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Whose Voices are Heard? Sources Quoted in Media Coverage of Amateurism and NIL Rights in College Sport

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Peyton L. Woods entitled "Whose Voices are Heard? Sources Quoted in Media Coverage of Amateurism and NIL Rights in College Sport." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Sports Management.

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James H. Bemiller, Jeffrey A. Graham

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**Whose Voices are Heard? Sources Quoted in Media Coverage of Amateurism and NIL
Rights in College Sport**

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Peyton Len Woods
May 2021

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family and closest friends who have stood by my side throughout my entire student-athlete career and my time as a graduate student. Also, to my grandmother, Lois Woods, who passed away November 5, 2020.

Acknowledgements

I would especially like to thank Dr. Adam Love for his consistent encouragement, discipline, and help even from the very first day of researching and writing. His expertise in media analysis, specifically in sport, has proved an invaluable resource to my work. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Graham for his essential support and insight throughout the entire process.

Abstract

While there is an ample amount of research surrounding student-athlete amateurism and name, image, and likeness (NIL) rights in collegiate athletics, there is a lack of research concerning the influence of the mass media when it comes to these same issues. The purpose of the current study was to examine how quoted sources (e.g., coaches, administrators, athletes) are used to frame the issue of amateurism and NIL when covered in the media. Out of the 113 sample articles that were analyzed, sources such as the NCAA and politicians were most frequently cited. These two sources were quoted a combined 191 times, while collegiate student-athletes were quoted a total of 7 times. Notable themes that emerged throughout analysis were the nationwide effort by multiple sources to solve the issue of NIL, the NCAA's attempt to maintain the collegiate model of amateurism, the blurred lines created to cloud how student-athletes are seen in the eye of the public, and the complexity of NIL deliberation and implementation among university officials. With NIL legislation on the brink of historic breakthrough, these themes matter both to the current reality of the student-athlete experience in college sport and the future of understanding media influence on the issue of amateurism and NIL. During the process and aftermath of this forthcoming reform in college sport, it remains the responsibility of members of the media to present amateurism and NIL in such a way that provides a voice for all sources involved, particularly the student-athletes on which college sports depend.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This study investigated the portrayal of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I collegiate student-athletes in mass media regarding the topic of amateurism, particularly the current issue of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights for college athletes. Debates surrounding amateurism have plagued the discourse within collegiate sports for decades with incremental changes made throughout recent history. The discussion concerning college athletes' amateur status remains in constant fluctuation, with solutions ranging from maintaining the traditional view of amateurism all the way to the idea of allowing pay for play. It is not only of great importance to understand benefits and consequences of all the potential outcomes, but also the narratives and ideas presented through the media that may shape our perspective of student-athlete compensation.

The roots of amateurism run deep throughout the core of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). It is most likely around the early 1800s that this British-born ideology made a first appearance in sport and society amidst England's most elite colleges (Crabb, 2017). Even though widely assumed that the implementation of amateur athletics was created during the ancient Greek Olympics, "this notion has been soundly repudiated" (Crabb, 2017, p. 184). For the sake of familiarity with our modern notion of amateurism, Crabb (2017) also noted when referring to the original British universities, "they espoused the notion that glory, not remuneration, was the only true motivation for sports" (p. 184). This so called "definition" of amateurism is almost identical in nature to the one the NCAA would adopt in 1916 which define an amateur as, "one who participates in competitive physical sports only for the pleasure, and the physical, mental, moral, and social benefits directly derived therefrom" (Afshar, 2014, p. 107).

Yet, even though the origin of this controversial regulation placed upon college sport participants may seem paramount, the fairness of amateurism has been an issue of substantial debate and discussion, particularly in recent years. Specifically, several state laws (first led by California Senate Bill 206) have presented a new challenge to amateurism and thrust the issue of NIL rights into the media spotlight. This state-level precedent has sparked the undivided attention of both the NCAA and federal government alike, prompting inevitable conflict. There is currently no greater threat to the NCAA and no greater friend to the student-athlete body than the introduction of more individualized NIL legislation within state-level government or timely nationwide intervention by the federal government.

Amid the constant barrage of NIL ideas or potential outcomes, the media remain in the middle of the conversation and provide a direct line to the voices of those involved. Given the meaningful role the media serve in disseminating information and influencing narratives on the issue of “amateurism,” the current study will examine the questions: When issues related to student-athlete “amateurism” are covered in the media, what sources (e.g., coaches, administrators, athletes) are quoted? How are these quoted sources used by the members of the media to frame the issue of amateurism in college sport?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze how quoted sources (e.g., coaches, administrators, athletes) are used to frame the issue of student-athlete “amateurism” and NIL rights when covered in the media.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The History of Amateurism

The importance of pure desire and pleasure of participating in sport has been emphasized throughout centuries. It is this pleasure that is vital to the integrity and development of sports in our world. Yet, if an athlete plays solely for the “love of the game” or simply because they find pleasure in sport, how do we define that athlete? According to Afshar (2014), the idea of a person doing something for pleasure, not as a job, is what defines someone as an amateur. The very Latin root of the word amateur, *amare*, means “to love” (Busby, 2012). This is the defining characteristic of the idea of an amateur, which is to love or to take pleasure in.

There have been many competing, but related, definitions of amateurism used in the context of sport. As stated by McLeran (2017), “the historic definition of ‘amateurism’ is ‘[a]ny gentleman who has never competed in an open competition nor for public payment nor admission money’” (p. 258-59). It is notable in this definition the lack of indication that playing for “pleasure” or “love” is necessary to defining the term. Meanwhile, Busby (2012) explains an amateur as “a person who engages in some art, science, sport, etc. for the pleasure of it rather than for money; a nonprofessional; [specifically], an athlete who is variously forbidden by rule to profit from athletic activity” (p. 135). Along the same perspective, Afshar (2014) found an amateur to be, “one who engages in a pursuit, study, science, or sport as a pastime rather than as a profession” (p. 107). The central feature in these definitions is the practice of being a nonprofessional.

When considering the idea and defining attributes of amateurism, it is worth noting that these distinct principles have not always been in place throughout sport. According to Crabb (2017), “scholars agree that the modern tradition of amateurism in sports began in England’s

class-conscious society of the early 1800s” (p. 184). It was in this society that such athletes competed without pay due to their high social class, unlike working class people who were considered the “professionals” in their respective fields (Crabb, 2017). Essentially, amateurism was created by the wealthy, educated population who played for the pleasure and pride of participating in the game without compensation. Additionally, it was also the intent of the wealthy population to keep working class people out of their sport.

Moreover, Crabb (2017) noted, “the nineteenth century theme of amateurism was a cultural construct, foisted by the aristocracy on collegiate athletics and international sporting events reserved for the upper class, and was not the norm for sports at the time” (p. 185). It is imperative to understand the social normalcy of professionalism during this century. But even as amateurism migrated over to American soil it was not defining in the early stages of collegiate athletics, as professionalism still remained. It was during the latter years of the nineteenth century that many higher education institutions began accepting money from sports fans to attend and watch collegiate athletic competitions, allowing teams to compete for prize money, and even paying non-student athletes to participate in certain sports (Crabb, 2017). This sort of renegade professionalism lasted for many years until the birth of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) at the turn of the twentieth century.

Amateurism and the NCAA

After recognizing the commonality of professionalism, likewise it is crucial to consider how the current normalcy of amateurism in collegiate sport came to be. According to Grimmet (2014), “Intercollegiate sports were born in 1852 when Harvard and Yale competed in a rowing match” (p. 5). This ambitious attempt at maintaining a leisure-style model of intercollegiate sport

lasted for over fifty years before the late President Theodore Roosevelt stepped in to prompt sudden change in the current state of an injury-ridden catastrophe (Grimmett, 2014).

Tatos (2019) states, “the institution known as the modern-day NCAA, which governs intercollegiate athletics among its approximately 1121 member schools, originated in December 1905 with the introduction of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS)” (p. 388). Since the beginning of the NCAA in 1910, formerly IAAUS, the governing body of this association has constantly highlighted the idea of an amateur student-athlete as being one who is participating only for the benefits and enjoyment of the game (Tatos, 2019). According to Afshar (2014), “the definition that the NCAA would adopt in 1916 was that an amateur was “one who participates in competitive physical sports only for the pleasure, and the physical, mental, moral, and social benefits directly derived therefrom” (p. 107). The adoption, not creation, of this definition in 1916 reveals the heart of the NCAA during the given period of time and shares how they intended to govern over participating members of their association.

Taking into account the NCAA’s prohibition of professionalism and financial benefits to student-athletes in the 1916 policy, Crabb (2017) states, “this policy was apparently motivated by university administrators and professors who began to recognize the goodwill created by athletic victories, which translated into larger student enrollment” (p. 190). Universities began to notice the uptick in student engagement and enrollment on campus and attributed this to the desire of attending a school in which sport teams were consistently winning. According to Afshar (2014), “even with this rule in place purely for regulating any payments to student-athletes, boosters and alumni sought to gain competitive advantages through illegal payments (p. 107). It was this corruption in college athletics that forced the formation of the NCAA in the first place (Landry & Baker, 2019, p. 8).

Unpacking the history of amateurism in the NCAA, Steele (2015) explains, “one of the major rules from the beginning is that student-athletes are not to be compensated for their athletic performance” (p. 513). The enactment of this idea of a so called “major rule” defines the NCAA as a whole body. Steele (2015) would later add how the rules prescribed by the NCAA were consistently ignored throughout the last century and argued those same rules in no way allowed student-athletes to obtain the modern idea and offer of an athletic scholarship. Afshar (2014) mentions, “this original definition, though not significantly different from today’s definition by words, forbade any sort of receipt of remuneration, *including scholarships*” (p. 107). Without doubt, it is clear the NCAA made a conscious choice to exclude any and all types of payment to student-athletes at the very beginning of their existence.

This decision was maintained for many decades and reinforced by the NCAA in 1948 when the “Sanity Code” was adopted. According to Tatos (2019), “growth in popularity of collegiate athletics coupled with the NCAA’s lack of enforcement powers and reliance of self-policing by its members soon created a significant financial incentive for members to ignore NCAA standards” (p. 389). The NCAA’s solution to this issue was the “Sanity Code,” which “forbade members from offering scholarships based on athletic ability,” however this ruling was abandoned just two years after implementation (Tatos, 2019, p. 389). Accordingly, the creation of grant-in-aid scholarships were awarded to student-athletes for the first time in 1956 (Steele, 2015). In his work, *Playing for Peanuts*, McLeran (2017) explained the following:

Evidently, when the NCAA decided to allow student-athletes to receive athletic scholarships based on their athletic abilities, it contradicted the historic meaning of *amateurism*. The NCAA manipulated “amateurism” to mean a student-athlete who does not receive compensation in excess of an athletic scholarship. If a student-athlete violates

the NCAA's definition of *amateurism*, he or she will be deemed ineligible to participate in NCAA collegiate athletic events. Thus, the formation of amateurism was designed to protect the NCAA's profits generated from its student-athletes (p. 259).

The History of Reform in College Athletics

Just two years after the NCAA adopted its first definition of amateurism, the governing body sought to bring order to intercollegiate athletics in 1921 by, "restricting eligibility for college sports to athletes who received no compensation whatsoever (Gerrie, 2018, p. 114). According to Tatos (2019), a year later in 1922,

The NCAA modified the definition to add the oft-cited term "avocation" and defined the amateur athlete as "one who engages in sport solely for the physical, mental, or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom the sport is nothing more than an avocation (p. 388-89).

While small additions to a definition does not seem a crucial reform, at this point and time for the NCAA any change of direction or intention was a delicate process in developing the future direction of the governing body as a national organization.

In reference to freshman football players at Pittsburgh striking in 1939 because they were receiving less money than the upperclassmen, Crabb (2017) noted, "the 'tradition' of amateurism at this point was pretty weak" (p. 190). The regulatory affairs of the NCAA were just beginning to take shape, and nine years after the Pittsburgh strike more change began to take place across college athletics. Busby (2012) explained, "in 1948, the NCAA got into the business of regulating unfair recruiting practices and subsequently institutional and individual amateurism violations, and business boomed almost immediately for the NCAA" (p. 144).

This regulation by the NCAA was much needed for the sake of controlling university and conference recruiting, the rise of student-athlete popularity, and the existence of the organization itself. In the early 1950s, Crabb (2017) mentioned, “the world of college sports was going through radical change” (p. 191). Ultimately, conferences were competing for players, coaches, and administrators from all over the country. Conferences such as the newly formed Southeastern Conference (SEC) began to dominate the collegiate athletic realm by way of competitive payments to recruits to lure them into member schools. Realizing the newfound national dominance of the SEC, other conferences such as the Big Ten eventually surrendered by way of argument for prohibition of payments to recruits and advocacy for a model of amateurism that had already been established by the NCAA (Crabb, 2017). Thus, taking on the Big Ten’s proposal, the NCAA expanded its reach and power.

Around the same time, a particular refusal by member schools to follow rules forced more reform in which, “the NCAA created its first enforcement committee in 1952 to monitor its member institutions” (Steele, 2015, p. 514). Busby (2012) would add, “breaking NCAA rules is one of the oldest professions associated with the ideals of the NCAA’s amateurism rules” (p. 144). Consequently, with the implementation of regulated amateurism, “sports conferences were turning into substantial commercial enterprises, particularly in basketball and football” (Crabb, 2017, p. 191).

In 1956 widespread and much needed reformation finally reached the NCAA as the governing body, “developed new regulations and amended its bylaws to allow schools to award athletic scholarships to student-athletes” (Sheetz, 2016, p. 870). Steele (2015) further explained how this amendment would, “allow schools to award scholarships that pay for commonly accepted expenses associated with receiving a college education. These include tuition, fees,

room and board, books, and incidental expenses” (Steele, 2015, p. 514). Groves (2016) would add,

It is important to clarify that while many rules promote amateurism, rules specifically relating to scholarships are fundamentally still an economic relationship of providing labor in exchange for compensation. It is therefore legally accurate to view the student-athlete’s receipt of a scholarship as “compensation” in a “commercial transaction” for antitrust purposes (p. 105).

Even so, this proved to be a game changer not only for student-athletes, but for the entire landscape of college sport and what it truly means to be an amateur.

Throughout its legal history, courts were fairly kind to the NCAA regarding its interference with antitrust law. It was the case of *NCAA v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* in 1984 that posed the first serious threat to the NCAA for violating Section 1 of the Sherman Act and restraining trade on the collegiate student-athlete (Steele, 2015). This was a case that ruled the NCAA violated antitrust law and restrained open trade and competition due to the television broadcasting plan the NCAA had put in place for member schools (Steele, 2015). It was decades later in 2009 when *O’Bannon v. NCAA* brought clarity to even deeper antitrust issues within the NCAA.

Edward O’Bannon, a University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) basketball standout, led the way in a suit that claimed, “the NCAA and EA misappropriated O’Bannon’s likeness without compensation” (Afshar, 2014, p. 124). The antitrust epiphany in 2008 stemmed from a scene where O’Bannon was told by his friend’s son that he was depicted in a college basketball video game that had been produced by Electronic Arts (EA). This company had produced men’s

college basketball and football video games from the late 1990s up until 2013. O'Bannon made the claim that he had never consented to the use of his likeness, both body and jersey number alike, and that he had never been compensated for this usage (*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015).

According to *O'Bannon v. NCAA* (2015), "in 2009, O'Bannon sued the NCAA and the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC), the entity which licenses the trademarks of the NCAA and a number of its member schools for commercial use, in federal court" (p. 6).

In light of the *O'Bannon v. NCAA* case, according to Afshar (2014), "in 2011, President of the NCAA, Mark Emmert, pushed through a new rule that would grant Division I universities the right to pay student-athletes a \$2,000 stipend" (p. 107). This move by the current NCAA president proved to be a monumental reform in providing much needed aid amid the mental and physical trials of a collegiate student-athlete in the 21st century. Just a year later the NCAA made even more changes to the model of collegiate athletics when the organization, "began allowing universities to offer multiyear scholarships to student-athletes" (McLeran, 2017, p. 259). While substantial reform has occurred in the NCAA's distant and recent history, none is more pressing and current than the issue of NIL and its impact on the marketing ability of student-athletes in intercollegiate athletics.

The Emergence of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Rights

Ground zero for the NIL controversy lies within the case of *O'Bannon v. NCAA*. In a summary complaint from the plaintiff O'Bannon in this historic lawsuit, Grimmet (2014) stated, "the complaint alleges that the NCAA unreasonably restricted competition by fixing the players' income at 'zero' for the use of their names and likenesses" (p. 830). Along the same lines, Sheetz (2016) noted, "the complaint further alleged that the NCAA unreasonably restrained trade and

commercially exploited former student-athletes by continuing to sell products using their images well after they graduated” (p. 874). Outlining intricate details of the litigation, Crabb (2017) mentioned,

The O’Bannon case centered on NCAA Form 08-3a, which all college athletes were required to sign. The form authorized the NCAA or a third party acting on behalf of the NCAA to use the athletes’ name or picture to generally promote NCAA championships or other NCAA events, activities, or programs (p. 195).

This “giving away” of personal NIL has presented a trying problem for student-athletes across many decades.

In defense, the NCAA argued the “restrictions on compensation are justifiable ‘because they are necessary to preserve its tradition of amateurism, maintain competitive balance..., promote... academics and athletics, and increase the total output of its product’” (Sheetz, 2016, p. 875). It was also around the time of the O’Bannon litigation that another suit against the NCAA, CLC, and EA was brought forth. The case of *Keller v. Elec. Arts Inc.*, while mainly under the radar and considered a sidekick to O’Bannon, was an important force in moving forward with athlete’s rights.

The importance of *Keller v. Elec. Arts Inc.* stems from the suit actually being the first official case arguing for NIL rights for student-athletes and alleging antitrust law violations. According to Afshar (2014), “Sam Keller filed a class action lawsuit against the NCAA, EA, and the CLC, claiming that they engaged in unjust enrichment through unconsented misappropriation of student-athletes’ likenesses, thus violating their right of publicity” (p. 124). Prior to the O’Bannon trial, Afshar (2014) continued, “the NCAA announced that it had settled with Sam Keller, awarding \$20 million to certain Division I men’s basketball and football student-athletes

who attended certain institutions in the years the video games were sold” (p. 125). Although *Keller v. Elec. Arts Inc.* may have held just as much or even more value, it was consolidated in pretrial with *O’Bannon v. NCAA* due to such large similarities.

After consolidation, the plaintiffs dismissed damages claims and “settled their claims against EA and CLC, and the district court preliminarily approved the settlement” (*O’Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015, p. 7). According to *O’Bannon v. NCAA* (2015), “it contended that amateurism had been one of the NCAA's core principles since its founding and that amateurism is a key driver of college sports' popularity with consumers and fans” (p. 9). While the idea may be argued that student-athletes participating as amateurs drives popularity for collegiate sport, it did not receive substantial traction as a reasonable purpose for restraining trade.

Following the settlement, the two previously consolidated cases were then deconsolidated in order to proceed with the antitrust claims of O’Bannon in 2014. These claims inevitably went to a bench trial before the district court (*O’Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015). During the bench trial many different effects had to be taken into consideration such as, the college education market, the group licensing market, amateurism, the, anticompetitive effects, procompetitive purposes, and competitive balance. It was the District Court’s decision in this trial that would affect the future of intercollegiate sport.

The class action suit of *O’Bannon v. NCAA* may have first burst onto the scene in 2009, but what is known today as the NIL rights of a student-athlete began to take shape in intercollegiate athletics in the fall of 2014. During that time the U.S District Court for the Northern District of California provided an injunction that ultimately halted the NCAA’s historic ban on legal student-athlete compensation (Sheetz, 2016). Revealing the court’s findings, Gerrie (2018) noted, “they found the NCAA is indeed subject to the rule of reason and not exempt from

schemes, which exhibit restraint on a student-athlete's trade" (p. 111). Sheetz (2016) would later add, "the court held that NCAA regulations precluding student-athletes from receiving a share of revenue from their own names, images, and likenesses violated the antitrust laws, specifically section 1 of the Sherman Act" (p. 867).

Moreover, *O'Bannon v. NCAA* proved to be the first federal appellate court case that ruled in favor of O'Bannon and the unreasonable restraint of trade on collegiate student-athletes (Mitten, 2016). This decision both changed the fabric of intercollegiate athletics and simultaneously set up the student-athlete for future compensation and NIL marketing success. In regard to the repercussion of the *O'Bannon v. NCAA* decision, Lush (2015) expressed, "while the NCAA may be reluctant to adjust its rules regarding student athletes' NIL, the O'Bannon decision proved that the U.S. judicial system is a viable means of relief for student athletes" (P. 779-80).

Post-*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, the emergence of NIL within antitrust violations only progressed forward in college sport. More and more information concerning the life, sacrifice, and value of the student athlete continued to come to the surface in the following years. Gerrie (2018) reported,

The average value of a student-athlete at a top 25 ranked school is \$487,617 and they are essentially performing the equivalent of two jobs. Today, the average student- athlete spends 43.3 hours per week on athletics, and 37.3 hours on academics. Their summer breaks are 10 days, instead of 10 weeks, and any optional activities are effectively mandatory if they wish to keep their spot on the team. (p. 116).

The worth and marketing capability of the student-athlete seems to be only increasing year after year, while in 2014 alone, “the NCAA reported \$989 million in revenue and \$665 million in net assets. Of this massive financial windfall about \$681 million came from multimedia, marketing, and licensing, all of which use student-athletes’ likeness” (Gerrie, 2018, p. 115). Alongside student-athletes, the marketability and popularity of the NCAA and its member institutions only increases in revenue as each year passes, thus prompting one to reconsider the rights and earned compensation of the collegiate athlete.

Detailing the possible influence of *O’Bannon v. NCAA* on the future of intercollegiate sport, Sheetz (2016) explains,

Although *O’Bannon’s* ultimate impact on the NCAA is still unknown, it did not hold the death sentence for amateurism that many anticipated it would. It is, however, indicative of the need for a drastic change to the NCAA and its relationship with athletic conferences, universities, and student-athletes (p. 893).

It is obvious the *O’Bannon v. NCAA* decision had created certain positive changes with respect to student-athlete rights, but there still remained more to be done. In September of 2019, that “more” came to the surface in the form of California Senate Bill 206. According to Senate Bill 206, State of California Education Code Section 67456 (2019),

A postsecondary educational institution shall not uphold any rule, requirement, standard, or other limitation that prevents a student of that institution participating in intercollegiate athletics from earning compensation as a result of the use of the student’s name, image, or likeness. Earning compensation from the use of a student’s name, image, or likeness shall not affect the student’s scholarship eligibility (sec. 2).

A single state had concluded that the only way to challenge the power of the NCAA in intercollegiate athletics was through governmental authority. The state of California legally passed a bill giving all in-state student-athletes the ability to profit from their NIL while remaining eligible to play their given college sport. This action was unprecedented not only in state-level government, but also in successfully undercutting NCAA amateurism rules and regulations.

It was at this point in 2019 a national race began to best understand how a state by state governmental NIL intervention could work to achieve nationwide NIL capabilities for all student-athletes, or if the federal government would somehow intervene with the insight of the NCAA, or vice-versa. While there is no definitive decision from the NCAA or the state or federal government, the issue of NIL will be solved sooner rather than later. Landry and Baker (2019) note, “there is no reason in law or common sense for the NCAA’s NIL restrictions, which are ripe for judicial review following the decisions in both *Grant-in-Aid* and *O’Bannon* (p. 3). The NCAA is aware of what is currently at stake for the traditional model of amateurism and its own interests as an organization, yet Landry and Baker (2019) additionally warn, “drastic changes to the NCAA’s NIL policy are on the way, and the NCAA needs them to protect its underlying mission” (p. 3).

Media Content Analysis in Sport

The analysis of mass media documents, particularly print or online content is nothing short of complex, as “the study of sport communication may produce unique perspective and different approaches” (Yoo, et al., 2013, p. 15). A main reason for studying sport media is to understand why “we have seen how the media are a force in sports, shaping the reality for sports consumers” (Eitzen, 2016, p. 169). Sport media content research has seemingly only increased in

recent decades. According to Yoo et al. (2013), “as the mediated and commercialized sport culture has become an integral part of social life in contemporary society, research in sport communication has drawn special attention from scholars” (p. 9).

In an explanation of how mass media interact with the sport consumer and society as a whole, Eitzen (2016) noted, “the media provide information and entertainment. More subtly, they provide a collective experience for members of society, contributing to their socialization and serving to integrate persons into that culture” (p. 157-58). One theory that is prevalent in mass media research and has attributed to the experience and perspective of sport media consumers is commonly referred to as framing in sport media. Yoo et al. (2013) provided a detailed description: “framing theory refers to the active process involving the selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media and its effects on the understanding of a message by media consumers” (p. 12).

While the consumer may desire the direct, untampered sporting news without a specific frame to read through or an altered perception, it is still “the media’s decisions on what to emphasize and what to ignore or whitewash” (Eitzen, 2016, p. 162). Even so, selecting content or specific issues and purposefully framing may commonly involve political ideologies, even though “sport is often considered an apolitical space” (Deeb & Love, 2018, p. 97). In the end, regardless of political infusion in sport media content or not, “clearly, the media do not present a clear window through which we observe sports. Rather the image is an edited version that distorts that reality” (Eitzen, 2016, p. 162).

In a study on the effect of sport commentator framing on viewer attitudes, Parker and Fink (2008) indicated, “a frame refers to how information is organized, including what is made to seem important and what is left out or made to seem unimportant, when presented to an

audience” (p. 117). Similarly, a study conducted on the media framing of concussions in the NFL by Karimipour and Hull (2017) suggested, “how the media packages information and presents it to the public can have profound effects on how they interpret and make sense of such issues (p. 46). Additionally, on the importance of framing, Karimipour and Hull (2017) noted it, “is useful in sports-media research because it enables researchers to examine issues more deeply to understand how such issues are presented to and understood by the public” (p. 46). Finally, Karimipour and Hull (2017) specifically examined sources quoted, such as the number and percentage of articles a source appeared in. Quoted sources are a particularly important aspect of framing in order to understand what specific sources are used in developing media consumer perception. In the case of amateurism and NIL rights, gathering quoted sources and calculating the percentage of articles those sources appeared in amplifies understanding of the issue as a whole and whose voices are heard.

Chapter III: Methodology

Method

Design

Following the approach of Altheide and Schneider (2013), the current study involved a qualitative media analysis of sources that are quoted in media coverage of amateurism in college sports. Specifically, the study examined the ways in which these quoted sources were used to frame the issue of amateurism and the question of whether college athletes should be able to receive financial compensation. Throughout this study, the investigator explored multiple themes and narratives that became present throughout the articles chosen. These themes, according to Altheide and Schneider (2013), “are general definitions or interpretive frames” and “are the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of the reports” (p. 52-53). The investigator identified principal themes from the quoted sources concerning amateurism in college athletics, explored how amateurism is framed in the media, and from what perspective (Welch et al., 1997).

Data Collection

The data collected for the current study included both print and online media articles published between January 2019 – January 2021. The selected starting point of 2019 was chosen considering the excess of articles published in the given time frame, the continued progression of NIL publicity in recent years, the emergence of cases such as *Alston v. NCAA*, and countless newfound NIL legislation (e.g. The College Athletes Bill of Rights). The end point of January 2021 was chosen as it is necessary to collect data from the most current date possible due to the relevance and progressive nature of this issue. Potential news stories and articles were identified using Internet search engines (i.e., Google) and news databases (i.e., NexisUni) (Deeb & Love,

2018). Alongside these search functions, the selected articles were identified by searching key words on specific news sites of certain sport media outlets (i.e., *Sports Illustrated*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *ESPN*) (Deeb & Love, 2018). The primary search was performed by combining the key search term “amateurism” with the terms “NCAA” or “student-athlete.” Other key search terms were specific to amateurism, such as “name, image, and likeness (NIL)” and “pay for play.” Next, potential articles to include in the study were identified. Inclusion criteria for articles that were analyzed in this study included both (1) articles discussing amateurism in collegiate athletics and (2) those quoting a specific source (e.g., coaches, administrators, lawmakers, athletes). Exclusion criteria for this study included any article that (1) does not directly discuss student-athlete amateurism and (2) any article that does not quote an involved source.

Data Analysis

The investigator analyzed the narratives from the media coverage of student-athlete amateurism, following the qualitative media analysis approach of Altheide and Schneider (2013). The data analysis was separated into different stages. First, the investigator read through all of the chosen articles to identify what particular sources were quoted in each article. This stage addressed a key portion of the study’s overall purpose: what specific sources are directly quoted in chosen articles? Second, the investigator extracted each identified quote from the articles and categorized them based on the source represented (e.g., coaches, administrators, athletes). Then within each category, quotes were coded for meaning. Fourth, and finally, the codes were compared across source categories and major themes and sub-themes were identified.

Chapter IV: Findings

Findings

Following the process outlined in the method, a total of 113 media articles were identified for further analysis. The earliest article included in the sample was published on January 7, 2019 and the most recent article was published January 20, 2021. Of the 113 articles, 41 articles were published in 2019, 62 were published in 2020, and 10 articles were published in 2021. Throughout the data collection process, the investigator focused on which sources were quoted and how many times they were quoted in each individual article. Similar to the work of Welch et al. (1997), the unit of analysis in this study was each specific quote included in the articles collected. It is important to note that different specified persons who were quoted under the same source were counted multiple times if quoted in the same article. For example, two different federal legislators quoted in the same article were noted as two quotes in the “politician” category for the specified article.

However, if the specified individual source was quoted more than once throughout the article, the quote count remained at one. By way of illustration, NCAA President Mark Emmert quoted multiple times throughout one article would remain counted as one quote toward the collected data for specified article. Differences can be seen in data collection in how many articles a source category was quoted in when compared to the total number of quotes gathered for that source. In reference to the NCAA, the organization was quoted 79 times yet only present in 67 articles (see Table 1).

Table 1. Source article presence, frequency of presence, and total source quotes collected in online media coverage of amateurism, pay for play, and name, image, and likeness.

Source Quoted	Articles Present	Article Frequency	Total Quotes
The NCAA	67	59.29%	79
Politicians	54	47.48%	112
Collegiate Athletic Directors	26	23.00%	37
Student-Athlete Advocacy Groups	26	23.00%	30
Conferences/Commissioners	23	20.35%	25
University Administration	20	17.69%	17
Former/Professional Athletes	17	15.04%	22
Sport Historians/College Professors	16	14.15%	15
Attorneys/Judges	12	10.61%	20
Collegiate Head Coaches	8	7.07%	15
Separate News Journalist/Reporter	6	5.30%	8
Current Division I Student-Athletes	6	5.30%	7
Player Agents	2	1.76%	3
Edward O'Bannon	2	1.76%	2
Miscellaneous (One Quote Sources)	7	6.19%	7

Of the 113 articles chosen, there were a total of 403 quotes gathered and analyzed by the investigator to understand what the source was saying in the given context of the current amateurism climate as well as the context of the article itself. A portion of the categories displayed in the findings are a single identifying marker and/or job position, while other categories encompass multiple sources and identifying titles or markers.

Type of Source Quoted

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Of the 403 total quotes collected and coded from 113 articles, the NCAA governing body was found to be present in the most articles overall (n = 67). The NCAA source category is not singular, but encompasses the NCAA president, chief officers, and administrators within the NCAA. This category also includes quotes from “the NCAA,” as it was stated throughout multiple articles, not specifying a particular person behind the quote. The NCAA was quoted a total number of 79 times throughout the collected articles. Of these 79 quotes, there were a total of 39 taken from the NCAA President Mark Emmert directly and the remaining quotes from other NCAA sources. It was decided by the investigator that the NCAA and the NCAA president should be conjoined as a united category but collected and specified separately due to the varying nature of language used by the president in comparison to the NCAA itself as a governing body.

Politicians.

A second source found to have substantial representation and the largest number of quotes (n = 112) gathered came from politicians. Yet, while this source is atop the list for most quotes, the source category ranked second in article presence (54 articles present). This revealed

that although politicians are not quoted most consistently throughout the articles examined, there were many different individual politicians quoted at a high rate in specific articles (e.g. six different politicians in one article). This was demonstrated throughout collection, as two or more politicians were quoted throughout 32 articles. This shows that not only were two or more politicians present in 28.31% of the total article sample, but there are two or more politicians present in over half (59.29%) of the total number of articles with quotes from politicians. This is important to note taking into consideration that while the NCAA was present in 67 articles, two or more NCAA sources were only present in 12 articles (10.61%).

The overreaching source category of politicians encompasses state governors, state senators and representatives, and federal senators and representatives. These multiple positions were categorized into a single category due to the overwhelming evidence of similar language, message, and agenda put forth by all of these separate entities. This consolidation also takes into consideration that all members hold public office in the United States and were elected to hold that office. All members reside in the political arena in their day to day lives, and all are in some way involved at the governmental level.

Collegiate Athletic Directors.

Tied for the third most frequently represented source according to article presence was collegiate athletic directors. This category is solely specific to collegiate athletic directors with no other consolidated specific sources. Athletic directors were deemed by the investigator to have a differing, outspoken voice that was unique compared to any other university administrator or coaching position, therefore this category was kept separate from any other university involved official. Athletic directors were present in 26 articles and quoted more as a group (37 quotes) than the collective category “university administration,” which covers multiple sources

(17 quotes). These criteria, along with specific quote context, were sufficient evidence for the investigator to categorize collegiate athletic directors as an individual source entity.

Student-Athlete Advocacy Groups.

Throughout collection, there were many companies and chief executive officers (CEOs) of those companies who were quoted by the authors. These executives were quoted in context as advocating for not only student-athletes, but for the progression of NIL legislation and change to the current collegiate model of amateurism. Included with them in this category is the National Players Association, a student-athlete advocacy association designed for representing student-athletes across the nation. Namely, the executive director, Ramogi Huma, was quoted directly. Conjoined into one source category, these sources were quoted a total 30 times, and represented in 26 articles. These two groups were joined into a single category due to the openness and constant advocacy they put forth for the student-athlete body as whole.

Conferences/Conference Commissioners.

The next source category identified throughout collection was conferences and conference commissioners. This category covers both quotes from conferences as a whole and individual conference commissioners. Like the NCAA category, multiple quote sources were simply identified as a specific conference (e.g. “the SEC said...”) without identifying the actual person or persons behind the quote. However, there were specific conference commissioners identified in other quotes collected. These two sources were quoted a total of 25 times throughout the sample, and present in 23 articles. The combination of these two sources was very simplistic, taking into consideration the commissioners reside over their conferences as a whole, and the consistent message that is spoken between the two.

University Administration.

The source category termed “university administration” covers a range of individuals who are present within the collegiate athletics experience and university athletic departments. These sources were present in 20 articles and quoted a total of 17 times. Many of the group’s quotes were gathered separately during collection but joined together at the end due to the overarching university umbrella covering four groups. Two university officials with an influential tone in this group include university presidents and chancellors. Two others within the university system include compliance, and unspecified university administration.

Former/Professional Athletes.

Current professional athletes were consolidated with former professional or collegiate athletes to represent a quoted category. The sources in this category were identified as at some point formerly participating in a collegiate or professional sport, or currently competing in professional sport. Although all may not have played professional sport, they also may not have all played collegiate sport. For example, a current NBA player drafted straight out of high school, foregoing college. It is important to note that none of the sources in this category currently participated in collegiate sport at the time the article was written. This source category was represented in 17 articles and quoted a total of 22 times throughout those articles. These individual sources were aligned due to the similar language spoken from similar experiences.

Sport Historian/College Professor

The category of sport historian and college professor was formed out of commonalities between the two such as an overarching knowledge and expertise in collegiate athletics. The very title sport historian deems one capable of detailing collegiate athletic issues, and many professors throughout colleges are known to specialize in certain areas such as sport law or college athletic

issues. At different points in certain articles these individuals were identified as both a professor and sport historian. These two sources were present in a total of 16 articles while being quoted 15 times combined.

Judges/Attorneys.

In the newfound dilemma surrounding NIL, the issue has reached many levels of court involving a multitude of entities. Since this onset of legal action and court involvement, many judges and attorneys have been asked to give opinions on the very issue of NIL. Thus, a category was needed for attorneys and judges who were quoted throughout the sample of articles. Many of these quotes were not direct quotes from the source to the articles author or reporter, yet the quotes came from court decisions or arguments. This source category was quoted a total of 20 times while present in only 12 articles. These specific sources were joined together due to the similar nature of their remarks in context and the comparable work of the two positions.

Collegiate Head Coaches.

The position of a head coach in college sport carries much weight when discussing issues surrounding the student-athlete. This is partially due to the role and responsibility of the head coach to lead and care for the younger, inexperienced athlete. The separation of this source category from all other university related sources, including athletic directors, was intentional by the investigator to openly reveal the voice of the head coaches who choose to speak and were quoted on the issue of amateurism. Collegiate head coaches were present in 8 articles and quoted a total of 15 times. While on the surface this may infer that there were multiple sources quoted throughout the sum of articles head coaches were present in, it proves to be an inaccurate assumption. Only 3 articles (2.65%) presented quotes from two or more head coaches. The anomaly lies within two articles which seven head coaches were present between the pair.

Separate News Journalist/Reporter.

As it is with many sources, the specific identity and work may exclude a source from being combined with any others. This was the case for news journalists who were quoted throughout the sample. The work done by these reporters was deemed to be distinct by the investigator when compared to other source quotes, thus the source category was held to a singular category. News journalists and reporters were present in 6 articles while being quoted a total of 8 times.

Current Division I Student-Athletes.

Even though student-athletes may be the very topic of discussion in the amateurism debate, the representation of these athletes remains an intriguing point of conversation. Of the 113-article sample, there were only 6 total articles discovered in which current student-athletes were present. Likewise, of the 403 collected quotes, there were only 7 quotes that derived from student-athletes. These findings reveal that student-athletes are both present in only 5.3% of the total article sample, and that there is only 1 article (.088%) in which there are two or more student-athlete sources present.

Player Agents.

In recent NIL discussion and court proceedings, the involvement of player agents has been of popular debate. The role that an agent could possibly play in the life of a superstar teenager has been seen throughout various professional sport teams, although allowing this certain entity into collegiate sport has sparked interest and outrage. Regardless, player agents were hardly recognized in the sample, with a presence in only 2 articles, and 3 total quotes. An interesting dynamic within the two articles did show that when sport agents were quoted it tended to be an in-depth conversation throughout the length of the article. While this occurred

often with many sources throughout collection, it did seem odd when considering player agent's presence in only two articles.

Edward O'Bannon.

Although a source with such a low quote count could have obviously, and easily, been added within the source category of "student-athlete advocacy groups" or "former/professional athletes." Edward O'Bannon was chosen by the investigator to be left alone as a single category. One of the originators and pioneers in the name, image, and likeness battle for student-athletes, the voice of O'Bannon speaks deep volumes into the discourse surrounding this historic issue. Yet, to have such widely known impact, O'Bannon was only present in a total of 2 articles (1.76%) and quoted 2 times out of the collected 403. This came of particular surprise knowing the very language of "name, image, and likeness" grew roots in the class action lawsuit of *NCAA v. O'Bannon*.

Miscellaneous (One Quote Sources).

The final source category was created in order to house the quotes collected from sources that were only present one time throughout the sample of articles. These sources were never quoted in more than one particular article and their presence was specific to each article context. There were 7 separate individual sources that were found to be present in the 7 articles, thus one quote from each article. While the inconsistency of these few quotes is obvious, the contribution of the sources was found to be both timely and effective for the surrounding discussion in each article and the issue of amateurism itself.

Themes Present in Quotations

A National Endeavor.

One prominent framing by members of the media was the theme of a national effort throughout quotes from the NCAA and politicians, but also discussed in multiple other categories from a variety of sources. The disconnect between motives for seeking federal involvement is the detail underneath the overarching umbrella of a national solution. While state governments did their early work on the issue of NIL, the NCAA sluggishly attempted to draw out the issue as long as possible without any definitive action. This led to the passing of a bill such as SB-206 in a state like California that houses 58 NCAA member schools. This bill led to a “national movement” by other state governments who were just as eager to offer free market rights to student-athletes.

Meanwhile, according to the NCAA, the ideal way of change was through themselves. In an article from *NBC News*, Li (2019) reported a statement from the governing body expressing, “As a membership organization, the NCAA agrees changes are need to continue to support student-athletes, but improvement needs to happen on a national level through the NCAA’s rules-making process.” However, the wave of NIL changes had seemingly surpassed the power of the organization and a national movement at the state level was underway regardless of the NCAA’s involvement. Post SB-206, the NCAA no longer possessed the formidable control over the modeling of collegiate athletics, and it showed.

This was a defining moment in the NIL chronicles as the NCAA sought to retain rule and reign but could no longer afford inaction on the issue. Even Mark Emmert, the current NCAA president, voiced concerns that this issue must be solved as a national process. According to Maese (2019), Emmert stated:

I feel very strongly, as do all the universities, that college sports shouldn't be run out of the federal government, and so far I haven't met a legislator that disagrees. . . . But in terms of addressing these issues and creating a legally valid model in which the schools can provide more than they do now — whatever that might look like has to be created at a national level.

It is striking that even though Emmert recognized a resolution coming at “a national level,” the highly criticized president failed to indicate what national process would be responsible for “creating a legally valid model.” During analysis, Emmert provided deeper description into issues at hand, while the NCAA tended to be more superficial. Yet in separate articles written by different members of the media, both parties are aligned using the same language of “national level” in referencing the collegiate model reform.

To introduce further perspective on the national effort by involved parties, a *Fox Business* article quotes Elizabeth McCurrach, a sports attorney for BakerHostetler, saying, “while the NCAA has traditionally been opposed to the federal government's involvement in regulating college sports, a federal solution would likely offer them a seat at the table to protect their interests” (Barrabi, 2020). McCurrach, seems to be expressing that federal government intervention might be beneficial for the NCAA, as it would give them “a seat at the table to protect their interests.”

While possible confusion can be formed from statements by the NCAA and president Emmert as to the avenue of resolution, there were definitive descriptors from politician sources cited by media members. Both state and federal politicians involved all communicated a similar message of a federal solution to an issue that could have been solved earlier by the NCAA itself. It became obvious that reporters were frequently quoting certain sources in order to continually

frame this as a national issue. Reported by Camera (2019) in a *U.S. News* article, Democratic Senator Chris Murphy (CT) stated the following,

I would like to see us work with the NCAA and work with student-athletes to come up with a federal solution that not only addresses the issue of having access to revenue through name, image, and likeness, but also speaks to issues of broader compensation and perhaps a fairer mechanism of compensation than simply making money off endorsement deals.

It is notable that Senator Murphy's language of a "federal solution" in comparison to the NCAA's "national level" can lead to an assumption that the two entities are at odds when it comes to how the solution should be reached, considering the NCAA is a national body capable of function without federal involvement. But, the two are actually in agreement and express the same basic idea: that there is a need for policies that apply universally across the NCAA rather than state-level policies. Even so, it was still thematically obvious the holistic push by both the mass media and these quoted sources for a national level resolution to help solve the issue of collegiate amateurism, and the issue of NIL.

Blurred Lines: Employees, Professionals, Students?

Despite the desire by many quoted sources to one and for all clarify student-athletes as employees or professionals in upcoming legislation, the NCAA has never hinted at the idea. Instead, the national governing body insists this type of professionalism and/or university employment will destroy the world of college athletics as we know it. In the NCAA's recent court quarrel, the organization submitted documents to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals asking to review the decision against them, rendering a violation of antitrust law. Barnes & Maese (2020) specifically and intentionally reported a brief section of the documents the organization

put forth in its filing which stated, “The rule changes that the 9th Circuit’s decision requires, moreover, will fundamentally transform the century-old institution of NCAA sports, blurring the traditional line between college and professional athletes.”

This “blurring the traditional line” speech is consistently spoken by the NCAA within the sample of articles and used by members of the media to amplify the organization’s history of traditional institutionalized amateurism perspective. To the NCAA, any outspoken critic of amateurism or proponent of reformed NIL legislation is only blurring lines and creating confusion to what student-athletes are or are not, thus assuming the organization’s subjective approach to amateurism is inherently moral. Meanwhile, it seems the NCAA sub-consciously lingers in a self-imposed blur by rejecting every notion of the possible professionalization of student-athletes it claims to represent.

The NCAA also noted any type of bill that resembled the likeness of SB-208, “would erase the critical distinction between college and professional athletics” (Maese, 2019). President Emmert agreed in his comments, as Maese (2019) further revealed in *The Washington Post* article,

Virtually everybody is in agreement that moving forward on this and related issues makes sense, and this is a really good time to be doing it, Emmert said. At the same time, they also made clear some really important parameters: that college sports always needs to be about students playing other students, not about hired employees playing other hired employees.

A vital recognition to these comments from NCAA officials would be an indication of both a blurred model of collegiate athletics that treats student-athletes as professionals or employees, and a clear model when the “correct” distinction is made between student and professional. This

representation in the media reveals the specific operating parameters of the NCAA and its president and could prove a fascinating framing through which the NIL debate is seen.

Maintaining the Collegiate Model.

The intentional barrage and consistent quoting of the NCAA by reporters is bound to produce strikingly similar narratives or frames that the governing body has constructed in past releases. Maintaining the collegiate model is one of these frames through which the NCAA sees the current issue of amateurism and NIL, and the frame pushed by the mass media as well. The inevitable resurfacing of maintaining a model that is significant to the NCAA and their interpretation of collegiate sport is purely historic. This is the history of the NCAA and its partners.

Through the lens of this frame, the NCAA is in support of a single amateurism-based model outcome for the student-athlete body both historically and in current debate. This is shown clearly in a quote chosen by a reporter in reference to opposing SB-206 in which the NCAA stated, “this directly contradicts the mission of college sports within higher education — that student-athletes are students first and choose to play a sport they love against other students while earning a degree” (Hobson, 2019).

In reference to certain types of new NIL regulations, the NCAA stated its desire for these rules to be “consistent with the collegiate model” in an article by *USA Today* (Skinner & Wilk, 2020). This has been a frame through which many spectators, fans, and student-athletes have seen college sport for decades. It is a frame still present in modern print and online media, and a frame the NCAA continually clings to for any sort of organizational life. It is an “all or nothing” type of frame in which the reporter or governing body seemingly convince the audience of a collegiate athletics experience that can only exist within a historically vetted, “student”-athlete

centered model. This frame will continue to pose a threat to any sort of reform within college athletics and has done so since the birth of the NCAA.

We Need Help.

NCAA president Mark Emmert may strategically align with his organization on the vast majority of issues, yet throughout the sample it was evident the media members quoted the president's personal thoughts and verbal emotions just as frequently. He consistently spoke in a manner that was both welcoming of federal assistance and inferred the NCAA were theoretically helpless without that assistance, contrary to any statements in the sample from the governing body as a whole.

"I said, 'We need your help right now.' I think the debate and the discussion is well past the ability of a group of states to resolve," Emmert said in an article written by Maese (2019) and filled with an overwhelming number of quotes from the current president. Emmert would follow up in later comments after a meeting with senators on Capitol Hill saying,

Having, in the end, 50 different state laws is a challenge to anything that's trying to be operated at a national level around the country. So, having this discussion be elevated to the congressional level, I think, is very, very good and certainly welcome in my point of view (Maese, 2019).

According to Emmert himself, it has been around 115 years since the NCAA had congressional involvement (Maese, 2019). Understanding this context produces perspective that is crucial in understanding how a desperate president is such a key aspect by which the ongoing NIL issue is framed.

In his continued plea with the federal government for assistance, an article by *The New York Times* quoted the current president saying, "I don't believe the N.C.A.A. should be the

entity that's in the middle of this arrangement," Mark Emmert, the N.C.A.A.'s president, said. "I think that's inappropriate" (Brassil, 2020). These type of unfiltered comments from Emmert are a forced expression derived from years earlier in *O'Bannon v. NCAA* in which the NCAA was called on to correct past wrongs and give rights back to the student-athlete, yet only now are we seeing the repercussions of this decision and the national confusion it has created.

Reforming a Broken Model.

It is no mystery that the way in which college athletics are run under the supervision of the NCAA has been a focus of great criticism for decades. The rights of student-athletes have resurfaced over and over again throughout the prosperity of the governing body. Many have called it "unfair" or "illegal" to withhold rightfully earned compensation and marketing rights from the student-athlete body. However, the frame used throughout quotes from politicians seems to be referencing the same type of issue, instead using language such as "a broken system" of college athletics. The idea that not only are there a few hiccups here and there within the NCAA, but the entire system of the governance could be broken.

Cory Booker, a current democratic U.S. senator for the state of New Jersey was quoted in an article released by *Sports Illustrated* expressing,

The system is broken right now. I'm sure that only once is not fair, says Booker. I have grown dissatisfied with the NCAA's talk of a lot of reforms and their failure to implement them. They've failed to police themselves and protect athletes as they should (Dellenger, 2020).

Monumental mistakes or an internal blow up does not seem to be downfall of the NCAA, yet it is a repeated failure to "police themselves" and an intentional denial of student-athlete rights year after year that consequently shines the unwanted spotlight in their direction. Through this frame

the failures of the NCAA as a national governing body are magnified, and the those tasked with fixing the “broken system” are shown to be hungry for change.

The Double Standard.

Politicians not only discussed multiple reasons as to why they were in opposition to the NCAA’s stance on student-athlete rights, but of all the sources quoted, politicians were the most bluntly expressive source confronting the issue of NIL. When it comes to compensating student-athletes, or paying them their “fair share,” politicians never hesitated on their stance behind what many call the double standard of college athletics. In a response to a tweet from NBA All-Star LeBron James concerning NIL compensation, *The New York Times* reported a quote from Vermont Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders expressing, “college athletes are workers. Pay them” (Witz, 2019). Definitive language such as this from the senator frames the issue of NIL similar to many politician quotes: college sport is rooted in a double standard.

This idea of a double standard implies a setting where the workers produce a product worth billions of dollars and fail to receive any direct compensation for their work. Richard Blumenthal, a Democratic Senator from Connecticut, agreed on the double standard of college athletics in an article when he stated, “put the athletes first. Colleges ought to hear that message loud and clear. College athletes must receive fair compensation for their work” (Giambalvo, 2020). It is a must according to the senator. Not a want. Not a desire. It is a must. Student-athletes must receive fair compensation for the work they produce.

Complicated is an Understatement.

The complexity of bringing never before seen compensation and marketing rights into an organizational model built on the amateurism of student-athletes cannot be overlooked. This prominent frame is one of the most key concepts within the NIL discussion. The reality: NIL

legislation is a very deep, complex issue that must be solved over an extended period of time. It is an issue that is highly debatable from varying perspectives with downfalls and positive outcomes from each solution offered. This complexity was at the forefront of arguably the most important leaders in college sport. Athletic directors, conference commissioners, and university presidents all fell victim to the unrelenting issue and what it could mean for student-athletes and collegiate sport as a whole.

In an article written by the *Courier Journal*, Louisville athletic director Vince Tyra expressed concerns over the NIL debate: “different things are going on and how this fits, it’s a real challenge. I can’t imagine there’s been a more complex challenge for the NCAA” (Sullivan, 2019). Jeremiah Donati, Texas Christian University athletic director, had similar feelings on the issue of NIL when he said, “It has potential to be a wild, wild west situation, which is scary as an athletic director” (Sullivan, 2019). South Dakota State athletic director Justin Snell went even deeper into detail as he responded,

There are some very good examples of where student-athletes are being more like just students; where they have an opportunity to generate money on, say, creating an app on a phone, not related to athletics. Why can’t they figure out how to monetize that? I think most of us in our industry are good with that. If you get into name, image and likeness and it gets into, like, jersey sales, that’s when it starts to get a little more complicated and difficult to untangle (Sullivan, 2019).

Athletic directors across the country remain fearful and perplexed by the current climate surrounding student-athlete amateurism and what the future holds for their athletic departments.

The issue of NIL reached even further as it occupied the attention of conferences as a whole, including commissioners. Craig Thompson, commissioner of the Mountain West Conference, mentioned, "so, it's really a deep and muddled issue, all getting back to the basic premise: Should they be compensated in some way or form because they're a good athlete? Which is completely counter to the NCAA amateurism model" (Sullivan, 2019). Thompson brought the issue back down to earth as he mentioned NIL complications, while understanding the issue still comes back to the basics of compensating student-athletes or maintaining amateurism. To sum up the approach and mentality of athletic directors, commissioners, and university administration, according to an article published by the *Indianapolis Star*, Ohio State University president Michael Drake named the NIL issue "uncharted territory" (Doyel, 2020).

Anti-Trustworthy.

The issue of anti-trust violations have been nothing short of a thorn in the side of the NCAA. It is the continual constitutional weakness that many accusers use against the governing body. NIL legislation is no different. Anti-trust remains at the forefront as it did in recent years with *NCAA v. O'Bannon*. A voice in great advocacy for the student-athlete body and in staunch opposition to the NCAA as an organization is Ramogi Huma, president and founder of the National College Players Association. In one of his many statements regarding NIL, he declared, "the NCAA is now a serial offender of antitrust laws, and that should say a lot" (Hobson, 2019). Standing along-side Huma was Kenneth Shropshire, CEO of Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University and former NCAA consultant. An article written in *The State Press* quoted Shropshire responding to student-athletes having the ability to earn from their NIL. This quote aligned with Huma in a way that reveals the restraint of trade on student-athletes, not even allowing the simple, human right of free market profits from NIL. Shropshire said, "there's really

no good reason not to allow someone to participate in the American dream and be profitable where you can be profitable" (Horst, 2020).

Perspective.

Head coaches in collegiate athletics are often questioned concerning their boosted salaries and the persistent amateurism of the athletes they mentor and coach on a daily basis. However, throughout the sample of responses from head coaches, there was no apparent theme that developed, unlike most other source categories. Yet, the head coaches quoted rarely spoke about the same details within the overarching NIL issue and offered a variety of differing opinions. This would also speak to complications NIL presents, even for those responsible for personally mentoring student-athletes. Overall, there were four sub-themes discovered in quotes from collegiate head coaches: everybody always, educational and favorable, COVID-19 professionalism, and student-athlete luxury.

Everybody Always.

A large focal point of NIL discourse has detailed the marketing ability of elite athletes in college sport. This would be partly due to nationwide coverage and fame of college football and basketball stars, and in part due to the high revenue generation of the two sports. The underlying issue stems from a high neglect for non-revenue generating sports role in NIL legislation and the issue of fairness between revenue or non-revenue generating sports.

If student-athletes were to be partially compensated from the revenue they generate, would it only include elite athletes who actually generate the profit or be inclusive of all sports across campus? This is the question haunting many head coaches from different sports. Two of the most highly respected and veteran coaches in college basketball spoke up concerning this

possible inequity. Rick Barnes, the head coach of The University of Tennessee men's basketball team, shared his thoughts:

My deal is, if you're going to pay revenue sports, the other athletes should be paid. Or nobody should get paid. . . I just think when you talk about paying athletes, it's everybody. You can't just stop it with revenue-generating sports (Sullivan, 2019).

Barnes, the 2019 Naismith Coach of the Year, is known for candid speech throughout his career, and he expressed how other coaches along with himself feel about the fair compensation of all student-athletes.

Florida State men's basketball head coach Leonard Hamilton shared the same sentiment as Barnes. When asked about the impact of NIL on student-athletes, he responded,

How do you be fair to that small percentage of elite athletes, as well as not being unfair to the kids who are not considered elite: the general population of college athletics? . . . Let's really have some meaningful discussion so that we have a better understanding potentially, how this can affect the overall position of the college's role in the grand scheme of things and hopefully we can come to some conclusion that's fair to everybody (Sullivan, 2019).

A non-revenue sport head coach joined the experienced basketball coaches in her plea for her own athletes to be considered throughout legislation. Ohio State track & cross-country director Karen Dennis implored legislators, "as you craft legislation to increase student opportunities, I ask that you do so with an eye not just toward revenue-generating sports, but also to sports like those I am privileged to coach" (Dellenger, 2020).

Educational and Favorable.

Two-time national champion and head coach of Villanova men's basketball Jay Wright is in his 20th season at the helm of the storied program. He has decades of experiences with student-athletes from all different backgrounds. In his response to NIL becoming a reality, he said,

The positives are a simple thing like a basketball player in the summertime going to speak at a camp. Speaking in front of 400 campers and doing a presentation and a skill instruction and getting paid. To me, that is a great lifetime experience. It's a great educational experience (Bernstein, 2020).

This comment framed the issue in such a way that it made NIL not only financially beneficial for student-athletes, but also educationally beneficial. Something the NCAA has repeatedly argued is not a possibility with the implementation of NIL. Mack Brown, current head football coach at North Carolina (formerly Texas), agreed with Wright on the same educational benefits of NIL legislation. In a statement regarding personal branding rights of his players he said, "Personal branding is becoming a critical element of football programs around the country. We're always looking for ways to educate our young men so they can take advantage of opportunities as they arise" (Krest, 2020). Branding, presentations, and skill instruction all outlined as educational benefits, only adding to the overall purpose of NIL.

Alike both Wright and Brown who are in favor of the benefits NIL brings to the table for student-athletes, many other coaches seem to share the same perspective. One in particular is Stanford football head coach David Shaw. In an article published by *Sporting News*, Shaw shared his perspective in favor of NIL as a head coach:

I would love for more people to understand that a high percentage of coaches are in favor of this. There are certain people that have kind of painted coaches on the side of trying to

restrict and take away from student athletes. Many of us get into college athletes not to restrict, but to advise and be mentors and teach and help young people grow (Bernstein, 2020).

While all head coaches may not be in favor of the outlined benefits of NIL, these quotes demonstrate a valid case for NIL in college sport apart from the marketing rights and deserved compensation debate.

COVID-19 Professionalism.

An even more interesting perspective on amateurism and NIL in college sports was brought to life in recent decisions surrounding student-athletes and the COVID-19 pandemic. The hypocrisy of both university systems and the NCAA was exposed when many schools remained virtual or prevented on-campus activity during the fall of 2020, yet collegiate athletics still pressed on and the student-athletes who make up these teams afforded a decision to “opt-out” of the season. To some this seemed like a well-intentioned opportunity to protect one’s livelihood and family from the Coronavirus, thus foregoing what has turned out to be a very trying season for many athletes, while others viewed the opt-out in a different light.

Despite many attempts by the NCAA to reconcile how and why it was morally justified in advocating student-athletes remain loyal to their duties as an athlete, certain coaches simply spoke out against the continued classification of these athletes as amateurs. For one coach, the COVID-19 pandemic only revealed the professionalism of collegiate athletes and the deception of the NCAA. When asked about student-athletes and their continued risk and sacrifice during the COVID-19 season, Jeff Capel, the head men’s basketball coach at the University of Pittsburgh, noted, “I don’t think anyone can say anymore that these young men are amateurs,” Capel told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. “That’s out the window. They’re not. They absolutely

aren't" (Streeter, 2020). This comment from the third-year head coach proved to be the most straight forward and intentional response from all head coaches quoted, and it is a testament to student-athletes across the country.

Student-Athlete Luxury

The final common narrative among multiple head coaches is the current treatment and luxuries afforded to student-athletes. To full scholarship athletes, a tuition waiver, free housing, free food (often unlimited amounts), a stipend, and other amenities that vary by school are afforded to 18-21-year-old students. A select few coaches argue these amenities are more than enough, even for schools outside of Power-Five conferences. Russ Turner, the head basketball coach at UC Irvine, is a coach who recognizes many great things already being done for student-athletes:

I think that at our level, in the mid-major level, the players are treated really well. And I'd be surprised if any of them that were part of our program saw it differently. Now, does that mean that they get everything that they could otherwise get if there were no restrictions? No, maybe not (Bernstein, 2020).

The argument by Turner may be that NIL legislation is not necessarily in the wrong, but to say that student-athletes have a rough existence would be ridiculous. He continued,

When politicians start weighing in on this issue, it feels like this something's not quite right. Because I don't think this is a civil rights issue. I don't think that college athletes in general are being treated unfairly very often. I think there's some isolated cases where

maybe they are treated unfairly, but it seems also like those cases give a lot of, you know, interesting media attention that may be unnecessary (Bernstein, 2020).

To reiterate, the framing by Turner does not seem to be in opposition of NIL yet is framed as a wake-up call to many in his same profession that student-athletes are indeed taken care of throughout their collegiate careers.

Missed Opportunities

Former and professional athletes spoke out for themselves and current student-athletes concerning past and present experiences with amateurism. The main type of frame in which they spoke was the idea of missed opportunities that could have occurred had there been such NIL legislation during the time of their collegiate careers, and the opportunities current student-athletes are still not afforded. Hayley Hodson, a former Stanford volleyball player, mentioned in her July testimony that for some student-athletes, “college is the only time they have to profit off their hard-earned athletic successes” (Blinder, 2019). According to Hodson, college may be the only time that many student-athletes will have to make a profit from their own NIL. Former Wisconsin basketball standout Nigel Hayes agreed when he stated,

Given the popularity I had and my team had, whatever I decided to do would have sold like hotcakes. It's good now though that the opportunity (will be) there, but I know for sure that if it would have been something I was allowed to do, the sky would have definitely been the limit with that (Bernstein, 2020).

Many student-athletes reach the height of their NIL popularity during their collegiate years. The denial to capitalize on the opportunity of earning money from their NIL is clearly stated by these former and professional athletes who have experienced the same struggle. Current

Golden State Warriors all-star guard Draymond Green put the frame in much simpler terms. An article published by *Vox* quoted the former Michigan State player who said, “I’m tired of seeing these college athletes get ripped off” (Campbell, 2019).

Who are we to decide?

Regardless of the low frequency in which current Division I student-athletes were quoted, one theme that stood out was the passiveness of response and hesitation to give any real, definitive answer or opinion on amateurism and NIL. Kalija Lipscomb, current Vanderbilt University football player, noted, "as a student-athlete, I am aware the climate surrounding the sport that I play and collegiate athletics in general. I do have an opinion on it, but I prefer not to share it at this time, though" (Sullivan, 2019). Michael Pittman Jr., a wide receiver at The University of Southern California (USC), shared a similar perspective as Lipscomb in his response to NIL legislation: “I think it would be great for players to get paid, but honestly, that’s way past me. I’m just going to keep playing every week until I reach that level that actually pays me” (Blinder, 2019).

Phrases such as “I prefer not to share” or “that’s way past me” reveal the framing not only by student-athletes but also by members of the media who present quotes such as these. Another student-athlete Eno Benjamin, an Arizona State University running back, expressed his thoughts on new NIL legislation saying,

I actually had a presentation in one of my classes (Marketing 441) that I did on that. I know a little bit of what’s going on. I’m sort of indifferent. I see pros and I see cons. That’s not for me to decide. I’m at Arizona State. The bill as of now has no effect on me and also it’s effective January 2023 so I’ll be long gone so I’m not even worried about that (Sullivan, 2019).

Even Benjamin shared the same perspective in his comment “that’s not for me to decide.” This framing introduces vital insight into the surrounding NIL controversy and the voice of the student-athlete.

Chapter V: Discussion

The current study is centered on understanding how quoted article sources are used by members of the media to frame the issue of amateurism and NIL rights in college sport. The findings reveal that universities, the NCAA, and government politicians make up a large portion of the quotes gathered and analyzed. The findings also demonstrate a lack of attention given to the voice of student-athletes and their interests. It is clear that not only were certain source categories intentionally heard, but more importantly others were silenced and highly underrepresented. Additionally, media coverage of the issue of amateurism and NIL was found to be consistently framed by members of the media in ways that potentially impact the discussion and implementation of NIL legislation.

Corrupt Amateur Idealism

The real, definitive notion of amateurism we know today has existed since the early 1800s (Crabb, 2017). A love or pleasure for the game being played without compensation proves a simple enough definition (Afshar, 2014). But the NCAA's tradition of ideal collegiate amateurism for student-athletes has only existed for just over a century (Tatos, 2019). It is this ill-defined and greed-saturated version of amateurism that has and continues to infringe on the rights of the collegiate student-athlete. As McLeran (2017) said, "the NCAA was designed to be an educational nonprofit organization, not a commercially driven enterprise" (p. 261). This amateurism idealism is arguably the backbone of the NCAA's primary defense of their purpose and existence and has been questioned in recent case law. In truth, any scholarship money given to a Division I student-athlete is now referred to as "compensation" – a payment for his or her services in the respective sport (Groves, 2016).

Moreover, the Ninth Circuit ruled that there actually is value in the NIL of a student-athlete that would in turn provide real compensation to those athletes if the NCAA rules were non-existent (Groves, 2016). This would soundly repudiate the NCAA's "blurred lines" framing in many quotes and articles found in the study. The line has never been blurred. Currently by law, student-athletes are no longer amateurs, nor should they ever have been considered as such by definition. Steele (2015) writes, "on the contrary, many students at universities are already paid professionals, or semi-professionals, in a field that they are studying. The status of these athletes as 'students' does not automatically mean they are amateurs" (p. 526). It is only the belief and agenda of the NCAA that the combination of athletics and academics under its wavering amateurism tradition justifies the restraint of student-athlete compensation (Tatos, 2019).

Framing by the NCAA in media coverage pushed the blurred lines further throughout commentary surrounding NIL and the impact produces widespread confusion for the reader. The indication by journalists, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and university presidents that NIL issues are so complex that there is no real answer or solution frames the confusion even deeper. Student-athletes are no more amateur in 2021 than they were in 1956 when athletic scholarships were first awarded. While the desire to maintain the nature and enthusiasm of college athletics is at the forefront, the unjustness of NIL restriction cannot be ignored. Student-athletes are no longer legally amateurs even apart from the NIL debate, as these are two separate compensation distinctions (Groves, 2016). Yet, the consumer is informed from an article telling a framed story of how it is actually still a blurred line as to what student-athletes are or what they can or should be. This would prompt a deep, cynical view of the NCAA, the complying media, and all their interests. Collegiate student-athletes awarded a scholarship by

any university are not amateur athletes and should never be classified as such. They are, however, in search of another form of rightfully earned compensation based on their right of publicity and freedom to use their NIL. As Busby (2012) suggested, “perhaps the catcalls, which state that student-athletes are definitely not students and the notion that amateurism is a façade, are true” (p. 174). Maybe they are true, indeed.

Sidelined Voice of the Student-Athlete

Apart from a few quotes offered by certain journalists, the narratives present in print and online media were vastly and obviously absent of the Division I student-athlete voice. This is a collective voice that is no stranger to marginalization within the college sport world. Even despite being some of the most identifiable and popular athletes across the country, these “students” are pushed to the margins regarding a topic that would cease to exist as an issue had it not been for the student-athletes themselves earning rightful compensation. Sheetz (2016) said it another way, “while player compensation has been at the forefront of issues surrounding college athletics, student-athletes deserve more than just compensation; they deserve the stability and protection from exploitation that the NCAA’s regulations help to provide” (p. 893). A deserved “stability and protection” within their own job of sport, but also a voice to speak out and be heard regarding the egregious exploitation of their rights to publicity and the free market.

Even the inconsiderable number of student-athletes who were quoted are framed by journalists as perpetually incompetent concerning NIL or unable to answer for themselves on an issue about themselves. As Busby (2012) said, “maybe certain media members with the largest platform are fixated only on telling a tale about amateur student-athletes that propagates a story of academic shams and bagmen in back alleys with hoards of cash for blue-chip athletes” (p.175). This specific framing of student-athletes citing the issue of NIL is “way past me”

suggests that is the way we are meant to view the student-athlete's mindset or inability to think for themselves. When in reality, "many student athletes find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place, where they try to circumvent the rules, each time leading to new examples of what student-athletes cannot do with their name, image, and likeness" (Gerrie, 2018, p. 117).

It is a constant game of back and forth, testing the waters to see what a student-athlete can or cannot do in order to maintain eligibility within the NCAA's guidelines. Meanwhile, the frame being published fails to voice the real concerns of the student-athletes who are in search of freedom for their own NIL. A notion that downplays the words spoken from the mouths of student-athlete, discounts the validity of their needs and rights, and opposes outstanding skeptics of amateurism. According to Busby (2012),

The cynicism directed towards the validity of amateurism in major college athletics is bolstered not only from media reports to the contrary, but also by the fact that the NCAA and the corresponding member institutions make millions of dollars from amateur athletes (p. 175).

The voice of the student-athlete may be continually and indirectly shunned, but NIL rights and privileges have never been closer.

Dominance of Power Amid NIL Chaos

Although certain sources such as politicians sought to challenge the power of the NCAA and its amateurism model, the same group of politicians were framed as being in search of power along with the NCAA on the issue of NIL. The desire of power had come from differing agendas, the federal politicians seeking power to step in and act on behalf of student-athletes while the NCAA began searching to maintain its dominance and model of amateurism in college sport by any means necessary. Lush (2015) affirmed, "the NCAA's value has grown

exponentially since its formative years, and stands today as a powerhouse in sports” (p. 771).

That national power had all but disintegrated after SB-206, therefore the NCAA had to resort to a plea for restoration.

Landry and Baker (2019) posed a crucial reminder:

The deference that once fortified the NCAA’s amateurism model from scrutiny has eroded to the point that material change to college athlete regulations is inevitable. The NCAA must now choose whether it wants to lead in the creation of change to its regulation of college athletes, or be led (p. 61).

The NCAA’s refusal to surrender its relationship to traditional amateurism gave the state and federal government no other choice but to act. The state of California had done its part, but that wasn’t enough without a national agreement. All individual states passing their own agreed upon laws concerning NIL was obviously out of the question for the NCAA as well as sport participants and spectators. Collegiate sport was and is induced with political involvement from all sides, despite the normalcy of sport being apolitical (Deeb & Love, 2018).

The framing of Mark Emmert as a helpless, vulnerable sitting president seeking the support of federal legislators after being undercut by multiple states in NIL legislation was a key indicator of the NCAA dominance. Providing an apt prediction, Lush (2015) reminded, “the O’Bannon decision will force the NCAA to revisit its rules on amateurism” (p. 777). Once federal legislators decided to take control, the capability of an organization who repeatedly refused to protect its athletes subsequently found an avenue to protect its own interests by its relationship to the only other group with more power than the NCAA itself proves astounding.

An attempt by media members to even mildly frame the NCAA's sudden vulnerability as innocent only speaks to the vulnerability of the student-athlete body as a whole in mass media.

Similarly, certain entities such as university administration sources that indeed possess a substantial amount of control over college athletics were largely and intentionally framed as presenting a fearful unrest over the pending issue of NIL. A source category not lacking in leadership or power within intercollegiate athletics, now moved to the backburner of one of the most debated issues in college sport. It is well known these sources are ones who regulate and create intercollegiate policies, yet they are seemingly in a trance, unable to overcome the complex issue that lies before them. This perception of university administration consequently aids the framing of politicians and the NCAA as voices the consumer can consistently trust.

The issue of NIL was, and still is a chaotic, controversial topic of conversation in college athletics. Yet, during possibly one of the more reformative times in intercollegiate athletics history, journalists continue to display the NCAA in a frame of caring, parental love for a child (student-athletes), while attempting to detach power from those who truthfully sit in chairs of leadership, such as university administration. In reality, the former couldn't be further from the truth, and the latter is clearly demonstrated. Sheetz (2016) reminds, "one of the NCAA's core reasons for promoting amateurism regulations is to prevent the exploitation of student-athletes "by professional and commercial enterprises. Yet it appears that the NCAA may be exploiting the very people that it claims to be protecting" (p. 873).

Not to be forgotten, the boldness of federal legislators to step in and attempt to change policy within collegiate sport produces both praise and backlash from multiple sides. It is not to spite politicians for protecting and advocating for student-athletes on the issue of NIL, which many proponents of NIL rights are grateful for. But it is to focus attention to the media's

intriguing reliance upon sources or persons holding a public position of national authority or influence both in and outside of college sport. This reliance standardizes people in positions of power as being the only ones whose voice is worth hearing, and refuses to take into account, “that amateurism is a flawed cultural tradition as applied to college sports” (McLeran, 2017, p. 197). The voice of the student-athlete matters, particularly regarding the confirming issue of NIL that protects and encourages full marketability and expression of every athlete’s humanness.

Practicality of NIL Rights

Even though there are many theories surrounding when, how, and why student-athletes should or should not be allowed to market their NIL for personal compensation, the practical side and logistics of college sport must be discussed. According to Sheetz (2016), “college athletics have become a true industry” (p. 891). Indeed, the atmosphere of collegiate athletics has become nothing short of commercialized due to the overwhelming amount of money generated. Yet, even in this current reality, there are still moves to be made that are potentially beneficial for student-athletes, universities, and the NCAA as a governing body. While it is true that collegiate student-athletes may be considered professionals by most standards both historically and currently, it is no secret that, “only 1.7 percent of senior student-athletes go on to play professionally. Even if the student-athlete goes on to play professionally, there is no assurance of sustaining a prosperous career (McLeran, 2017, p. 283). As the NCAA (2007) famously says, “there are over 380,000 student athletes, and most of us go pro in something other than sports” (para. 2).

This storied slogan by the NCAA that has been heard for over a decade may be deemed another ploy to maintain the focus of amateurism and education, yet truth remains truth even in college sports. It is true that an extremely small percentage of student-athletes will eventually

play professional sports, and even more rare that a professional career will last for an extended period of time. It is also true that the overwhelming majority of collegiate athletes will go professional in something other than sports. At the same time, the truth of publicity, marketing, and NIL rights being withheld from student-athletes cannot continue to hold a common place in intercollegiate athletics.

It is not to say that implementing NIL or ridding collegiate athletics of all its regulations or traditions will solve every problem the college sport world faces. Grimmett (2014) stated, “lifting the restriction on student-athletes’ intellectual property rights will not remove all of the issues confronting the NCAA” (p. 856). It is important to confront unjust actions of the NCAA and reveal faults where they are present. It is, however, just as paramount to not completely destroy a system (NCAA) that has been instrumental in student-athlete education and compensation (athletic scholarship) for over a century.

Therefore, what ultimately can and should be done for the issue of amateurism and NIL rights for collegiate student-athletes? According to Grimmett (2014), “if student-athletes were to receive a portion of the NCAA’s television revenue, it would require them to receive a salary on top of their scholarship, which would undoubtedly destroy amateurism” (p. 848). Grimmett (2014) would later add, “compensating college athletes may actually preserve amateurism more successfully than the strict regulations that are currently in effect” (p. 847). Similarly, Gerrie (2018) noted,

By removing the violations of a student-athletes’ Right of Publicity the NCAA could change the environment of college sports forever without really touching the landscape at

all. The NCAA can leverage capitalism and existing free-markets to improve the lives of student-athletes and set a positive trajectory for the future of college sports (p. 130).

Even though framing by the NCAA and its interests infer NIL rights and freedoms for student-athletes would ultimately abolish traditional amateurism and the existing collegiate model, it might actually provide improvement and success for all sides both educationally and financially.

This improvement would not be an easy task, taking into account the complexity of NIL implementation, but a possibility, nonetheless. Promoting actions that could entail a promising future for student-athletes, McLeran (2017) suggested,

They should be compensated in ways that further their education and protect their right of publicity. To accomplish this, the Ninth Circuit should have provided student-athletes with guaranteed multiyear scholarships and trust funds—available after their eligibility expires—containing a percentage of their publicity rights (p. 283).

The idea of a multi-year scholarship provides security for a student-athlete (apart from any illegal or immoral action), and potentially reduces the commercialization aspect of athletes in the industry. Additionally, in reference to revenue generation from free market publicity rights, Sheetz (2016) stated,

From 2012 to 2013, the retail marketplace for licensed college merchandise was estimated at \$4.62 billion. The royalties from these sales were returned to the member institutions, indicating that the majority of college athletics departments do in fact make a significant return profit (p. 893).

Nearly a decade ago, college merchandise generated well over \$4 billion, and there is still a conversation around whether student-athletes should be given NIL rights. Hence, the underlying pains beneath the issue at hand.

In response to this disparity and the upside of a trust, Sheetz (2016) expresses,

Ultimately, the purpose of a trust is to compensate student-athletes only from the profits made by their respective school and athletic conference. Therefore, when a school or athletic conference chooses to sell merchandise using the names, images, and likeness of its student-athletes, they would then accrue profits that could be distributed into the trusts of the respective student-athletes (p. 893).

In hopes of accomplishing the heart behind this theory, McLeran (2017) explained, “a percentage-based trust fund—as referred to in this Note—allocates student-athletes a direct percentage of the NCAA’s revenue from merchandise sales which contain their NILs. The percentage the student-athlete receives is negotiated during the recruiting process (p. 287-88). As Sheetz (2016) concluded, “implementation of a trust would be the most beneficial model for compensating student-athletes” (p. 891). Even though the desire to rightfully give free market and publicity capabilities to student-athletes is more than necessary, it cannot take away from the invaluable nature of a college education (Sheetz, 2016). The investment into a future career outside of sport, and an emphasis on higher education should always be delicately added to, not taken away from, the stories, memories, wins and losses experienced by all collegiate athletes.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Though the current study has identified many sources that are quoted throughout the sample of articles and certain themes and framing by journalists, multiple limitations should be recognized. First, each publisher is tasked with producing an article with certain limits, as the journalist is also only able to quote so many sources throughout the course of writing to stay within the prescribed limits. Therefore, it is important to note that certain journalists may have

wanted to include multiple quotes from certain sources or multiple sources overall and were simply unable. Likewise, the direct quotes that were taken are likely part of a larger conversation between journalist and the source in a broader context (Deeb & Love, 2018).

Secondly, the sample of online and print media articles represent only a small percentage of online media articles that are produced every year. This would also indicate limitations surrounding the sample of articles, as the collection was from a specifically small point in time even though collegiate amateurism has been a public issue for decades. Another notable limitation is the lone examination of print and online media articles that included key code words and sources. This study did not include any platform of social media and was unable to include articles if they were not discovered in the initial searches using keywords from the method.

With regards to the direction of future research, recent, main components of amateurism and NIL lie within the power of elected officials, the power of the student-athlete voice, and the impact of public knowledge and social change. Thus, future research could examine the effect of social media on the current debate and the continuing issue of collegiate amateurism in years to come. Future research could also provide a more in-depth analysis to all parties involved, as this study specifically focused on select sources that were found in a limited time frame. There are many more components and sources in play throughout the amateurism debate that may not have been mentioned. Lastly, research will need to continue to maintain relevancy as NIL legislation and change will continue to progress year after year.

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to analyze how quoted sources are used to frame the issue of student-athlete amateurism and NIL rights when covered in the media. The findings

indicated that sources such as the NCAA and politicians were highly represented while other sources such as the student-athlete population were marginalized in a discussion surrounding themselves. This disparity was also seen in frames that were discovered, as student-athletes were repeatedly cast to the side of the main conversation. Given these findings, media members should carefully consider how they present the issue of NIL to readers, what sources they choose to frequently quote, and how they can more consistently represent the actual voices of student-athletes. When the current media coverage favors the voices of NCAA officials, university administrators, and politicians, while largely ignoring the voices of student-athletes, this type of coverage may act as an impediment to change in college athletics.

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Vita

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