

By

Edward G. Howat

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influenced prospective student-athletes to attend East Tennessee State University. Using a qualitative research design, interviews were conducted with 36 freshman scholarship student-athletes. Participants represented student-athletes from each sport.

A literature review covered the history of intercollegiate athletics, the history of recruiting student-athletes, the process of recruiting student-athletes, and the decline of public perception towards intercollegiate athletics.

Results from the interviews were analyzed using inductive analysis. Patterns, themes, and categories of analysis emerged from the data. The data from the interviews were then unitized and categorized. The categorized units were used to formulate grounded theory. The computer software package QSR NUD.IST 4.0 was used for analyzing the data.

Results showed that the ETSU campus personnel were the most influential to prospective student-athletes in deciding to attend East Tennessee State University. The coaching staff at ETSU was mentioned by 27 (75%) of the interviewees. Other ETSU campus personnel were mentioned by 18 (50%) of the interviewees. Finally, current team members were mentioned by 16 (44%) of the interviewees.

Facilities located at ETSU were also influential to prospective student-athletes. The dormitories were mentioned by 16 (44%) interviewees. The recently renovated athletics weight room was mentioned by 12 (33%) interviewees. Finally, the Memorial Center was mentioned by 10 (28%) of the interviewees as being influential in the decision-making process.

Lastly, 15 (42%) of the interviewees mentioned their academic interests were best served by attending East Tennessee State University. The Quillen College of Medicine was a big factor to several interviewees. The reputation of the College of Business was important to a couple of prospective student-athletes. Also, many interviewees mentioned that the size of the university was influential to them academically.

There were eight recommendations that emerged from the study. The first is that the ETSU coaching staff should continue to be heavily involved in the recruiting process. Secondly, the coaching staff should recognize that prospective student-athletes find the people at ETSU very helpful and friendly. Prospects should meet as many people on campus as possible. The third involves the information sent to prospects in the form of letters. A series of letters should be developed to highlight the strengths of ETSU, to include: the academic strengths of ETSU, the dormitories, the coaching staff, the athletic facilities, the newly constructed library, the Tri-Cities area, the Southern Conference, the recent success of the individual athletic programs, and the strength of schedule. The fourth is scheduling official visits during times the current team members are on campus. The fifth includes scheduling tours of the athletics facilities, to include a visit to the weight room. The sixth is athletic programs that have experienced recent success should highlight this success as much as possible to prospective student-athletes. The seventh is for the coaching staffs to determine the academic interests of the prospects early in the recruiting process. The last recommendation is that all female prospects tour Luntsford Apartments during the official visits.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Kim, who provided the support and love needed to complete this project. I also dedicate this to my son, Tyler, who provided the motivation and energy to complete this degree program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many individuals who provided me with the strength and support needed to complete this project. My committee chairperson, Dr. Richard A. Manahan, provided the guidance and encouragement that helped me through the many rough times of this project. Next, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the rest of my committee members: Dr. Russell West, Dr. Terrence Tollefson, Dr. Rick Osborn, and Dr. Janice Shelton. Their many years of dedication to higher education proved to be invaluable to me throughout this degree program. They are the heart and soul of the ELPA program.

I would like to thank Mr. Mike Pitts, my peer debriefer for this project. His true interest and support of this project helped keep me motivated to complete this project. Dr. Penny Little Smith served as the auditor for this project. Her hard work to ensure the accuracy of this project provided a valuable service.

The support of the ETSU athletics department was greatly appreciated. The administration and coaching staff were extremely supportive and encouraging. The ETSU student-athletes who participated in this project were very open and honest throughout the interviewing process and I am thankful for their help. They are the heart and soul of the ETSU athletics department.

Another individual who provided a great service was my aunt, Marsha Bailey. She transcribed all 36 of the audio-taped interviews from my study. She did so without taking any remuneration. I couldn't have completed this project without your kind generosity.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, William J. and Mary Beth Howat. They have always been there for me and without their support throughout the years, I would never have had the courage to begin this degree program. I am lucky to have the best parents in the world.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate athletics has been an accepted practice in higher education since the middle 1800s. The practice of intercollegiate athletics dates from between 1820 and 1852. The first campus gymnasium was established at Harvard in 1826 (Worsnop, 1994). Harvard was also first to establish an intramural program and an intercollegiate athletics program for its students (Rooney, 1980). On August 3, 1852, the first collegiate athletic event was staged. The crew teams from Harvard and Yale competed on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire (Cady, 1978; Rooney, 1980; Worsnop, 1994).

Athletic associations began to appear in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first conference to officially organize was the Big 12 Conference. The Big 12 Conference, formerly the Big Eight was formed in 1895. The Big Ten Conference was started in 1906. The Missouri Valley Conference was formed in 1907. The Southwestern Athletic began operations in 1920. The Southern Conference opened on February 25, 1921. is the nation's fifth oldest collegiate athletic association (Southern Conference, 1999).

The sport of football in its earliest form would forever change the structure of intercollegiate athletics. The first intercollegiate football game was played between Princeton and Rutgers on November 6, 1869 (History of College Football, 1996). In the beginning, the game of

football resembled rugby, and as more teams began to play the game, the game itself began to evolve. New plays and formations introduced to the game made it more violent, resulting in more injuries and deaths of football athletes. During the period, beginning in 1895 and ending in 1912, radical changes were made that would change the game of football into what is played today. The present-day game of football resembles only in spirit the game played before 1912.

In 1905, football's major offense, the flying wedge, initiated the formation of the NCAA (NCAA, 1998). Symbolized by mass formations and gang tackling, football's rugged nature resulted in numerous injuries and deaths and prompted many institutions to ban the sport. In 1905, there were 18 players killed while playing college football (History of College Football, 1996). The number increased to 33 deaths during the 1908 campaign (History of College Football, 1996). Others urged that football be reformed or abolished from intercollegiate athletics. Many schools banned the sport of football after the 1905 season. The most notable schools to do so were: Stanford, Northwestern, Columbia, Arizona, and California.

According to the NCAA (1998), President Theodore Roosevelt summoned college athletics leaders to two White House conferences to encourage reforms. In early December 1905, Chancellor Henry M. MacCracken of New York University assembled a meeting of 13 institutions to initiate changes

in the football playing rules. At a later meeting on December 28, 1905, in New York City, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was founded by 62 members.

The IAAUS officially was constituted March 31, 1906, and took its present name (NCAA) in 1910. For several years, the NCAA was a discussion group and rules-making body. This changed in 1921, when the first NCAA national championship was held: the National Collegiate Track and Field Championships. Eventually, more championships were held and more rules committees were formed (NCAA, 1998).

Women did not play a major role in intercollegiate athletics until the inception of Title IX. In 1972, Congress passed the Educational Amendments of 1972. One section of this law, Title IX, prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded educational program, including athletics programs (Feminist Majority Foundation, 1995). Because of Title IX, schools and colleges receiving federal funds in any part of the institution are required to offer equivalent sports opportunities, equipment, and funding for women's and girls' sports. Title IX regulations apply to almost all colleges and universities, and some high schools. In addition, 12 states have state laws prohibiting sex discrimination in education, which would apply to all public education in those states. Sixteen states have constitutional measures (equal rights amendments) prohibiting sex discrimination (Feminist Majority

Foundation, 1995). However, the equal rights provisions passed before the 1970s are quite weak. Less than two dozen states have sex discrimination protection in educational programs (Feminist Majority Foundation, 1995). Title IX has provided opportunities for women to receive college athletic scholarships and thus the opportunity for higher education. Many Olympic athletes credit Title IX for the opportunity to participate in sports.

Women joined the NCAA's activities when Divisions II and III established 10 championships for the 1981-82 year. One year later, the historic 75th Convention adopted an extensive governance plan to include women's athletics programs, services, and representation. During this convention, the delegates expanded the women's championships program to include an addition of 19 events (NCAA, 1998).

What started as student-initiated athletic club teams has grown into large-scale revenue-producing teams that are tightly structured by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The coaching profession has changed tremendously since the late 1800s. Early collegiate teams were coached by student managers, whereas today's colleges are coached by professionals who are at times paid more than university presidents.

The pressures to win at the collegiate level are enormous. College coaches are expected to produce winning teams. At times, such pressure leads to a "win at all costs" attitude. Mangan (1995) states that coaches are

under more scrutiny today because of the abuses in recent years. "Coaches," she continues, "are expected not only to produce winning teams, but to make sure that their athletes are not being exploited, that they're passing their courses, and that they aren't getting into trouble with drugs and alcohol" (p. A35).

Sabock (1991, p. 167) states that, "It should be a revelation to no one that the name of the game in college coaching is recruiting." Rooney (1982) puts recruiting in a similar perspective:

And so our collegiate athletic departments have spent endless hours trying to recruit and keep student-athletes eligible for sports competition. Many of them are neither interested in nor capable of performing well in the classroom. Because of this, 73 of the 139 schools who play Division IA football have been on NCAA probation, including 42 of 62 members of the major football conferences. Two-thirds of the elite - institutions with major football programs - have been caught cheating. (p. 33)

For athletic teams to be successful, the recruitment of quality student-athletes is essential. According to Cady (1978), "Success or failure in recruiting makes or breaks not only the coach and his family but the health of the program in all its relations to the academic and other communities and the esthetics of the game" (p. 166).

Each institution is out to recruit the best student-athletes available. One or two superior athletes can help convert an average team into an extremely successful team (Foreman, 1980). Such time and resources are considered worth the expense in the recruitment of these superior

athletes. The success of collegiate teams translates into greater amounts of revenue produced for the athletic departments in the form of ticket sales, novelties, concessions, television and promotional rights.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was the assessment of factors influencing prospective student-athletes in their choice of institution. The recruitment of student-athletes is an extremely time consuming and expensive practice, yet little is known about the factors that influence prospective student-athletes in their choice of institution. According to Lisa Love, head volleyball coach at the University of Texas at Arlington (cited in Hanlon, 1988), she spends 40% of her time in recruiting activities, including evaluation of prospective student-athletes, reviewing videotapes, corresponding by mail or telephone, and traveling to watch spring and summer volleyball tournaments. Despite its apparent importance in the recruiting process, few research studies have been conducted that examine factors influencing student-athlete choice of institution.

Enormous amounts of money are spent on recruiting activities at institutions throughout the country. Table 1 shows the average recruiting and scouting budgets of institutions responding to surveys sent annually by the NCAA. The enormous amounts of money spent annually by athletic departments to recruit prospective student-athletes

7

can be attributed to the following: numerous phone calls to recruits, parents, coaches, high school guidance counselors, and alumni; travel across the country by the collegiate recruiters; travel for prospective student-athletes to visit the institution; postage for recruiting materials to be sent to prospective student-athletes, and video tapes that are sent to the coaching staffs.

Table 1
Average Annual Institutional Expenditures for
Recruiting/Scouting
(Dollar Amounts in Thousands)

	MEN	WOMEN	ADMINISTRATION	TOTAL
DIVISION I-A	292	105	7	404
DIVISION I-AA	80	35	4	119
DIVISION I-AAA	50	32	0	82
DIVISION II (FOOTBALL)	22	8	1	31
DIVISION II (NONFOOTBALL)	9	6	0	15

Source: D.L. Fulks, "Revenues and Expenses of Divisions I and II Intercollegiate Athletics Programs: Financial Trends and Relationships - 1997. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, Overland Park, Kansas, October 1998.

The costs associated with recruitment practices at the different levels of NCAA competition are modest compared to the money spent annually on athletic scholarships. Table 2 lists the scholarship budgets of institutions responding to surveys sent annually by the NCAA. The table indicates average expenditures of those institutions that responded to the survey.

With such enormous amounts of money being spent to recruit student-athletes and to finance their educations through athletic scholarships, it is important to understand why student-athletes select one institution over others. The budgets of athletic departments at most NCAA institutions are limited at best. A better understanding of the recruiting strengths of these institutions would maximize their dollars spent on recruiting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors influence prospective student-athletes to attend East Tennessee State University. This study examined the factors associated with recruiting potential student-athletes, reviewed recruiting practices, and reviewed recruiting injustices from the past, which have caused public scrutiny of intercollegiate athletics.

The results of this study will allow coaches to maximize their recruiting budgets and focus on the recruiting advantages (strengths). Coaches and

Table 2

Average Dollars Spent per Institution on Scholarships
(Dollar Amounts in Thousands)

	MEN	WOMEN	ADMINISTRATION	TOTAL
DIVISION I-A	1,830	1,056	98	2,984
DIVISION I-AA	945	586	26	1,557
DIVISION I-AAA	624	640	27	1,291
DIVISION II (FOOTBALL)	383	184	5	572
DIVISION II (NONFOOTBALL)	202	162	5	369

Source: D.L. Fulks, "Revenues and Expenses of Divisions I and II Intercollegiate Athletics Programs: Financial Trends and Relationships - 1997. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, Overland Park, Kansas, October 1998.

administrators will be able to determine which recruiting techniques most influence potential student-athletes to attend the institutions which they are employed.

Research Questions

The following are research questions formulated as a foundation for carrying out this study:

1. What institutional (school) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?

2. What personnel (coaching staff) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?
3. What team (athletic) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?
4. What personal/situational (individual) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?
5. Are there differences between male and female student-athletes in factors determining choice of institution?
6. Are there differences between student-athletes from different sports in factors determining choice of institution?
7. Are there differences between student-athletes of different ethnic backgrounds in factors determining choice of institution?

Significance of the Problem

Many factors are involved in constructing a successful collegiate athletic program. One major factor is acquiring student-athletes who can be successful in the classroom as well as on the field of competition. This study will examine those factors that influence institution choice of student-athletes. Comparisons will be made by the gender, sport, and race of the prospective student-athletes.

Recruiting is extremely time consuming and expensive. Most athletic departments annually operate at deficits throughout all divisions of the NCAA. Table 3 lists the

1993 operating deficits from all levels of the NCAA. The data are an average of all institutions that responded to the survey.

The data from Table 3 indicate that, on average, without institutional support all institutions responding to the survey operate at a deficit. This information indicates that athletic administrators and coaches need to maximize the effective use of their budgets. One way to maximize recruiting budgets is for coaches to understand why student-athletes are choosing their institutions. Such information will allow coaches and administrators to focus on the strengths of their institution, as well as to avoid the weaknesses.

Limitations

This study is limited by the following factors:

1. The data collected are limited to those student-athletes interviewed by the researcher.
2. The data collected are limited to those student-athletes who attend East Tennessee State University.
3. The respondents are limited to freshman male and female student-athletes from each sport sponsored by East Tennessee State University.
4. The respondents are limited to those freshman student-athletes who receive any type of athletic scholarship.

5. No generalizations may be made to student-athletes at other colleges and universities.

Table 3

Average Annual Athletic Department Operating Deficits
(Dollar Amounts in Thousands)

	REVENUE	EXPENSES	DIFFERENCE	EXCLUDING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT
DIVISION I-A	17,734	17,297	+437	-822
DIVISION I-AA	4,160	4,903	-743	-1962
DIVISION I-AAA	3,036	3,645	-609	-1,874
DIVISION II (FOOTBALL)	1,165	1,635	-470	-947
DIVISION II (NONFOOTBALL)	906	1,276	-370	-773

Source: D.L. Fulks, "Revenues and Expenses of Divisions I and II Intercollegiate Athletics Programs: Financial Trends and Relationships - 1997. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, Overland Park, Kansas, October 1998.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions from the 1998-99 NCAA Division I Manual (Legislative Services Staff, 1998) were used:

Recruiting: Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospect or a prospect's relatives [or legal guardian(s)] by an institutional staff member or by a representative of the institution's athletics interests for the purpose of securing the prospect's enrollment and ultimate participation in the institution's intercollegiate athletics program (p. 90).

Student-Athlete: A student-athlete is a student whose enrollment was solicited by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the student's ultimate participation in the intercollegiate athletics program. Any other student becomes a student-athlete only when the student reports for an intercollegiate squad that is under the jurisdiction of the athletics department. A student is not deemed a student-athlete solely on the basis of prior high-school athletics participation (p. 71).

Prospective Student-Athlete: A prospective student-athlete (prospect) is a student who has started classes for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospective student-athlete if the institution provides such an individual (or the individual's relatives or friends) any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective

students generally (p. 90).

Financial Aid: "Financial aid" is funds provided to student-athletes from various sources to pay or assist in paying their cost of education at the institution. As used in NCAA legislation, "financial aid" includes all institutional financial aid and other permissible financial aid (p. 180).

Basic Purpose of the NCAA: The competitive athletics programs of member institutions are designed to be a vital part of the educational system. A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports (p. 1).

The Principle Governing Recruiting: The recruiting process involves a balancing of the interests of prospective student-athletes, their educational institutions and the Association's member institutions. Recruiting regulations shall be designed to promote equity among member institutions in their recruiting of prospects and to shield them from undue pressures that may interfere with the scholastic or athletics interests of the prospects or their educational

institutions (p. 5).

Overview of the Study

Chapter one is an introduction to the study, which includes: an introduction to the recruitment of student-athletes, the statement of problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the problem, the limitations, and the definitions of terms used in the study. Chapter two is the review of literature related to the topic being investigated. Addressed in the review of literature will be the following: a historical overview of collegiate athletics and recruiting, the process used to recruit student-athletes, and a critical look at the illegal and immoral recruiting practices used by many coaches throughout the country. Chapter three includes the methodology of the study including the following: research design, population to be studied, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the results of the data analysis. Chapter five includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The recruiting of student-athletes has been a major focus of college coaches since the middle of the 1800s. Because the ultimate success of a coach depends upon his or her won/loss record, recruiting quality student-athletes is essential in obtaining such success. A prosperous collegiate athletic program requires the effective recruitment of student-athletes and coaches. Rooney (1982) states that college coaches spend countless hours trying to recruit student-athletes. In the USA Coaches Clinics Instant Review Notebook (1991), legendary DePaul University basketball coach, Ray Meyer put the pressures of recruiting in perspective:

But I don't think I could ever stay in coaching today with the pressure that they have on them, the recruiting, the winning. Every time they build a beautiful gymnasium, they must fill it. How do you fill it? You must win. How do you win? You have to recruit. It is a vicious cycle. I never worked 12 months a year like Joey does. He's out all the time looking at films, etc. I couldn't have lasted as long as I did. (p.237)

The review of literature is divided into three sections. Section one focuses on the history of recruiting student-athletes. Section two examines the process of recruiting student-athletes. Section three deals with the declining public perception of intercollegiate athletics caused by the unethical recruiting practices of many institutions across the nation.

History of Recruiting Student-Athletes

According to Rooney (1980), the recruitment of student-athletes began in the 1880s and was generally funded by the school fraternities and alumni. Sabock (1991) stated that recruiting dates back to the late 1890s when colleges initiated student-directed club teams. Only the best student-athletes were offered inducements, which consisted of employment opportunities, room, board, and other favors (Rooney, 1980). Because administrators of higher education placed little value in the learning experiences brought about by athletics, undergraduate students often were responsible for the administration of the teams (Worsnap, 1994). Insufficient institutional control meant the students often abused their duties as team and school officials to win at all costs. Team managers often recruited factories, mills, railroads, mines, and other work places. These "ringers" were not students, nor had any such relationship with the college for which they played (Cady, 1978; Rooney, 1980; Worsnap, 1994). Many were "blue-collar" workers who enjoyed their Saturday afternoons by bashing college-aged student-athletes in such athletic competition. Rooney (1980) noted that it was common for such "ringers" to play for five or six different schools during their college athletic careers. In outrageous situations, some would play for a university team on Saturday and for a professional team on Sunday (Rooney, 1980).

Administrators of higher education first allowed sports at their institutions to evolve by placing students in charge of their own programs (Worsnop, 1994). From that point athletics grew slowly up until the 1880s when professional coaches were hired and revenues were being produced. The first professional coaches spent most of their time recruiting student-athletes within the same region as the location of their institution (Bale, 1987). By the 1930s, recruiting had become national. Payments to student-athletes in the form of athletic scholarships became legal in the early 1950s. Bale (1987) stated that, "By the 1960s athletic recruiting had become a highly systematized affair designed to solve the geographical mismatch between the sources of the best high school talent and the locations of the major consuming universities (p. 5)."

Process of Recruiting Student-Athletes

According to Hoch (1991), "Almost every high school athlete who would like to play on the college level will probably be involved in some facet of the recruiting process" (p. 22). Many high school athletes and their families find the recruiting process to be overwhelming. The barrage of phone calls and mail can prove to be intimidating, especially to those who do not fully understand the recruiting process.

A high school athlete becomes a prospective student-athlete when he or she first begins classes in the ninth

grade (Legislative Services Staff, 1998). According to the NCAA (Legislative Services Staff, 1998, p. 102), "A Division I or Division II institution may not provide recruiting materials to a prospective student-athlete until September 1 at the beginning of the prospect's junior year in high school." The following are exceptions to the above rule and may be sent to prospective student-athletes prior to September 1 of their junior year in high school (Legislative Services Staff, 1998): questionnaires, NCAA Educational Information, summer camp brochures, and requests by prospects for institutional information. The NCAA Division I Manual (Legislative Services Staff, 1998, p. 94) states, "In Division I and II sports other than football and Division I basketball, telephone calls to a prospect may not be made prior to July 1 following the completion of the prospect's junior year in high school."

Institutional staff members may not make more than one phone call per week to a prospect or a prospect's relatives or legal guardians (Legislative Services Staff, 1998). Such rules were established to protect the prospects and the prospects' families from unlimited phone calls placed by countless institutions.

Once an institution receives positive feedback from a prospective student-athlete, the coaches will offer to pay for an official visit. An official visit is a visit to the institution financed in whole or in part by the institution (Legislative Services Staff, 1998). Prospective student-

athletes are limited to five official visits (Legislative Services Staff, 1998). Division I institutions may finance 56 official visits in the sport of football and 12 in the sport of basketball (Legislative Services Staff, 1998). Once the official visit is over, the prospect must decide if the institution is the best for his or her situation. The coaches at the institution must also determine if the prospect is one who fits into their future plans. If both sides agree, then a scholarship (grant-in-aid) is offered and accepted.

High school athletes and their families have several sources to draw upon to receive the proper guidance and support. High school principals, athletic directors, guidance counselors, and coaches should all possess the ability to help the prospective student-athlete answer important and vital questions necessary to make informed decisions.

Wills, Hallberg, and Gronbech (1983) listed six factors a high school coach should consider to help the school's athletes make the appropriate choice of college:

1. The athletes come first. They must be happy to be successful academically and athletically. Athletes should go to a college where they have a realistic chance of playing early in their careers.
2. Athletes need to choose a college that caters to their academic interests.

3. Athletes must decide whether to stay close to home or move away to college.
4. Athletes must decide if they can fit in socially with the college they choose. Are they financially able to attend college there?
5. Will the institution utilize the athletes' athletic ability to their potential. Do they fit into the style of the program?
6. Athletes must ultimately make the decision. (pp. 17-19).

Hoch (1991) developed a list of factors that athletes and their families should consider when choosing a college to attend. Athletes should first make a list of what they are looking for in a college. They should next analyze everything about the college. Third they should look in depth into the program of study and the anticipated major. Next, athletes should look into the support services available to all students as well as to student-athletes. Fifth, athletes should examine the expenses to attend the college. Finally, athletes should consider all of these factors and have alternatives available for each choice. Aradi (1995) maintained that the high school athlete and his or her family should take into account all of the options available to them. The prospective student-athlete and his or her family should consider all scholarship offers and reacts according to what is in their best interests.

The National Letter of Intent is the official document

administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association and used by subscribing institutions to establish the commitment of a prospect to attend a particular institution (Legislative Services Staff, 1998, p. 90). Farrell (1987) defined the National Letter of Intent as the mechanism used to keep the recruiting process orderly.

In many NCAA-sponsored sports, an early signing period is available for high school athletes. This is a period in which a prospective student-athlete may sign a National Letter of Intent early in the prospect's senior year. There are advantages and disadvantages of signing a National Letter of Intent early. The athlete and his family must carefully consider the benefits and risks of signing a National Letter of Intent early.

Carodine (1990) examined factors that influenced high school basketball athletes' decisions in determining which institutions they allowed to make home visits during the early signing period. Questionnaires were mailed to 292 male high school basketball players who signed a national letter of intent during the early signing period. Because the number of home visits is limited for each prospective student-athlete, this research is vital to coaches and athletic departments in determining what prospects and their families consider important. His research led to the following attributes in rank order:

1. High Graduation Rate
2. Regular Calls from the Head Coach

3. Opportunity to Play as a Freshman
4. Job Placement Services
5. Head Coach's Reputation
6. Facilities
7. Intended Degree Program Offered
8. Athletic Academic Counseling
9. Length of Contact
10. Handwritten Letters from the Head Coach
11. Handwritten Letters from Assistant Coaches
12. Letters from Athletic Academic Counselors
13. Regular Phone Calls from Assistant Coaches
14. Basketball Tradition
15. Winning Record
16. Conference Affiliation
17. Participation in Post-Season Tournaments
18. Television Exposure
19. Home Attendance
20. Distance from Home
21. Typed Letters from Assistant Coaches
22. Players in Professional Ranks
23. Friend Attends the University
24. Friend Playing at the University (p. 30)

From these results, Carodine (1990) made three recommendations. The first was that coaches should evaluate their programs to determine the strengths and weaknesses. Once coaches fully understand their program, they can determine how to maximize their efforts in the recruiting

process. The second recommendation was that coaches should examine the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions they are recruiting against. Improved recruiting strategies can be obtained when coaches better understand the institutions they are recruiting against. The third recommendation was for coaches to consider the demographic profiles of the high school athletes they are recruiting. This will allow coaches the opportunity to develop recruiting strategies to use for specific groups of athletes being recruiting.

A study by Foreman (1980) examined student-athletes' perceptions of factors influencing their choice of university. In this study, Foreman sent questionnaires to 769 football and male basketball student-athletes of whom 490 responded. The following are the three research questions examined in this study:

1. What are the methods used by selected colleges and universities to recruit male football and basketball players?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the recruiting procedures with regard to the success of the universities won/loss record over the past five years?
3. What factors, if any, in the recruitment process, appear to be related to the athlete's choice of the selected institution?

The major results and conclusions of the study are listed below:

1. The academic reputation of the university was explained in detail to 81% of the basketball student-athletes and 66% of the football student-athletes by the recruiter. (p. 108)
2. The first recruitment of the student-athletes occurred during the last two years of high school. (p. 109)
3. Seventy percent of the student-athletes were recruited directly by the coaching staff. The remaining percentages were distributed evenly among alumni, players, and others. (p. 109)
4. The won/lost record of the university had a major influence in choice of institution. (p. 112)
5. Recruiters who emphasized the school's prestige were more successful in gaining the recruited student-athlete. (p. 111-12)
6. Receiving an athletic scholarship most influenced the student-athletes in their choice of institution. (p. 112)

In 1993 the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) developed a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee consisting of athletes at institutions from across the nation in all sports officially sponsored by the NCAA. The committee was designed to provide input to NCAA officials. Since most NCAA legislation directly affects the student-

athlete, their input was deemed important. One task of the committee was to prepare a list of questions prospective student-athletes should ask college recruiters throughout the recruiting process (Herman, 1998, pp. 15-16):

1. What positions will I play on your team?
2. Describe the other players competing at the same position.
3. Can I "redshirt" my first year?
4. What are the physical requirements each year?
5. How would you best describe your coaching style?
6. What is your game plan?
7. When does the head coach's contract end?
8. Describe the preferred, invited, and uninvited walk-on situation. How many make it, compete, and earn a scholarship?
9. How good is the department in my major?
10. What percent of players on scholarship graduate in four years?
11. Describe the typical class size.
12. Describe in detail your academic support program. For example: Study-hall requirements, tutor availability, staff, class load, faculty cooperation.
13. Describe the typical day for a student-athlete.
14. What are your residence halls like?
15. Will I be required to live on campus throughout my athletics participation?

16. How much financial aid is available for summer school?
17. What are the details of financial aid at your institution?
18. How long does my scholarship last?
19. If I'm injured, what happens to my financial aid?
20. What are the opportunities for employment while I'm a student?

Marshall (1985) identified five characteristics that college recruiters look for in a prospective student-athlete. The first is that the recruit has been a part of a winning high school program. Athletes who have experienced playing in winning programs are likely to continue in the success throughout their college careers. The second characteristic is the mental toughness of the recruit. Athletes who are mentally tough are better competitors and less likely to quit in trying situations. The third attribute is the academic potential of the recruit. Coaches and universities are being held accountable for the academic status of their student-athletes. Having student-athletes who graduate enhances the attractiveness of the program and university. The fourth is the athletic capacity of the recruit. The coaches need to determine the status of their current players, and what type of athletes they need to recruit for the coming year. Coaches must ask, "Do we need student-athletes to compete right away or can we take a chance on a student-athlete with the potential to be a great

player?" The fifth concern is whether the recruit will "fit in" with the current team members. A coach needs the input from current team members to determine if a recruit will "fit into" the program. Cady (1978) explained the responsibility of coaches in the recruiting process as:

You recruit "futures," guessing whose play will mesh best with that of others; how a youth will perform when he has become a man; how personalities and backgrounds will fit into the family, match the student body, produce happy, effective seniors; who may become leaders; whether a youth can survive academically, socially, psychically. You figure the odds on everybody, knowing that you will at best get only part of your ideal list, knowing you will make mistakes. (p. 167)

Floretta Crabtree, head volleyball coach at Eastern Connecticut State University, described recruiting (in Wikgren, 1988) in the following terms:

The reputation of the university is very important. Do your athletes graduate? Is there follow-up? Do your athletes get jobs after they graduate? These are all important questions that a recruit wants answered. Our number-one concern when recruiting is fitting the individual academically to the school. We look at an athlete's SAT score and what the athlete wants in terms of a major, size of school, environment, and housing. Being a smaller school, we can offer individual attention that may not be available at the Division I schools, which is to our advantage. (p. 9)

Decline of Public Perception

Intercollegiate athletics are in a precarious position within higher education institutions. By far, athletics draws the most attention to universities throughout the country, and receives the most media attention. Yet, most

negative attention regarding higher education focuses primarily on intercollegiate athletics. According to Rooney (1982), "Nationwide recruiting by most institutions is a costly, laborious, frustrating, sometimes dishonest, and always wasteful practice. It is a necessary evil to the maintenance of our intercollegiate sports system" (p. 33).

True critics of intercollegiate athletics view awarding of financial aid based on athletic merit against the mission of higher education (Lederman, 1993; Rooney, 1982). The NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers) Report, in Lederman (1993), states:

An important consideration for university leaders in regard to athletic recruitment costs is the return on this investment to the institution's academic reputation. If the institution views its academic reputation as central to its mission, it must ask whether it makes sense to spend vastly more money recruiting athletes than academically talented students or students with other talents and characteristics desired by the university. In the long term, will the institution's reputation benefit more from producing professional athletes or producing future scientists, doctors, teachers, and civic leaders? (p. 31)

Adversaries of athletic scholarships indicate that students are sent the wrong message by rewarding athletic achievement over academic achievement (Lederman, 1994). He states that in 1993, of the schools that finished in the Top 10 football poll and Top 10 pre-season basketball poll, eleven spent more money on athletic scholarships than merit-based scholarships. Eight gave more merit-based scholarships than athletic scholarships, and one reportedly could not accurately separate the figures.

Athletic officials agree that it is unfair to compare athletic scholarships with merit-based scholarships because athletic scholarships are funded through revenue generated by the athletic department (Lederman, 1994). These officials claim that this money would not be used to fund merit-based scholarships if not used towards athletic scholarships. Proponents claim that many athletic scholarships help students who would qualify for need-based financial aid. Supporters of athletic scholarships indicate such awards bring a diverse group of students to campus, and provide higher education to some who otherwise could not afford an opportunity (Lederman, 1994).

Thelin and Wiseman (1989) summarized athletics' effect on public trust in higher education:

The national publicity associated with scandal at a handful of universities with big-time varsity sports programs has a disproportionate influence on public images and opinions of all colleges and universities. The media attention afforded big games and big scandals dominates and distorts the popular image of what American higher education is all about. The most serious concern is that flagrant, sustained abuses in college sports programs lead to the erosion of public faith in institutions of higher education. (p. 3)

There are many ethical concerns about intercollegiate athletics. Should colleges actively recruit, subsidize, and separate student-athletes from the general student body, place them in useless curriculums, and contribute to the hypocritical system of intercollegiate athletics (Rooney, 1982). Bale (1987) stated: "Recruiting per se is highly controversial and regarded by many observers as the bane of

college sports. It is generally regarded as the biggest problem in college sports (pp. 5, 13)." He continued:

Recruiting is an obscene, indecent, and disgusting process that demeans coaches and humiliates schools. Most criticism of athletic recruiting within the United States focuses upon football and basketball, but such abuses undoubtedly also apply to the non-revenue sports and to foreign recruiting. (p. 12)

It is impossible to estimate the amount of cheating that occurs in intercollegiate athletics. Recruiting practices deemed illegal by NCAA bylaws and regulations have been commonplace since the days of the non-student "ringers." Cheating will occur as long as high, and often impossible, demands continue to be placed on the college coaches. Only when the coaches whose primary duty is to graduate student-athletes are seen as educators first by alumni and boosters will such pressures disappear. The alumni and boosters must be educated to the mission and primary purpose of the athletics department.

Summary

Limited research has been conducted concerning the recruiting practices of collegiate coaches. The review of literature has expressed the many viewpoints of recruiting student-athletes. The literature examined the history of recruiting, the process of recruiting, and the negative public perceptions caused by illegal recruiting. The recruitment of quality student-athletes is essential to the success of each university that sponsors intercollegiate

athletics. Coaches and athletic administrators must examine why student-athletes are choosing to attend their institutions.

CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence choice of institution made by student-athletes. This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology utilized in this study. It includes the research setting, research design, participants, collection of data, and the analysis of the data.

The Research Setting

Johnson City, Tennessee, home of East Tennessee State University, is located in the Tri-Cities Tennessee/Virginia region, an area of natural beauty and rich history (ETSU, 1999). Johnson City, with a population exceeding 50,000, is located close to the state lines of Virginia and North Carolina. It is a part of the nation's 80th largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (ETSU, 1999).

Founded in 1911, East Tennessee State University (ETSU) is a state-supported, coeducational institution and one of the principal campuses governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. With an enrollment of almost 12,000 students, the university offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs.

According to the East Tennessee State University Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs (1997), the profile of the typical (majority) ETSU student is as

follows: white, unmarried, female, living in-state. The typical ETSU student prefers morning classes and plans to study 18 or fewer hours per week. During the 1996 orientation sessions, the Entering Student Survey (ESS) was administered to 1,825 new ETSU students. The ESS is an instrument that provides user norms so ETSU responses can be compared with national norms. One question on the survey considered the reasons new students chose to attend ETSU. The top six reasons reported as being very important in the decision making process were: location of the college (58%), availability of a particular program of study (57%), cost of attending college (42%), availability of financial aid or scholarship (42%), variety of courses offered (38%), and academic reputation of the college (38%). The following information also came from the EES survey: ETSU enrolls more transfer students than national norms, ETSU students come from smaller high schools than national norms, ETSU students have other priorities in their lives (work, children, family), and ETSU students decide to attend college in their senior year of high school or later than national norms.

East Tennessee State University first began intercollegiate competition in 1911-1912 (Kessler, 1990, p. 193). According to Williams (1991), intercollegiate athletics at East Tennessee State Normal School developed in the form of an intramural program. The better players on the intramural teams were chosen to represent the school in

competition against local high schools and colleges. In 1920, the school's first football team was formed. Sidney Gordon Gilbreath, ETSU's first president, was initially against big time athletics and against subsidizing student-athletes from the beginning of sports competition at ETSNS. He wanted no "professionalism" in athletics and stressed that only regularly enrolled students with acceptable grades could represent the school in athletic competition. By 1924, Gilbreath was able to see the advantages of intercollegiate athletics and the benefits that student-athletes received by participating. As a teacher's college, providing intercollegiate athletics would better prepare those student-athletes in the teaching profession for additional duties as coaches, and would increase the student-athlete's ability to earn extra income from coaching. Scholarships were not provided to student-athletes at this time, but they were given opportunities for employment on the campus as compensation.

In 1929, East Tennessee State Teachers College accepted membership into the Smoky Mountain Conference. Other members included: Emory & Henry, King, Milligan, Tusculum, Carson-Newman, and Maryville. Dr. Charles C. Sherrod, ETSU's second president, accepted the conference membership with stipulations that the rules and regulations established by the conference were upheld by the other member institutions. In the late 1930s, Sherrod and the presidents from Emory & Henry and Maryville, all disappointed with

other members of the Smokey Mountain Conference and how they operated their athletic departments, began discussions on forming a new conference. The new conference would be based on student-athletes playing strictly as amateurs. No scholarships would be awarded. ETSTC did withdraw from the conference and operated with no conference affiliation until 1949. At this time, Smokey Mountain Conference officials pleaded with East Tennessee State College to return to the conference. ETSC did renew their membership into the Smoky Mountain Conference with the understanding that all schools would operate under strict guidelines. In 1952, ETSC again withdrew from the SMC and joined the Volunteer State Athletic Conference. During the 1950s, the desire for membership into a larger conference led to ETSC withdrawing from the VSAC and joining the Ohio Valley Conference. In 1978, East Tennessee State University again changed conference affiliations by joining the Southern Conference.

Today, the East Tennessee State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics sponsors the following 16 varsity sports:

- Baseball
- Men's Basketball
- Women's Basketball
- Men's Cross Country
- Women's Cross Country
- Football
- Men's Golf

- Women's Golf
- Women's Soccer
- Men's Indoor Track and Field
- Women's Indoor Track and Field
- Men's Tennis
- Women's Tennis
- Men's Outdoor Track and Field
- Women's Outdoor Track and Field
- Volleyball

The total number of student-athletes receiving athletic grants-in-aid for the 1997-98 academic year was 208.

The ETSU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is a Division I member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Southern Conference. On February 25, 1921 at a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, the Southern Conference was established (Southern Conference, 1999).

The Southern Conference was formed by 14 institutions from the 30-member Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA). The charter members of the Southern Conference included: Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi State, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Tennessee, Virginia, Virginia Tech, and Washington & Lee. In the fall of 1921, athletic competition began in the Southern Conference. In 1922, seven more schools - Florida, Louisiana State, Mississippi, South Carolina, the University of the South, Tulane, and Vanderbilt - joined the Southern Conference

(Southern Conference, 1999).

Since the inception of the Southern Conference, membership has experienced a series of changes with 41 institutions being affiliated with the league. There have been two significant transitions in the conference during its history (Southern Conference, 1999).

In December 1932, the first transition occurred when the Southeastern Conference was formed out of the 23-school Southern Conference. Because of the geographical size of the league, 13 members west and south of the Appalachian Mountains reorganized to help reduce the excessive travel demands that were present in the league at that time (Southern Conference, 1999).

In 1953, the second major shift happened when Clemson, Duke, Maryland, North Carolina, North Carolina State, South Carolina, and Wake Forest officially withdrew from the conference to form the Atlantic Coast Conference. This change was brought about due to the desire of many of those schools to schedule a greater number of regular season basketball games against their local rivals (Southern Conference, 1999).

In 1983, the Southern Conference sponsored the first three women's championships: basketball, tennis, and volleyball. In 1985, the conference added the women's cross-country championship. In 1988, the indoor and outdoor championships were added to women's athletics. Since then, women's sports have expanded with the additions of golf,

soccer, and softball in 1994.

In December 1995, three additions were approved - College of Charleston, UNC Greensboro, and Wofford. UNC Greensboro and Wofford began competing in the league in 1997-98 and College of Charleston began competition at the beginning of the 1998-99 season. Today, the Southern Conference continues to thrive with a membership that spans five southeastern states. Present day members are: Appalachian State, College of Charleston, The Citadel, Davidson, East Tennessee State, Furman, Georgia Southern, UNC Greensboro, Chattanooga, Virginia Military Institute, Western Carolina, and Wofford.

East Tennessee State University's football program operates as a member of the NCAA Division I-AA. In 1973, the Association's membership was divided into three legislative and competitive divisions at the first special convention ever held (NCAA, 1998). In 1978, Division I members voted to create subdivisions I-A and I-AA in the sport of football (NCAA, 1998).

Sampling

The researcher had a strong desire to explore why student-athletes are choosing to attend East Tennessee State University over other institutions. Results should facilitate the recruiting efforts of all ETSU coaching staff members. The data will help maximize recruiting resources by allowing coaches the focus on the major reasons why the

student-athletes are choosing to enroll at ETSU.

All 1997-98 freshman scholarship student-athletes were interviewed from each athletic team at East Tennessee State University. There were 47 freshman student-athletes receiving athletic grants-in-aid. The following is the breakdown of the number of scholarship, freshman student-athletes by team: baseball (3), men's basketball (2), women's basketball (3), football (19), men's golf (2), women's golf (3), women's soccer (3), men's tennis (2), women's tennis (3), men's track and cross country (3), women's track and cross country (2), and volleyball (2). The researcher gained permission from each freshman student-athlete through the process of informed consent. Seidman (1991) defined the process of informed consent as being explicit about the range and purpose of the study. Providing as much information as possible to the research participants prior to the study will help protect the participants and the researcher. A copy of the informed consent form was provided to each research participant so that his or her role in the study was readily available (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This sample was chosen to maximize variation of data between gender and all sports sponsored by East Tennessee State University. Freshman student-athletes were chosen because the recruiting process is most current to them.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Bryman (1988, p. 1) stated, "Qualitative research tends to be associated with participant observation and unstructured, in-depth interviewing." Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) defined qualitative research as:

Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction. (p. 767)

Bryman (1988) described qualitative research as a commitment to viewing events, action, norms, and values from the perspective of the individuals being studied. Patton (1990) defined the qualitative research approach as being flexible, understanding, and committed to many valid perspectives, as opposed to the quantitative research approach which he describes as being standardized, generalized, and committed to a single truth.

A case study was used in this study. Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe case studies as descriptive in nature, and the results of case studies form a true understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Merriam (1988) defined case study research as a comprehensive study of a phenomenon and from the perspective of the individuals involved within the phenomenon. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) determined that,

"researchers generally do case studies for one of three purposes: to produce detailed descriptions of a phenomenon, to develop possible explanations of it, or to evaluate the phenomenon" (p. 549).

Procedures

A list of all 1997-98 freshman student-athletes was obtained from the Associate Director of Athletics for Internal Operations at East Tennessee State University. After obtaining the list of the scholarship freshman student-athletes, individual interviews were conducted to gather the necessary data. The questions were open-ended and semi-structured to allow the researcher flexibility to probe further into answers given by student-athletes. After each interview, the researcher evaluated the interview process to determine if changes were needed to enhance the responses of future respondents.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended selecting a unit of the sample only after the previous unit has been interviewed and the data analyzed. They defined this procedure as "serially" analyzing the data. The initial interview provided the framework to refine the interviewing process. Patton (1990) explains that at the conclusion of each interview is a critical time for the researcher to guarantee the data collected will be of value to the study. He went on to explain it as a time to guarantee the reliability and validity of the data. The analysis process from the

previous data was initiated prior to the next interview. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "each successive unit can be chosen to extend information already obtained, to obtain other information that contrasts with it, or to fill in gaps in the information obtained so far" (p. 201).

Questions were focused around the following factors that influence student-athlete choice of institution: (1) institutional factors, (2) personnel factors, (3) team factors, and (4) personal and situational factors. Each interview was audio-taped and then transcribed by an independent party.

Data Collection

The researcher gained the permission to conduct the research by the ETSU Institutional Review Board. Permission to conduct the research was also granted by the ETSU Director of Athletics.

The collection of data was conducted through in-depth interviews designed to address institutional, personnel, team, and personal and situational factors that influence the student-athletes' choice of institution. Through the interview process, more pertinent information was gathered by probing areas that were relevant to each individual student-athlete.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) described qualitative in-depth interviews as being a conversation more than a formal event with structured questions. General topics are

explored to help uncover the participant's perspective of ⁴⁴ the phenomenon being studied. Patton (1990) explained the general interview guide as a process that provides the researcher with a common set of topics to collect the data without determining the sequence of the interview questions. Marshall and Rossman (1995) stated that an interview is an effective way of gathering large amounts of information in a short period of time.

Validity and Reliability

Rudestam and Newton (1992) defined internal validity as the credibility or truth value. They defined external validity as the generalizability of the results. Triangulation methods were used to ensure validity of the data being collected. To ensure the validity of this research project a peer debriefer was used. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the peer debriefer should be selected by using five criteria. The peer debriefer should be familiar with the topic and methodology being used. The peer debriefer should be in the same age range as the researcher, not an authority figure, should be serious about the role of peer debriefer, and should be willing to record all communication with the researcher throughout the study. Mike Pitts, ETSU Director of Admissions, served as the peer debriefer. Mr. Pitts has been employed at East Tennessee State University for 23 years. Due to his position as Director of Admissions, Mr. Pitts has a genuine interest in

the results of this study.

Merriam (1988) defined reliability as the replication of the study under similar circumstances. Will duplication of the research yield the same results? Lincoln and Guba (1985) preferred to substitute the term dependability for reliability. The researcher established reliability by the use of an inquiry audit. An audit trail, as defined by Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996, p. 754), is the process of documenting the materials and procedures used in each phase of a study. To confirm the accuracy of the data, an independent auditor was used to verify the accuracy of the data. The auditor examined the research methodology and results from interviews to confirm the results of the study. Dr. Penny Little Smith conducted the audit for this research project.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by a method known as inductive analysis. Patton (1990) defined inductive analysis as:

Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis. The analyst looks for natural variation in the data. (p. 390)

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher recorded notes and comments in a journal concerning individual interviews. The transcribed interviews were used to begin the process of unitizing the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985)

define units as:

single pieces of information that stand by themselves, that is, that are interpretable in the absence of any additional information. A unit may be a simple sentence or an extended paragraph, but, in either case, the test of its unitary character is that if any portion of the unit were removed, the remainder would be seriously compromised or rendered uninterpretable. (p. 203)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated the next process involves the categorization of the units. They went on to define categorization as sorting the units into categories that have similar characteristics. By categorizing the units, the researcher was able to formulate grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Glaser and Strauss (1967) defined grounded theory as one that will:

fit the situation being researched, and work when put to use. By "fit" we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by "work" we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study. (p. 3)

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using the computer software package called QSR NUD.IST 4.0 (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theory-building). Such software analysis allowed for the data to be coded and categorized.

Summary

The study was conducted in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at East Tennessee State University. Due to the nature of the research, a qualitative method was used. Participants included incoming

1997-98 freshman, scholarship student-athletes at ETSU.

Data collected from the initial interviews were used to build the interview guide. The data were analyzed by using inductive analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Validity was achieved through triangulation and a peer debriefer. Reliability was achieved through the use of an inquiry audit.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The results from the interviews are presented in this chapter. Section one describes the interviewees. Section two addresses the findings of the interviews.

Interviewees

There were 47 freshman student-athletes who received athletic grants-in-aid for the 1997-98 academic year. Of the 47 student-athletes, 36 granted permission to be interviewed.

The 36 (20 males and 16 females) who granted permission to be interviewed were from 11 different states and four foreign countries. The following is the breakdown of the different states and countries:

STATE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Tennessee	7	19.44%
South Carolina	7	19.44%
Virginia	4	11.11%
North Carolina	3	8.33%
Argentina	2	5.56%
Florida	2	5.56%
Georgia	2	5.56%
West Virginia	2	5.56%
Delaware	1	2.78%
Louisiana	1	2.78%
Mexico	1	2.78%
Mississippi	1	2.78%
New York	1	2.78%
Scotland	1	2.78%
Venezuela	1	2.78%

The breakdown for the interviewees of in-state versus out-of-state scholarship student-athletes is as follows: in-state scholarship prospects (19.4%) and out-of-state scholarship prospects (80.6%). The breakdown for all in-state versus out-of-state scholarship student-athletes for the entire ETSU athletics department is as follows: in-state scholarship student-athletes (28.2%) and out-of-state scholarship student-athletes (71.8%).

The ethnicity of the 36 interviewees was broken down as follows: 22 White (61%), 9 Black (25%), and 5 Hispanic (14%). The ethnicity of all scholarship student-athletes in the athletics department is as follows: 135 White (64.6%), 62 Black (29.7%), and 12 Hispanic (5.7%).

Interview Results

The findings of the interviews are presented in this section. All factors identified as being influential to the interviewees will be addressed. The research questions presented in Chapter 1 were used to structure the presentation of the findings.

Research Question One

What institutional (school) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?

The interviewees identified three institutional factors that were influential in their decision to attend East Tennessee State University. The three categories are non-

athletic facilities, the ETSU campus, and academics.

Non-Athletic Facilities

The non-athletic facilities on the campus of East Tennessee State University were identified on 17 different occasions during the interviewing process. These comments were divided into two subcategories: dormitories and the Culp Center.

Dorms. The dormitories were considered important to the decision process by 16 interviewees, 10 females and 6 males. The dormitories used by female and male student-athletes are apartment-style dormitories. Each unit contains a kitchenette with stove and a refrigerator, and a private bathroom. Scholarships that cover room by the ETSU athletics department provide for a double-occupancy room. Each scholarship student-athlete has a roommate unless the student-athlete pays the remainder of the cost for a private room.

The majority of female student-athletes stay in Luntsford Apartments. The female interviewees made many comments on the importance of Luntsford Apartments. One female student-athlete stated:

I think that had a big factor on me coming here, too, because I liked it. Like, you know, it's good to have like your own like kitchen area, your own bathroom, you know. A little apartment.

Another female student-athlete reported the following:

Yes. I'm in Lunsford Apartments. That was another thing, when they showed me Lunsford, I had never--I had

never seen a dorm room so big and I, I loved it. And Coach had told me, you know, she said, "Well, just when I come see you play, to play hard, so you can try to get in these dorms." I love Lunsford. It's great.

When compared to other dorms that the female student-athletes visited on other campus visits, Luntsford Apartments were considered bigger and nicer. One student-athlete made the following comparison:

Yeah, that was--that was a--that was a really big thing. The dorms at the other universities, even for athletes, weren't that nice. But I was really impressed with the dorms here for athletes. That was a big deal.

Also, another student-athlete who visited other institutions made this comparison:

It was--it was awesome. I mean, that was a really, really big thing, too, coming home and talking to my other friends that went on recruiting trips of volleyball--just the fact that we have a bathroom and a kitchen in our room is...

The following female interviewee indicated that the kitchenette was important, especially as a student-athlete. Many student-athletes have special diets. The advantage of a kitchenette was deemed important:

And these--the dorms, that was another thing, they were--because they had the kitchen and your own bathroom, you know. And especially for an athlete, so you can cook your own meals every once in a while.

The majority of male student-athletes stay in Davis Apartments. When compared to the other male dorms on campus, Davis Apartments are the most requested. The following are comments made by the male student-athletes who stated that Davis Apartments were important in their decision to attend ETSU. The first student-athlete

explained:

It was very much a deciding factor for me, 'cause on the, 'cause I've stayed in dorms before 'cause my high school had dorms and we'd have to stay in there during football camp, and it being so small, not having anywhere to go, 'cause I know you--that's where you spend almost of your time, is in your dorm, and if it's someplace where it's small and you feel cramped up, you're not going to want to be in there, that's not going to help me study any, and, you know, I'd heard that, you know, Coach Campbell and Coach Cloud basically told me when we came that it was about twice the size of a regular dorm and had a kitchen and a sink and a bathroom, and so we talked about that, too, and that was going to help us out financially, because that way I could get a small meal plan and then I could maybe cook some of my own meals and have stuff in the refrigerator and that was going to help out a lot, too.

Another student-athlete continued:

Yeah, it was a benefit of making the decision to know that the room were a lot bigger, had a little kitchen that I could make food in, or anything of that, and had a private bath. That would have been a big thing, too, not to share a bathroom with ten other guys, so I had--actually I had a little bit of space to get up and walk around inside the room, so, you know, that was a big thing, too.

One male student-athlete indicated that Davis Apartments were not the deciding factor in his deciding to attend ETSU, but he did state that Davis Apartments were an incentive and a benefit of choosing to attend ETSU. The following are his comments:

Yeah, it's, from what I'd seen on all my friends that went to college, they were surprised. I guess they're really nice with having a little kitchen and having your own bathroom and shower, 'cause most of my friends are saying how lucky I am, 'cause they, you know, the whole floor has to share a bathroom and a shower. Some of them don't have kitchens, so that was nice to know that.

Another student-athlete noted the following:

Yeah, it was real impress--I was impressed. You had your own shower, you had every--I mean, you had all your necessities and, and it was--it was a lot bigger than I usually--you know, original dorms. I was really impressed by that aspect.

Culp Center. The Culp Center was mentioned as important in the decision making process by one interviewee. The Culp Center is the student center at ETSU. The Culp Center houses all of the dining facilities, the only campus bookstore, the post office, the largest computer lab on campus, a game room, and the Office of Student Affairs. With these services provided in one building, most ETSU students, especially those who reside on campus, find a need to enter the Culp Center at least on one occasion per day classes are in session.

The student-athlete who mentioned the Culp Center liked the fact that most student services were located in one facility. He stated:

Yes, when I saw like, like the Colt (Culp) Center, I was like, yeah, this is a nice place, because you got, you could eat, then you could just go downstairs and work on computers, you have everything, you know, that you need right there, you've got your store and everything.

These three buildings, Davis Apartments, Luntsford Apartments, and the Culp Center, were influential to the decision-making process of 17 prospects.

ETSU Campus

The ETSU campus located in Johnson City, Tennessee was mentioned during six interviews. The ETSU campus category

is subdivided into two categories: the location and the cleanliness of the campus.

Location. Four student-athletes discussed the location of the ETSU campus as being important in the decision making process. Distance from home was a deciding factor for two student-athletes. One student-athlete stated, "I just thought it was beautiful. It was, you know, a perfect distance from home, it was just--I loved it. It was like I came here and I thought, this is the one."

Cleanliness of ETSU Campus. One student-athlete noticed the beauty of the ETSU campus. He stated, "I guess the campus is, you know, the campus is clean and you see flowers, and they keep the grass neat and I think that's another point that recruits might like,..."

Academics

Fifteen of the student-athletes mentioned that academics were a major reason for choosing to attend East Tennessee State University. Five of the student-athletes were drawn to ETSU because of the James H. Quillen College of Medicine. One student-athlete stated:

Well, when I made the visit, a lot--I noticed the academic side a lot, because it has a pre-med program, which I'm kinda wanting to go into, even though I'm undecided, I still have basic ideas pretty much what I want to do.

Another comment concerning the Quillen College of Medicine included:

The fact that I'm undeclared right now is, is really not that important. I've been thinking about going into pre-med because I know that ETSU has a good medical program, and that's one--that's also another reason I came here.

Another student-athlete indicated the importance of the medical school as a deciding factor, "Well, another decision that helped me come to ETSU is the medical school here, because I've been thinking about going to med school after my four years and I was really impressed with that..."

Finally, another student-athlete compared the medical school at ETSU with another institution that was recruiting her:

Yeah, that was definitely a big thing, because I knew it would be easier to get into med school if I went to East Tennessee. I don't know--I think West Virginia has a, a med school, too, but it was a big thing for it to have a med school here. It was important.

One interviewee was impressed with the ETSU College of Business. He explained:

It played a big part, because I'm know I'm not going to make basketball my whole life, so I had to do something else with my life, so I liked the business school and I'm trying to major in Economics, obviously, so--it was a good bit.

NCAA Bylaws require that all institutions share with each prospect their graduation rates from the previous year. One interviewee was impressed with the ETSU graduation rate once it was shared with him. He indicated:

Yeah, 'cause he told me that it was like the most, they graduate the most student athletes, something like that, they got a good percentage, so that was--you know they really trying to graduate, you know, athletes 'cause you got like a bad thing, you know that athlete is one dimensional, you know.

One student-athlete, who is dyslexic, met with individuals from the ETSU Office of Student Disabilities on his unofficial visit. It was important for him to attend a university where he could receive help for his disability. He noted:

The coaching staff and the professors are outstanding, I think, in my opinion, because you know that, you know you can go to them for help and everything, and they'll help you on a one to one basis. See, I'm dyslexic so, I get, you know, the facility down here is outstanding, helps me out a lot, and the coaching staff is really good.

Several other interviewees said the size of East Tennessee State University was right for them. With just under 12,000 students, ETSU was viewed by one student-athlete as being an ideal size for what he was looking for in a university. His comment was, "It was like in the middle of what I really wanted. It wasn't too big and it wasn't too small, and it was just a friendly environment when I came up here." Another student-athlete liked the social life that a big campus provides. In narrowing down her collegiate choice, she expressed the desire to attend a larger university. She explained:

I had applied to so many schools and I hadn't narrowed it down to many by the time she contacted me. I started to narrow it down, but I just needed something to just completely, you know, throw me off, and I would do anything to go, you know, just to find something that would just grab my attention and make me go there, you know. I just needed something to just help me decide and any recruiting, any official visits that I could have taken, I would have gone on. And it was the bigger school, because the schools that I had narrowed it down to were Barton and Charleston-Southern and they were both really small schools and I'm more kind of a

social person, so I guess the bigger school kinda turned me on, too, so--for a visit.

Research Question Two

What personnel (coaching staff) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?

The interviewees identified two personnel areas that were influential in their decision to attend East Tennessee State University. The two categories are ETSU campus personnel and athletic team personnel. Of the questions asked during the interviews, the area of personnel received the most comments. A total of 64 comments that were related to ETSU personnel were received during the interviews.

ETSU Campus Personnel

Many of the interviewees stated the people at East Tennessee State University are very friendly and willing to help them. Eighteen interviewees mentioned this at one point during the interviews.

The following are comments concerning the friendliness of ETSU's campus. One student-athlete stated, "Yeah, 'cause, like everywhere you go, you know, like all the people are nice around here and we went and looked at a car and everybody just knew about football around here and it was nice." Another student-athlete added, "Like when I first come up just to be coming up here, I mean, people just, you can just walk up to anybody and start talking to them and everybody seems so friendly." The individuals he

met during his official visit to ETSU influenced the next interviewee. He noted:

I seen how everybody, you know, was nice and things. The Athletic Director, Mr. Frye (phonetic). All these people like, you know, they're who really, you know, mostly influenced me to come, how people, how nice they were, you know.

Two student-athletes compared the friendliness of the South to that of the North. The first stated:

I guess the whole friendliness of the South--the, the South and North are completely different and just coming down here from the North, I mean everyone was friendly, and the whole campus just seemed so alive, always like up and friendly and everyone knew like Coach Andrews was on such a pedestal, it seemed to me, to everyone here, and that just made me feel like...

The second student-athlete said, "The people were really nice, I guess somewhat of a southern hospitality, as opposed to up north."

Other interviewees felt the people at ETSU are very helpful. One interviewee explained, "I just liked how, how everyone's so welcoming here and were just really helpful to me and helped me out." Another interviewee added, "Because I found the people here like really nice. The administration, everybody was really willing to help me and stuff." Finally, one interviewee noted:

Well, another thing, when--I came twice, actually. The second time my mom and dad came and we couldn't get over the fact about how nice everybody was. Everybody we talked to, everybody we met would go out of their way. If we had a question, they wouldn't just say, "Oh, yeah, over there," I mean they stopped, they'd introduce themselves, they went out of their way to accommodate us and, you know, to make us feel comfortable and to let us know that everybody was here for us, and that was just--it was just so welcoming. It was just so nice, especially for my parents to see

that, and I remember the drive home--that's all my mom kept talking about is how nice everybody was. And, like if it was late in the evening, and, and people were even leaving--I mean, they would just stop and explain things to us, "What do you need to know?" "Is there anything I can show you?" It was just, it was great. I think everybody here was just so nice.

Athletic Team Personnel

Athletic team personnel is broken down into two categories: coaching staff, team members, and previous team members. There were 27 comments concerning the ETSU coaching staff. There were 16 comments concerning team members.

Coaching Staff. There were more comments concerning the ETSU coaching staff than any other category. It is apparent from the following comments that the ETSU coaching staff was highly regarded by this recruiting class of ETSU student-athletes. Every sport, except men's tennis, had at least one student-athlete mention the coaching staff as being influential in their decision to attend East Tennessee State University. Men's tennis is also the only sport which none of the prospects made an official or unofficial visit to ETSU.

Several student-athletes mentioned the coaching staff as being the reason for them choosing to attend ETSU. The first stated:

Well, like I said, Chris (Layne) had known me two years before, so he--we were on a, kind of a personal level, I mean, we, we had become pretty good friends during, during that time period and I knew that he was, he was

a good person, and he was very influential in my decision to come to ETSU.

Another student-athlete had known the ETSU head coach prior to the coach being hired at ETSU. The student-athlete explained:

I had actually gotten the chance to know Coach Hamilton pretty well through, through the Air Force recruiting so that was, that was a big reason I came here too, because, you know, I had always thought Coach Hamilton was a good guy and good coach.

The next interviewee expressed her opinions of the ETSU coaching staff as follows. She reported, "Well, to tell you the truth, the coaching staff was really--that was my first reason for coming here, for choosing East Tennessee State." Another student-athlete also indicated the ETSU coaching staff was instrumental in his decision making process. He noted:

They were really, really nice. I mean, they would probably rate first. I mean, if I didn't like the coaching or whatever I wouldn't be here right now. So, that, that has a big plus. That was a major plus in my decision-making. It was probably them because they really seemed to care about me and everything like that.

One student-athlete was recruited by four Southern Conference institutions. He was most impressed with the ETSU coaching staff. He indicated:

I mean, the thing I liked about it was, you know, they all honest with you, say we not going to lie to you, we going to be straight out with you, lets you know you going to work, so all the coaching staff, I mean, I think we got the best in the Southern Conference.

Many student-athletes in their interviews stated that the coaches who were recruiting them placed great amounts of

pressure on them. One interviewee was impressed with the ETSU coaching staff and the fact that the coaching staff did not pressure him to sign a National Letter of Intent with ETSU. He said:

Well, the--for me, the major factors would have been the players being really nice and the coaches caring about whether or not you come here, and then the coaches giving you time, whether or not if you wanted to sign, or--that you could make your own decision, that you wouldn't have to hurry it up.

Many comments centered on how much the student-athletes felt the ETSU coaches cared about them as individuals as opposed the coaching staffs from the other institutions that were recruiting them. One interviewee stated:

The coaching staff, because on other visits, the coaches like didn't know your name, and they was like, "What's your name again?" But when I came up here, as soon as I walked in the door, they was like they knew everything. They knew your name and face and it was like, they treated my, my parents and my grandfather real nice and my brother, you know, they treated him like he was a player, too. Like not just one coach that recruited you, all of, all the coaches knew your name, and they just knew everything and that just made me feel good because the past visit like, one coach might know you and the rest don't. But when I came up here it was like five, six, seven coaches already knew you, and they just invited you, to welcome, you know, they just treated like they already knew us for like two, three months in advance and that's probably what made it.

Another added:

Coach seemed really nice and like she cared about what happened with her athletes and how they got along and everything, and that really impressed me, 'cause some coaches didn't seem like they really cared what their athletes did.

Still another continued:

I think it was something that would happen with your personal life. I mean, they really--they were

concerned about basketball, but they were more concerned about how you did off the court academically and stuff, and that really showed me how they interested in me, total person, instead of just for basketball.

One student-athlete was impressed with the honesty of the ETSU coaching staff throughout the recruiting process.

He stated:

One is that they're really nice and they weren't like making promises that they couldn't keep, like I've heard of places where they'll say, you know, "We're getting new stuff and, you know, we're getting all this free stuff," and then come season, whatever, they don't get it. They weren't making promises they couldn't keep and they were really nice about stuff. They were really a, I think, genuine, about wanting me to come here, saying that they're not going to hand anything over, you know, you won't come in and start, but if you work, then you can get more money and then you can get more playing time, too.

Team Members. Sixteen interviewees mentioned that the ETSU student-athletes on the respective teams were influential in the interviewees' decision to attend ETSU. Since the student-athletes will be spending the next four years as teammates to the current ETSU student-athletes, it is obvious why many of the freshman student-athletes spoke about the current ETSU student-athletes being important to the decision-making process.

Many interviewees stated that being around the current ETSU student-athletes made them feel like they were all part of a big family. These interviewees mentioned that the ETSU program that was recruiting them felt like it had a family atmosphere and everyone in the program really cared for one another.

One student-athlete indicated, "Yeah, it--I mean, it was the players, too, because whenever I come down for a recruit visit, they were really helpful and they showed me how things were." Another student-athlete added:

I got on really well with the team. And Amon's (phonetic) from Ireland, I got on well with him and Sean was my host and we got on really well. I just, I just really liked the atmosphere, the way the whole team just kind of bonded together and had a lot of fun.

Another added:

Oh, probably, the--whenever, whenever I was with the team, it was like we were family. It was kinda like team unity, and like it was just like everyone was there to help you--if you needed anything.

Still another continued:

I think it was a lot the way the--I saw the team was really close, the tennis team, and the way the coach treated me when I came--really well. They treated me really well, and at some of the other universities I felt not--it wasn't as personal.

One interviewee stated that the current ETSU student-athletes seemed to be working hard for the same goals that she had as a student-athlete. This was important for her to select a university and a program that would surround her with those she felt would work hard to achieve common goals.

She stated:

I still would have chosen here. Because a lot of it was also the team aspect of here, 'cause I got to meet everybody on the team and it just seemed like everybody was so close and was working for the same goal.

One key element of the current ETSU student-athlete category is the importance of having international student-athletes on campus. Many of the international interviewees, especially those from South America, indicated that it was

important for them to select a university that currently had student-athletes from their region of the world.

One international freshman student-athlete reported:

Because the most important reason that he, he gave me, was the people are very nice. You never have problem here, he tell me, and the coach was a very nice person. He, he knows a lot of tennis, and there are other Argentinian, and this is important for me because when I don't understand some, something, I, I ask for Damian and he, he told me he teach me a little English.

Another indicated:

But I also need like Latin, a few Latin people, and in Washington was just Europeans and North Americans, so that was like really completely different from me. And here I know that there are some Latins and is closer to Mexico, so--in fact, it was a hard decision, but I think here was, was the best option.

Research Question Three

What team (athletic) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?

During the interviews, the freshman student-athletes mentioned several athletic factors that were influential in the decision-making process. These comments are divided into four categories: athletic facilities, opportunity to play, scholarship package, and program reputation.

Athletic Facilities

Athletic facilities were mentioned 27 times throughout the interviews. The comments are divided into three subcategories: the Memorial Center (Mini-Dome), the weight room, and other athletic facilities.

Student-athletes spend a majority of their time in the athletic facilities. From comments received during the interviews, it is apparent that athletic facilities were important to many of the student-athletes as they made their visits to universities.

Memorial Center (Mini-Dome). The Memorial Center is the primary athletic complex on the campus of East Tennessee State University. Opened in 1977, the Memorial Center houses offices and facilities for athletics, physical education, and a portion of the Quillen College of Medicine.

The Memorial Center serves as home to the following ETSU athletic programs: men's basketball, football, men's and women's indoor tennis, and men's and women's indoor track and field. The size and layout of the Memorial Center allows all 16 athletic teams the opportunity to conduct practices indoors.

The size of the Memorial Center, the largest building on the ETSU campus, makes it impressive on first sight. Several interviewees indicated this. The first stated:

Well, coming from a two red light town that I'm from and we're a 2A school and didn't have but twenty players on a team, I remember the first time I pulled up here and, you know, I heard they played in a dome and this and that and, you know, a few people that where I'm from been by here before and saw it, you know, when you hit the red light and you see something this big and you come from a little town like I do, it's kinda feel you get chills, kinda, and then you know it was just like a dream come true when you walk in under the bottom and just see it all lit up and--so it was, it was a pretty nice experience for me.

Another interviewee was impressed by the size of the Memorial Center. She stated:

The first thing I saw was the dome, 'cause I was here at night and Coach Moore brought me in here and I was just in awe. I loved the dome and the next day I saw the campus and I just saw how, how big it was and how, I don't know, how many things you could have done there.

One interviewee was impressed on his official visit by all of the activity going on at one time in the Memorial Center. He continued:

At the time the, they didn't have the carpet rolled out--they had the basketball court set up and tennis courts, and track running, but it was still a--you know, it's still an impressive sight to have everything like that going on at one time. And to just look up in the stands and look around...

Another student-athlete liked the atmosphere the Memorial Center provides. He stated, "No, the floor wasn't down. Just the dome atmosphere and the weight room and the facilities, that made it--that played a big part in my decision."

The recently resurfaced indoor track within the Memorial Center was seen as a decisive factor to two track student-athletes. The first reported:

Well, when I came here, I just, I kinda knew this is where I wanted to go, like the first day that I was here. I just thought the campus was pretty, the area was nice, and the facilities--the indoor track, that was a big thing.

The other track student-athlete indicated:

Yeah, yeah. I mean, and to have, I mean, they have a good indoor track, so. The fact that they had just gotten it resurfaced and plus I knew they had a weight room, but I didn't know they had redone it, you know. It was like whoa!

Weight Room. In the spring 1997 semester, work was started on renovating the ETSU athletic weight room, which is located in the Memorial Center. The cost of the renovations was approximately \$200,000. The renovation costs included the relocation of the weight room from the West side first floor of the Memorial Center to the West side balcony of the Memorial Center. The move increased the size of the weight room to 7,200 square feet. The weight room was redesigned aesthetically and new equipment, including customized York plates, customized free weight equipment and Hammer-Strength Machines, was added to the new facility. The weight room was mentioned by 14 prospects during the interview process.

The size of the weight room was important to many prospects. One student-athlete explained:

And I just like--and plus, knowing I was going to be an athlete, I had to work out in the weight room, it was like first class, the best that I saw. And like all the weights, it was clean and they had an office and a strength coach and like the facility, it was nice...

The next interviewee added, "I got a chance to see the locker room, the weight room, especially the weight room, that's, that's nice, that's the biggest weight room I ever seen." Another student-athlete indicated, "The facilities around here are great, especially the training room and the, the weight room. And those are available to us pretty much at any time, which is great."

The weight room impressed one student-athlete, especially since he expected to be spending much of his time

in the weight room training. He stated:

Yeah, it was, I, I thought it was really neatly laid out. It was easy access to everything, you could find everything easily. The weight rooms really impressed me like that, because I might be spending a lot of time in there.

One student-athlete was so impressed, she indicated that she mentioned the ETSU athletic facilities the most upon her return home from the recruiting visit. She expressed, "Yeah, that was another impressive thing. Really big. That was--actually those were the top things I talked about when I went back home. The weight room and the locker room--those two mainly."

Other Athletic Facilities. Several ETSU athletic teams are unable to practice and compete on the ETSU campus. Since ETSU does not have a campus golf course, the ETSU men's and women's golf programs must practice at different private and public golf courses in the surrounding community. This provides the opportunity to practice on several of the Southeast's finest golf courses. The courses used by the ETSU golf programs include: The Ridges, the Johnson City Country Club, The Virginian, Graysburg Hills Golf Course, the Elizabethton Golf Course, Buffalo Valley Golf Course, and Pine Oaks Golf Course. Having this many courses available is an advantage that many schools do not have, especially those limited by having on campus golf courses.

One student-athlete said:

And also the, the golf courses we get to play on--we get to play on so many here than other places really, they only get their choice of one or two places to go play, and here we have five or six different ones.

Another golf student-athlete linked the number of courses available to the amount of support the men's golf program receives at ETSU. He stated:

Yeah, yeah, we went to, I guess, three of them, three or four of them, and I definitely have seen nice courses and seen that people around here let you play their course. That helped a lot. Knowing they had a lot of support.

Another sport that uses off campus facilities is baseball. The ETSU baseball team plays its home games at Cardinal Park. Cardinal Park is owned by the city of Johnson City, Tennessee. It is the home of the Johnson City Cardinals, a rookie league franchise affiliated with the Saint Louis Cardinals organization. Cardinal Park provides many advantages to the ETSU baseball program that the on campus field does not. Lights provide the opportunity to play games at night. Because Cardinal Park is owned by the city of Johnson City, the Johnson City maintenance crews maintain the facility. Cardinal Park has a maximum seating capacity of 2,500.

The following are comments made by baseball student-athletes concerning Cardinal Park. The first baseball student-athlete stated, "The stadium. I liked the stadium. It, I mean, it was outstanding. It is a really, really nice stadium."

Although another baseball student-athlete indicated that Cardinal Park and the weight room were not deciding factors, he did state that Cardinal Park and the weight room helped him make the decision to attend ETSU. He explained:

Oh, yeah. I was comfortable with the situation, because I mean I've played at Cardinal Park and I was very comfortable with that, and I knew that that was a good facility and stuff. And the weight room, they upgraded it and it's really good now and, I guess, I mean, that, that wasn't like a deciding factor where I would go somewhere to play on the field or something, but it helped.

Opportunity to Play

Prospective student-athletes are generally ones who were the stars of their high school teams. These are individuals who have played at the highest level of athletics for most of their high school careers. Because all of the interviewees were recruited by more than one institution, they were being told how great they were and how badly each institution wanted them to be a part of their program. These elements are all important in the decision-making process for the student-athletes when it comes to playing time as freshman at ETSU.

There were six interviewees who mentioned opportunity to play as a freshman as a deciding factor in choosing to attend ETSU. The first interviewee stated, "Yeah, that was--my whole like high school life and club level, like I've always like started and played and like not being able to play like would affect me a lot, I think." Another added, "Yeah. Yes, I felt I can get a lot of playing time and

that's made a--played a big part in my decision." Another expressed her confidence in receiving playing time as a freshman at ETSU. She continued:

Well, basically, I thought ETSU will be a great chance for me. This may sound very cocky, but I was going to be the one here and everybody was going to be on my back, trying to help me, which is good, 'cause in other places I would be a number. I'd be maybe number 1 player, but maybe there are like twenty other girls that are a lot better than me in any sports, so another big university, I'd be a number, here, I'm (name), and everybody knows me and they're willing to help me and I like that.

Another interviewee expressed that playing time as a freshman was instrumental in his decision to attend ETSU. He stated, "Yeah. Yes, I felt I can get a lot of playing time and that's made a--played a big part in my decision." Another interviewee was told that he would be expected to compete and contribute to the team as a freshman. He expressed, "Yes, it was, it was made clear that I would be coming in and competing."

Scholarship Package

One important factor in recruiting prospective student-athletes is the amount of athletic grant-in-aid offered. The NCAA breaks down the sports into head-count sports and equivalency sports. Head count sports allow for a set number of student-athletes to be placed on athletic grants-in-aid. These sports include: men's basketball, women's basketball, I-A football, women's volleyball, and women's tennis. Equivalency sports allow a set number of grant-in-aids to be provided by the institution. The grant-in-aids

in equivalency sports can be divided among as many student-athletes as the coaching staff wishes. Examples of equivalency sports include: baseball, men's and women's track/CC, men's and women's golf, women's soccer, and men's tennis.

Many times the amount of athletic grant-in-aid offered is the determining factor for prospects in deciding which institution to attend. Coaches in equivalency sports must decide how much athletic grant-in-aid to offer and hope it is equal to or greater than the scholarship offers from the other institutions.

There were six freshman student-athletes who mentioned the amount of athletic grant-in-aid as being a deciding factor in choosing to attend ETSU. One interviewee discussed the advantage of receiving a full athletic grant-in-aid. He stated the importance of the full scholarship:

Yeah. Yes. Yes. Big influence. Big influence, you know. Like many people say, scholarship players got it easy, and I believe it, 'cause you know, tuition's taken care of, books, room, all that's taken care of, you know, we get enough to eat. The only thing we have to do is just make the grades and play, and that's about it.

Another expressed his appreciation of the athletic scholarship and the money it would save his parents by receiving the scholarship. He indicated:

Yeah, definitely. I mean it's definitely nice, 'cause I, you know, getting money off, saving the parents a little money and, so I mean, it definitely plays a role. I wouldn't, I probably wouldn't have come here if I wouldn't have got anything, you know.

Another added, "It played an important part because I knew that I would need financial help, so." Another continued, "Yeah--factor. That helped a lot." Still another discussed the importance of the offered scholarship package, "Yeah. Yeah. I guess I needed it, really."

Program Reputation

Choosing an institution that has a successful program or a nationally ranked program is important to many prospective student-athletes. Many have experienced great amounts of success as high school athletes and want to continue the success into their collegiate athletic careers. There were nine interviewees who indicated the reputation of the ETSU program as being instrumental to the decision making process.

The first student-athlete stated:

Well, I, when I heard about all the big accomplishment they had back, you know, when they went to the Sweet Sixteen, and all that, and some of the players they had was in the pro's and I like, well, I believe I want to be a part of that, and maybe I can get the same thing.

The program that has the greatest amount of success is the ETSU men's golf program. Several of the men's golf student-athletes mentioned the level of success the program has achieved as being important in the decision making process. The first men's golf student-athlete stated, "I knew they were, they were good, and I wanted to go to a good school where I could get a lot of good golf--they had an awesome schedule and I just wanted to play good, good

college-level golf." Another added, "Well, first off, just how good they are at golf, you know."

The reputation of the ETSU women's golf program was important to the decision-making process of one women's golf interviewee. She stated, "I was really impressed with that and the golf team seemed like it was on the right track, and that they were going to get better and become one of the best colleges in the nation."

The ETSU football program experienced one of the most successful seasons in the history of the school during the 1996-97 academic year. That team finished the season with a record of 10-3. The 1996-97 team made it to the NCAA Division I-AA football quarterfinals before losing to the #2 team in the nation, the University of Montana. The 1996-97 season brought ETSU much media coverage throughout the southeast. This was reflected in the 1997-98 football recruiting class. Several football freshman student-athletes mentioned the success of the program as being influential in their decision making process. The first football student-athlete expressed his desire to build upon the previous season and compete for the national championship. He stated, "We were going--got one thing, you know, try to win the national championships, so that was that." Another added the success of the program, along with his desire to graduate and have fun during his college career, was important in deciding which college to attend. He noted, "Just--they had a good program. The school was

good, and I felt that I had a chance to graduate, have fun here. I'd just be successful, and that was just some of the things I wanted."

The final comment is from a men's tennis student-athlete. He was impressed with the success the men's tennis program has had in the past. He wanted to compete for a university that would be successful on the tennis court. He stated:

About ETSU was very nice. He told me that ETSU tennis won a lot of tournaments, conference, and when I, when I hear that, I, I think that this is a very nice school and for me, really, the most important is the tennis, and if ETSU goes in the right way in tennis, I love to hear.

Research Question Four

What personal/situational (individual) factors influence student-athlete choice of institution?

The interviewees identified three personal/situational areas that were influential in their decision to attend East Tennessee State University. The three categories are the Johnson City community, church-related activities/faith, and relatives who attended ETSU.

Johnson City Community

There were six freshman student-athletes who mentioned the Johnson City community as being important in the decision making process. Nestled against the splendor of the Appalachian Mountains, Johnson City is the home of East Tennessee State University. The beauty of the area caught

the attention of two prospects. One interviewee compared ETSU to another institution he visited during the recruiting process. He stated:

I took a look around and it, you know, it just seemed like the facilities were nicer, you know, it was just the, the surrounding area. I liked the surrounding area better than I did at MTSU. You know, just the whole atmosphere of Johnson City better than, you know, I liked it a lot better up in the mountains than down in the pretty flatland, down in there.

Another interviewee also was impressed with the layout of Johnson City. He stated:

The area, mainly, the mountains, was a major, I mean that was a major--and then, once we got on campus, campus was spread out, but it wasn't a UT-Knoxville spread out, you know, so, you know, you can walk back and forth from your dorm to your classes without having to sprint to get there in your ten minute time. And it just really seemed like it is in the area where, you know, it's not in the middle of downtown, but not five minutes away you can get to a mall, or you can get to somewhere if you need to go somewhere and that was, that was another big thing, 'cause I wanted to go to a smaller school that was, you know, away from town, but it was close enough to town where you--if you needed something you could go get it without having to make it a day trip.

One student-athlete noticed the banners hanging on the light poles throughout the Johnson City community. He also noticed the support and enthusiasm that the community provides to ETSU and especially the ETSU athletics department. He indicated:

Yeah. This, like I said, this is a drawn out town, it's a lot bigger than where I'm from but, you know, it really, it let me, when I go through town the first time and you see ETSU pride, Go Bucs, everything all over town, you know that the town's behind this team, you know, and that makes a lot of difference when you got the whole town behind your team. Makes a lot more difference than when you have, just, you know, the school and the town, where's nothing's backing it or

supporting it, and I can tell now being a player all the stuff that people do for us as far as eating and doing whatever, I mean, it's, it's a big town supportive school, that's what--I could tell that when I first come in and saw all the banners and, you know, flyers and everything, so that impressed me a lot. That just lets you know that everybody's behind you, you're not just over here and nobody don't know nothing about you.

One interviewee, who lives in Johnson City and attended Science Hill High School, discussed the advantage of attending ETSU and having his family and friends continue to follow his athletic career. He reported:

Right. Yeah, yeah. I mean, they've, they've been there since the beginning, come to every game and, you know, stuff like that, so that's going to be special, just to keep, keep them here, and a bunch of friends coming, too.

Church-Related Activities/Faith

One student-athlete discussed the importance of having church related activities at the university of her choice. Another interviewee placed the decision-making process in the faith he had in God.

The first interviewee compared the church-related activities at ETSU with those at other institutions she visited during the recruiting process. She stated:

Yeah, all the other schools I went to, I asked about Christian activities and churches, and they really didn't know that much, but when I came here I found out a lot of stuff, you know, different campus ministries and the churches in the area, and that, that was, you know, one of the reasons I came here because I wanted to go to a school where I could develop as a person--develop into a better person and grow, grow spiritually, you know, so.

The second student-athlete placed his decision in the power of prayer. He indicated:

So, what really impressed me to come here was just I liked the way the school was made, it wasn't, it wasn't overly big or anything like that, and I knew I could get around and everything like that, and the people were really nice and my mother was a big help throughout that, too, you know, we just constantly prayed about it and just waited on, waited on God for the answer, and feel like I made the right choice.

Relatives Who Attended ETSU

Family members who graduated from East Tennessee State University influenced one freshman student-athlete. The interviewee is very impressed by how successful the family members have become since the family members graduated from ETSU. He stated, "Well, the fact that all of them graduated and, and three of them were making extremely good money and they're in jobs that they enjoy, was a big, big factor."

Summary

The process of selecting an institution can be an extremely lengthy and time-consuming process. Highly recruited prospective student-athletes have the options of selecting numerous institutions. As shown by the results of the interviews, freshman student-athletes considered several factors that help them decide which institution was best for them.

The interviewees were impressed with the individuals associated with East Tennessee State University. Impressed enough for them to decide to attend ETSU. Those mentioned

the most were the coaching staff members and the current team members. The facilities were also impressive to the freshman student-athletes. Those facilities mentioned most were the dormitories, weight room, and Memorial Center.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusions drawn from the findings presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes recommendations that might be taken by coaches and athletic administrators at East Tennessee State University to maximize their recruiting efforts. Recommendations for further research will also be presented.

Conclusions

The 1997-98 recruiting class identified eight major factors that influenced them to attend East Tennessee State University. The eight major factors include: the coaching staff, the people at ETSU, the current team members, the athletics facilities, the renovated weight room, the academics, Luntsford Apartments, and the sport reputation.

Conclusion One

Three areas from Research Question #2 (ETSU personnel factors) provided the most comments. There were 60 comments in the three areas. The ETSU coaching staff was mentioned by 27 student-athletes. The ETSU personnel who met with the student-athletes were mentioned by 18 prospects. Finally, the team members of the respective teams were mentioned by 16 student-athletes. These three areas were mentioned the

most when it came to the student-athletes deciding which institution to attend.

Conclusion Two

Three areas from Research Question #3 (athletic factors) provided the second most comments. There were a total of 36 comments in the three areas. Athletic facilities were mentioned by 15 student-athletes, the weight room was mentioned by 12 student-athletes, and the reputation of the sport was mentioned by 9 student-athletes.

Conclusion Three

Two areas from Research Question #1 (institutional factors) provided the third most comments from the interviewees. ETSU provided an academic environment that was influential to 15 student-athletes. Luntsford Apartments was mentioned by 10 student-athletes.

Conclusion Four

Research Question #5 addressed differences between factors that influenced student-athletes in different genders. From data collected through the interviewing process, it was determined that there were no trends identified between the student-athletes from different genders.

There were 10 of 16 female interviewees who identified Luntsford Apartments as being influential to their decision-

making process. Luntsford Apartments was the only factor that was gender specific.

Conclusion Five

Research Question #6 addressed differences between factors that influenced student-athletes in different sports. From data collected through the interviewing process, it was determined that there were no trends identified between the student-athletes from different sports.

Conclusion Six

Research Question #7 addressed differences between factors that influenced student-athletes from different ethnic backgrounds. From data collected through the interviewing process, it was determined that there were no trends identified between the student-athletes from different ethnic backgrounds.

Study Recommendations

Once a recruiting foundation is established, it is important for the ETSU coaches to understand the student-athletes they are recruiting. Based upon the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. It is important for the ETSU coaching staff to understand that they were mentioned by the most student-athletes as being influential to the decision-making process. The ETSU coaches must continue to be heavily involved in the recruiting process. Coaches

must continue to keep the prospects' parents involved as well.

2. Coaches must be aware that student-athletes find the people at ETSU very friendly and helpful. A team effort with campus personnel, such as coaches, administrators, faculty, team members, and students is essential to present a positive image and experience with ETSU. It is recommended that coaches set up as many meetings as possible with people from the many different areas of campus, such as admissions, housing, financial aid, athletics administration, and academic advisors from the prospects' area of study. Tours of campus provide the opportunity for coaches to introduce prospects to many individuals on campus on an informal basis.
3. Two series of information letters should be developed to highlight the strengths identified by the interviewees. The letters should be sent, one per week, to junior prospective student-athletes beginning on September 1 of their junior year of high school. The first series of letters should be developed to highlight the strengths of ETSU. The results of this study should serve as the basis for determining the strengths of ETSU. According to the study, a letter should be written on each of the following areas: the academic strengths of ETSU, to include the Quillen College of Medicine, the Bill G. Humphrey's Academic

Center, and graduation rates for ETSU student-athletes; the dormitories, to include Davis Apartments and Luntsford Apartments; the coaching staff, to include coaching philosophy; the athletic facilities, to include the Memorial Center and the newly renovated weight room; the newly constructed library on campus; the Tri-Cities area, to include the overall beauty of the area and the many outdoor activities available; the storied history of the Southern Conference, to include the advantages of competing in the Southern Conference; the recent success of the program; the strength of schedule included with the mailing of the media guide. Other letters should be sent at the discretion of the individual coach and coaching staffs. The second series of letters should come from the head coach. These letters should address the 20 questions found on pages 15-16 of the *1998-99 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*. This publication can be found in all high schools in the United States and is available free of charge. Because this brochure is easily available to prospective student-athletes, it is important that these questions are addressed in a timely manner by the head coach.

4. Official visits should be scheduled at times when the current team members will be on campus. When possible, official visits should occur during the teams' playing and practice season. This ensures that all team

members will be on campus. Also, it provides the recruit an opportunity to watch a practice or competition. When selecting a host for the prospect, it is encouraged to select a host who shares common interests, areas of study, or a region of the country that is home.

5. The ETSU athletic facilities were deemed impressive enough to be considered influential to many student-athletes deciding to attend ETSU. All prospects are encouraged to tour the newly renovated weight room. The Memorial Center is impressive to recruits and their families. The Memorial Center should be toured at times that help maximize the appearance of the building. The Memorial Center should be "hyped" as much as possible by the coaching staff and team members as being a unique environment for intercollegiate athletics. The baseball staff should take their prospects to visit Cardinal Park. Although it is an older facility, it has recently been renovated and is the home of a minor league baseball organization. The golf coaches should take their prospects to visit as many of the golf courses as possible. These courses provide a recruiting advantage and should be "hyped" in that manner.
6. Sports that have experienced recent success at the conference and national level should emphasize this to their prospects as often as possible. This can be

accomplished in many ways. Institutional stationary should include all conference championships and any top finishes at the national level. Championship trophies and banners should be displayed in areas that are easily noticed by recruits on official visits. Media guides should highlight the success of the athletic teams at ETSU so that recruits can notice the success immediately from the media guide.

7. Coaches should discover early in the recruiting process the academic interests of their prospects. The national prominence of several academic programs at ETSU could influence prospects if they are made aware of the programs early in the recruiting process. The Quillen College of Medicine is one program that should be highlighted by the ETSU coaches. The College of Business is another such program.
8. All female prospects should tour Luntsford Apartments. Luntsford Apartments was mentioned as being influential to 10 of the 16 female interviewees.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study provide reason to further study the recruiting strategies of the East Tennessee State University athletics department. There are five areas that are worthy of further study.

The first area is to determine why student-athletes who made official visits to ETSU and were offered athletic

scholarships decided not to attend ETSU. While this study determined factors that influenced prospective student-athletes to attend East Tennessee State University, it is vitally important to determine which factors influenced prospective student-athletes against enrolling at ETSU.

The second area is to conduct a longitudinal study of the 1997-98 freshman student-athletes to determine if the factors that influenced them to attend East Tennessee State University were still influential to them after they graduated and/or exhausted eligibility. This information is important to determine if coaches and campus personnel are following through with promises made to freshman student-athletes during the recruiting process. Important to this area would be interviewing any of the student-athletes whom decided to transfer or leave East Tennessee State University prior to exhausting their eligibility. The ETSU athletics department could use this information to develop a student-athlete retention program for the its' student-athletes.

The third possibility for further research includes comparing the results of ETSU student-athletes to the general ETSU student body. Interviewing ETSU students from the general student body would help determine if factors influencing their decision to attend ETSU were consistent with the factors influencing ETSU student-athletes.

The fourth possibility for further research includes collecting data at institutions with similar characteristics as ETSU. Research could be conducted at other Southern

Conference institutions that are state supported. Such institutions would include Appalachian State University, Georgia Southern University, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Western Carolina University, the College of Charleston, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. These institutions are similar in size, compete in the same conference, operate with similar budgets, and generally recruit for the same caliber of prospective student-athletes.

The final opportunity for further research would be to study the factors that influenced student-athletes to attend major institutions (Division I-A) and compare the results to student-athletes who decided to attend mid-major institutions (Division I-AA). This information would be extremely beneficial to both the major institutions and the mid-major institutions.

Summary

Recruiting prospective student-athletes is an extremely time consuming and expensive process. The data indicated that the 1997-98 freshman student-athletes interviewed for this study were highly influenced by the people at East Tennessee State University. The opportunity to choose an institution where they were comfortable with the personnel was extremely important to this recruiting class. Athletic facilities were also influential to this recruiting class, especially the newly renovated athletic weight room. The

dormitories were important, especially to the female student-athletes. Finally, East Tennessee State University best provided and served the academic interests of this recruiting class.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions

1. How did you feel about the recruiting process overall?
2. When did you first realize you wanted to and/or had the ability to participate at the collegiate level?
3. How helpful was your high school coach in the recruiting process?
4. How much influence did your high school coach have on you in the recruiting process?
5. When did you first hear about E.T.S.U. in the recruiting process?
6. What influenced you to take a visit (official or unofficial) to E.T.S.U.?
7. Did you take other official visits?
8. What order did you take your official visits?
9. What impressed you about your visit to E.T.S.U.?
10. Were the athletic facilities a factor?
11. Were the dorms a factor?
12. Were the people at E.T.S.U. a factor?
13. Was the coaching staff a factor?
14. Was the coaching staff philosophy a factor?
15. Do you have any friends or relatives who attend or have attended E.T.S.U.?
16. Was the distance from home a factor?
17. Were your parents an influence in your decision?
18. What is your major? Did you visit with anyone from that department?
19. Was your scholarship package a factor?
20. Was the Johnson City community a factor?
21. Was being able to play as a freshman a factor?
22. Is there any other information you can supply to help me with my study?

APPENDIX B
AUDIT FINDINGS

March 25, 1999

Dear Committee Members,

I was privileged to be asked by your doctoral candidate, Ed Howat, to serve as auditor for his dissertation. As a result of that request I have talked with Mr. Howat about his study, reviewed each chapter upon completion, verified the accuracy of randomly selected transcripts of interviews, and examined conclusions reached by the candidate as a result of his study.

I found the transcripts to accurately reflect the interviews conducted and determined that the conclusions reached by Mr. Howat were based upon information received through athlete interviews. I believe the candidate conducted his study in a conscientious, methodologically sound manner. The recruiting model resulting from this study appears to have great potential for positively impacting the recruiting effort at East Tennessee State University.

In all of our interactions Mr. Howat has exhibited professional behavior, a commitment to meticulous work, and an interest in producing a scholarly work of institutional value. I am honored to have been asked to assist with this endeavor.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penny Little Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Penny Little Smith, Ed.D.

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY ANALYSIS

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Edward G. Howat

TITLE OF STUDY: Factors Influencing Student-Athlete
Choice of Institution

The purpose of this study is to determine factors that influenced student-athletes to attend East Tennessee State University (ETSU). Each participant will be interviewed in depth regarding the experience of being recruited to participate in intercollegiate athletics at ETSU.

Expected inconveniences and/or risks are minimal. Some of the topics may be difficult to discuss. The interview will last 30 to 60 minutes. You may refuse to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. This study is not an experiment; no variables are being manipulated. All information provided during the interview will be kept strictly confidential.

I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the possible risks involved. I also understand that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time by notifying Ed Howat at 439-6439.

I understand that if there are any questions or research related problems at any time during this study, I may contact Ed Howat at 439-6439. I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D
GENERAL RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations

Before recommendations from the study are made concerning the recruiting process, it is important for the ETSU coaches to understand basic recruiting principles. Based upon the literature and the researcher's experience in recruiting, the following ideas are recommended:

1. Know your coaching and recruiting philosophy. Head coaches should hire assistant coaches who understand and appreciate this philosophy. Recruiting involves many long hours of work and preparation, and all staff member should be committed to the philosophy. Weekly staff meetings on recruiting should be held with all staff members involved with the meeting.
2. It is important for coaches to build a relationship with the prospective student-athletes. The confidence of the prospect should be gained early in the recruiting process. The best way to build confidence with prospects and their parents/guardians is for each coach to become an expert on the university, NCAA rules, and the sport he/she coaches. When prospects and parents ask questions, they expect answers. Being prepared to answer questions is extremely important in gaining the confidence and trust of prospects and their parents/guardians.
3. Telephone calls should be made with a plan in mind. Coaches should prepare for each telephone call placed

to prospective student-athletes. Goals and objectives should be established. Once the goals and objectives are established, the coach should write them down and have them in front of them during each telephone call. By preparing for each telephone call, the coach ensures that the calls are productive and all information needed is obtained from the prospect during this time. Because coaches may place only one telephone call per week to prospects (per NCAA regulations), it is important that the efficiency of each call is maximized.

4. Early in the recruiting process, it is vital that the coach identifies the person/persons who are important to the prospective student-athlete in the decision making process. Each prospect will have someone who will help him/her sort through the recruiting information and help decide which institution is best for him/her. Once this individual or individuals is identified, it is important for the coach to "recruit" them as well. Gaining the support of this individual or individuals is extremely important.
5. The recruiting process should be constantly evaluated. After coaches complete a telephone call, send a written letter, conclude a home or official/unofficial visit, they must evaluate the process and determine what can be improved. At the conclusion of all recruiting activities, the coach must ask, "What have I just done

to convince that prospect that we are the best university and program for him/her to attend?" These ideas should be shared with all staff members at the weekly recruiting meetings.

6. Coaches should know their recruiting budgets. Most recruiting budgets are limited; therefore, each coach should understand how much money remains in his/her recruiting budget. Detailed records should be kept to ensure the status of the recruiting budget. Keeping up-to-date records will also guarantee the business office records are accurate. The business office should not be the only place that tracks the recruiting budget. Coaches should also know their scholarship budget for the upcoming year. Knowing the budgets should include knowing how much scholarship money is available as well as how much the coach wants to make available for the upcoming recruiting class.

APPENDIX E
RECRUITING MODEL

Recruiting Model

The following is a recruiting model developed for East Tennessee State University. Recruiting should begin as early as possible for the prospective student-athlete and should follow all applicable NCAA regulations. The model is divided by academic year of the prospective student-athlete.

Freshman and Sophomore Years in High School

According to NCAA regulations, no contact can occur with prospective student-athletes prior to July 1 following the prospect's junior year in high school. Recruiting materials may not be provided to a prospective student-athlete until September 1 at the beginning of the prospect's junior year in high school. Freshmen and sophomore prospects may receive certain recruiting materials prior to the September 1 time period. ETSU coaches should take advantage of this and send the following materials to their freshmen and sophomore prospects:

- Athletic Questionnaires sent directly to the prospect.
- Camp Brochures sent directly to the prospect.
- NCAA Educational Information (e.g., NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete).

Because telephone calls may not be made to prospective student-athletes prior to July 1 following the completion of

the prospect's junior year in high school (for most sports), ETSU coaches should have as much contact with the high school coach as possible. ETSU coaches should request that the high school coach explain to the prospect that the ETSU coach had called inquiring about him/her.

ETSU coaches should use every available evaluation for their freshmen and sophomore prospects. There are limitations on the number of times prospects can be evaluated. The ETSU coaches should take advantage of each evaluation opportunity. ETSU coaches should inquire from the high school coaches which summer camps their prospects will attend. Evaluations at summer camps are important because many of the camps are held in smaller gymnasiums. Although no contact can occur, it is an opportunity for the ETSU coaches to be seen by their freshmen and sophomore prospects. The coaches should wear clothing that easily identifies them as ETSU coaching staff members.

ETSU coaches should explain to the high school coaches that unofficial visits are allowed, except during dead periods. There are no limits on the number of unofficial visits allowed. Complimentary admissions may be provided to prospects during unofficial visits.

Junior Year

As stated above, recruiting materials may be sent to prospects on September 1 during their junior year in high school. The following materials should be sent once

September 1 arrives:

- The prospect should receive a hand written note from the head coach on September 1.
- The two series of letters discussed in Study Recommendation #3 above should be developed. One letter per week should be sent to the prospects from this date forward.
- A media guide or recruiting brochure should be mailed to the prospects as soon as the publication is available.
- Admissions publications should be sent to prospects as early as possible.
- A letter should be sent indicating that the prospects are able to initiate telephone contact with ETSU coaches. This is permissible as long as the telephone call is at the expense of the prospect. The coach should also provide his/her e-mail address to the prospect. There are no limits to the number of e-mail transmissions or facsimiles sent to prospects
- Business cards from the coaches and one schedule card may be provided to prospects after the September 1 date.
- A camp brochure should continue to be sent to the junior prospects.

Evaluations for junior prospects should be treated the

same as with freshmen and sophomore prospects. The ETSU¹¹¹ coaches should evaluate as many times as permitted by NCAA regulations.

Unofficial visits should also be treated the same way as with the freshmen and sophomore prospects. Prospects, especially those who are local residents, should be invited to as many home athletic contests as possible. This invitation can be extended in writing from the head coach. Correspondence can only be sent after September 1 of the junior year in high school

Senior Year

All information listed for junior prospects should continue during the senior year. ETSU coaches should determine which prospects are priority. The priority prospects should receive hand written notes from the head coach every two weeks. General correspondence should continue throughout the academic year as well.

ETSU coaches can initiate telephone calls on July 1 following the prospects junior year in high school. The head coach should call high priority prospects on July 1. Telephone calls should be made one per week as long as the prospect remains on the ETSU prospect list. General Recommendation #3 should be followed when calling prospective student-athletes.

Official visits should be scheduled during times that will enhance the image of the university. The ETSU campus

is generally vacant during the weekends with few students around. During the fall semester, home football weekends are generally a good time to schedule official visits. Homecoming is an ideal weekend for official visits. Generally, there are campus activities and events are planned. Study Recommendation #4 should be followed as well. Ensuring that current team members are on campus during official visits is vital.

ETSU coaches can contact prospects off campus beginning on July 1 following the prospects junior year in high school. There are limits on the number of times a coach may contact a prospect, so it is important that the contacts are as productive and efficient as possible. An example would be that any number of contacts made during the same calendar day would count as only one contact. Therefore, if a coach contacts a prospect at the high school during the day, the coach may also contact the prospect and/or the prospect's parent or legal guardians that evening and only one contact would be used for that prospect. The ETSU coaching staffs should organize their recruiting calendars so that contacts and evaluations are maximized. General Recommendation #1 also addresses this point.

When offering athletic scholarships, the ETSU coaches should have a plan in place. This can be the most difficult part of the recruiting process. Most sports have early signing periods. High priority prospects will have many scholarship offers early in the recruiting process. Some of

the prospects will sign early and some will not. Coaches¹¹³ will have to determine how long to extend scholarship offers to high priority prospects who do not sign early. All sports have backup lists of prospects who will be offered scholarships once the high priority prospects are no longer available. Coaches must determine how long to pursue the high priority prospects at the risk of losing prospects on the backup list. This is very difficult for the coaches; especially waiting long periods of time may put them at risk of losing their priority prospects as well as the backup prospects.

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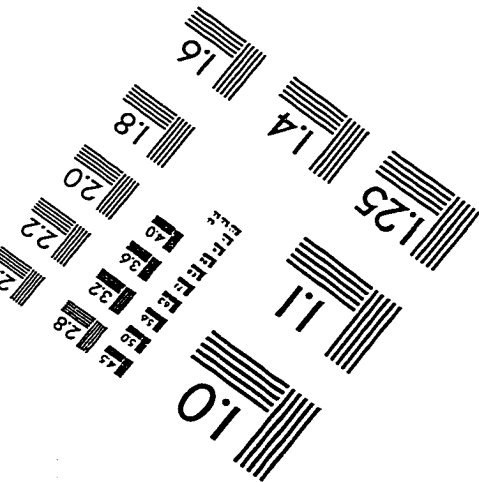
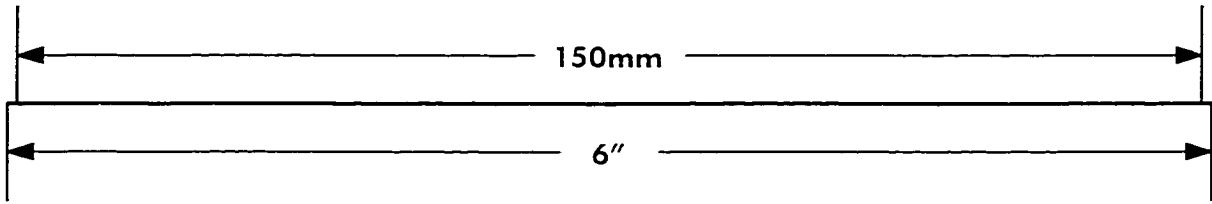
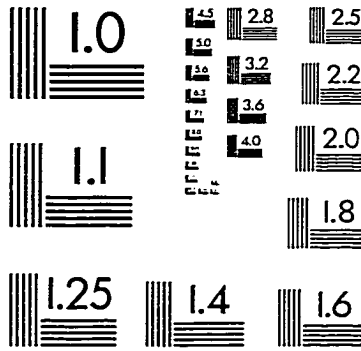
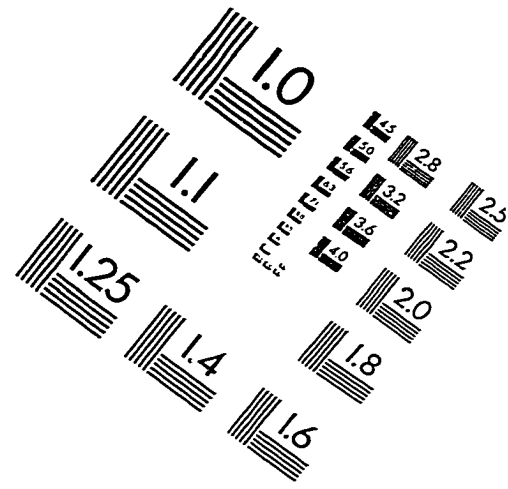
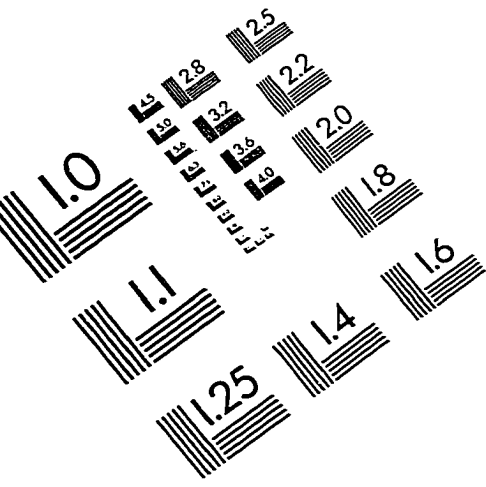
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