

PROPOSITION 48 AND A DIVISION II INSTITUTION

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For many years it has been debated whether or not freshman student-athletes should be able to participate in sport at the intercollegiate level. At the 1983 national convention, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) passed legislation stating that prospective freshman student-athletes must score at least 700 on the SAT or 15 on the ACT and have at least a 2.0 grade point average in a certain core curriculum in order to participate in intercollegiate athletics. The core curriculum consisted of 11 college preparatory courses selected from the four major subject areas (three English, two each in math, natural/physical sciences, social sciences, and additional courses). This legislation became Bylaw 5-1-(j) or more commonly known as Proposition 48. As stated by Petr (1987):

Several people who spoke in favor of this legislation indicated that if athletes were going to be participating in varsity athletics as freshmen, then the high schools needed to do a better job of preparing these student-athletes, and it was felt that this legislation might lead to better training for athletes in the secondary schools.
(p. 5)

Bylaw 5-1-(j) has only been in effect in Division I institutions since its removal in 1983. However, as of August 1, 1988, Bylaw 5-1-(j), which was amended at the 1987 NCAA Convention, affects student-athletes enrolling in Division II member institutions for the 1988-89 academic year. For the fall of 1988, Proposition 48 will include a floating scale in Division II. The new scale states that freshman student-athletes who will be entering Division II institutions in the fall of 1988 must have at least a 720 on the SAT (16 on the ACT) and a core curriculum grade-point average of 1.900 to 1.999 (on a 4.0

scale), a 700 on the SAT (15 on the ACT) and a 2.00 to 2.099 core curriculum grade-point average, or a 680 on the SAT (14 on the ACT) and a core curriculum grade-point average of 2.100 or higher to compete in intercollegiate athletics. Beginning in the fall of 1989, the floating scale will be dropped and freshman student-athletes will be required to have at least a 700 on the SAT (15 on the ACT) and a 2.000 or higher core curriculum grade-point average to be eligible for athletic competition.

Recently, the NCAA Research Committee sent out a survey to Division I institutions asking them to report the number of 5-1-(j) partial qualifiers and nonqualifiers who enrolled as freshman student-athletes during the fall of 1987. The results indicated "at 202 schools responding to the survey, 457 (4.5 percent) of 10,197 enrolled freshmen were partial qualifiers under Bylaws 5-1-(j) while 143 (1.4 percent) were nonqualifiers" ("Results of Survey," 1988, p. 1). This study indicated that of the total number of students enrolling in Division I institutions, a very small percentage were partial qualifiers or nonqualifiers.

Partial qualifiers are defined as prospective student-athletes who have earned at least a 2.000 overall grade-point average in high school and graduated but did not meet the test score or core curriculum requirements of Bylaw 5-1-(j). Prospective student-athletes who did not earn at least a 2.000 grade-point average in high school and did not meet the test score or core curriculum requirement are classified as nonqualifiers.

Methods

With Bylaw 5-1-(j) taking effect in Division II member institutions in the fall of 1988, this study was conducted to see how Bylaw 5-1-(j) may have an impact on one small New England private Division II institution. The particular institution may be considered unusual because it does not award athletic scholarships. This study examined the high school transcripts and test scores of student-athletes participating in football and men's basketball at a Division II institution during the 1986-87 and 1987-88 seasons. Bylaw 5-1-(j) was used as a guideline in determining the core curriculum grade-point averages and tests scores.

The records of 96 football players and 12 men's basketball players were examined from a total of 122 and 19 football and men's basketball players, respectively, who competed during the 1986-87 and 1987-88 seasons. Student-athletes who had graduated, withdrawn, or had not registered for classes during the spring 1988 semester when the study was conducted were not included in the study. Transfer students were also not included in the study. Core curriculum grade-point averages based on Bylaw 5-1-(j) were computed and the highest test score was reported for each student-athlete.

Each student-athlete was then classified as a qualifier, partial qualifier, or nonqualifier.

Results

The results indicated that for both men's basketball and football there were 90 qualifiers (83.3%), 15 partial qualifiers (13.9%), and 3 nonqualifiers (2.8%) under the rules of Bylaw 5-1-(j). These data are summarized in Table 1. Of the 12 men's basketball players, there were 10 qualifiers (83.3%), 1 partial qualifier (8.3%), and 1 nonqualifier (8.3%). The results of the football players indicated 80 qualifiers (83.3%), 14 partial qualifiers (15.5%), and 2 nonqualifiers (2.1%).

Of the 15 student-athlete partial qualifiers, 9 failed only to meet the core curriculum grade-point average and 6 failed only to meet the test score requirement. Non of the partial qualifiers failed to meet both the core curriculum grade-point average and test score requirement. The breakdown of partial qualifiers is shown in Table 2.

Discussion

According to Mayo (1986), "students who are extremely weak academically are often invited into college to pursue the improbable dream: to become one of the less than two percent of college players who make it into the NFL or NBA" (p. 26). Hopefully, after many years of research, the enactment of Proposition 48 will prove to prevent the recruitment of athletes who are not academically qualified.

This study examined the academic records of student-athletes participating in men's basketball and football at one Division II institution. The results indicated a fairly low percentage of men's basketball and football partial qualifiers and nonqualifiers compared to the results of a survey compiled by the NCAA Research Committee. Their results indicated that 60 men's basketball (13%) and 156 football players (34%) were partial qualifiers out of 10,197 freshmen who enrolled in 202 Division I institutions in the fall of 1987 ("Results of Survey," 1988). The results of this study seem to indicate that this particular Division II institution may not be affected by Bylaw 5-1-(j). Although this study only included men's basketball and football, these two sports are usually subject to major criticism.

More research needs to be conducted in order to see the long term effect of Bylaw 5-1-(j). This study only indicates how Bylaw 5-1-(j) has affected one Division II institution since it was instituted on August 1, 1988.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Qualifiers, Partial Qualifiers, and Nonqualifiers

	Total Qualifiers (%)		Partial Qualifiers (%)		Nonqualifiers (%)	
Men's Basketball	12	10 (82.3)	1	(8.3)	1	(8.3)
Football	96	80 (83.3)	14	(17.5)	2	(2.1)
Total	108	90 (83.3)	15	(13.9)	3	(2.8)

Table 2. Partial Qualifiers

	Core GPA	Not Meeting Test Score	Both
Men's Basketball	0	1	0
Football	9	5	0
Total	9	6	0

References

- Mayo, A.M. (1986, Fall). Athletes and academic performance: a study of athletes at an NCAA Division I institution. The Academic Athletic Journal, 25-33.
- Peter, T. (1987, November). History of NCAA Bylaw 5-1-(j). Unpublished manuscript.
- Results of survey on Bylaw 5-1-(j) released. (1988, April 20). The NCAA News, p. 1.